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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BROOKS of Alabama).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 4, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MO BROOKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS KILLED FIGHTING HOTEL FIRE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when there is a blaze, when there is a fire, when there is an explosion, when someone has an emergency medical problem, the firefighter—the EMT rush in. That is what they do. While others flee danger, the firefighter with sirens, red lights, horns, red and white trucks charge into the jaws and midst of danger. Sometimes the danger is overwhelming and firefighters are injured and some are killed.

This has been a tragic year in Texas for firefighters. On April 17 in West, Texas, 10 firefighters were killed while putting out the fire at a fertilizer plant that had exploded.

Last Friday, in the heat of the Texas noonday Sun, a restaurant on the highly traveled Southwest Freeway caught fire. Then with the high winds, the fire spread to a nearby hotel. Houston firefighters arrived at the scene in minutes. They heard screams from citizens, and they rushed into the hotel to find potential trapped guests.

The hotel suddenly became a hellish inferno. First, the two-alarm, then a five-alarm fire. It took over 2 hours to get the fires under control. While the firefighters were in the hotel looking for people who stayed there, the roof of the hotel collapsed, trapping and killing four firefighters. Thirteen others were injured—some critically.

These are photographs of the four firefighters, Mr. Speaker:

Engineer Operator EMT, Robert Bebee, right here. He was 41 years of age. He's a graduate from Dobie High School, and he was a firefighter at Station 51. He started his career at the Houston Fire Department in August of 2001. His cousin, Joshua Gandara, said when he heard his cousin died, he knew why. ''I knew he was saving somebody else.'' ''That's him. He always put people first before himself, anybody's needs before his own needs.''

Over here on the far left, photograph Mr. Speaker, is Anne Sullivan. She was 24 years of age. She was assigned to Station 58. She grew up in Sugar Land, Texas. She was just 5 feet 2 inches tall. Anne knew she wanted to be a firefighter since the day she graduated from high school. She had just graduated from the Houston Fire Department Academy in April. Anne was an avid soccer player, cross-country runner, and she ran 10 miles a day. Her father, Jack Sullivan, was in his car on the way home from work Friday when he heard on the radio about the fire. He realized the fire was in the same area where his daughter Anne worked. He wasn't sure whether or not she was involved and hoped with all his might it wouldn't be her. Then came the terrible news that four firefighters had been killed in the blaze. He started to cry. When he pulled up to his home, the emergency vehicle parked in front of his house said it all. Anne, 24, was one of the fallen firefighters.

Firefighter Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, 35 years of age. He graduated from North Shore Senior High School. He was an 11-year veteran of the fire department. Station 51 was where he was assigned. He was close to Bebee. He transferred to Station 51 to work with him because they were like brothers.

And then firefighter EMT Robert Garner, 29 years of age, Station 68. He had previously served in the United States Air Force; and since he finished serving, he wanted to be a firefighter in Houston. He did two tours of duty in Iraq. Garner's dad once told him: ''Use your training because God will be with you.'' He awoke his dad that morning when he walked out of the house to go to work. That was the last time he saw his father.

Mr. Speaker, Houston is the third largest fire department in the United States. It is the busiest. This is the most tragic event in the history of the Houston Fire Department. So tomorrow at Reliant Stadium, an estimated 30,000 citizens, firefighters, police officers, and other people will pay tribute to these amazing firefighters. They were the best we have in Houston, and we are saddened that they are gone; but we thank the good Lord that such people ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

I insert into the RECORD the 10 firefighters killed in West, Texas, on April 17, 2013.

Printed on recycled paper.

FIREFIGHTERS KILLED IN WEST, TEXAS, EXPLOSION—APRIL 17, 2013

(1) Morris Bridges, Jr., 41, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(2) Perry Calvin, 37, Merkel, Texas Fire Department.
(3) Firefighter Jerry Chapman, 26, Abbott, Texas Fire Department.
(4) Cody Dragoo, 50, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(5) Captain Kenneth Harris, 52, Dallas, Texas Fire-Rescue.
(6) Jimmy Matus, 52, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(7) Joey Pustejovsky, 29, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(8) Firefighter Cyrus Reed, 29, Abbott, Texas Fire Department.
(9) Kevin Williams Sanders, 33, Bruceville-Eddy, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(10) Douglas Snokhous, 50, West, Texas Fire Department.
(11) Robert Snokhous, 48, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.
(12) William ''Buck'' Uptmor, Jr., 45, West, Texas Volunteer Fire Department.

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to come together and improve our broken, misguided, and convoluted tax system. The time is right for tax reform.

We currently spend $1 trillion through the Tax Code each year, all of which is off budget, meaning it is not scrutinized each year by appropriators. Once a tax break is written into the Tax Code, it usually remains, unlike discretionary programs which are reexamined for their necessity each year. To put this in perspective, $1 trillion would be the single largest government spending program—larger than the Pentagon's budget, larger than Social Security, and larger than Medicare or Medicaid.

As we desperately search for ways to reduce the deficit, we are making deep and painful cuts to discretionary spending. All the while, we are spending more than $1 trillion through the Tax Code with little oversight.

I have introduced a bipartisan bill with Congressman RENACCI, which would bring greater transparency and oversight to such expenditures. But in addition to greater oversight, we also need reform. While many of these tax expenditures incentivize worthwhile behavior, such as homeownership and increased savings and investment, there are others, such as the yacht interest deduction, which clearly need to be reconsidered. We are cutting the funding for the National Institutes of Health, Head Start, and Meals on Wheels, while subsidizing yachts.

Let's put this into perspective. If one of my constituents takes out a loan to buy a car to get to work or take the kids to school, the interest on that loan is not tax deductible; but if they were to go out and buy a yacht, the interest on that loan would be tax deductible.

Clearly, it's time to reexamine our Tax Code and get our priorities in order. I have a bill that would end this tax break for yachts. But rather than tackling these tax breaks individually, we need a wholesale rewrite of the Tax Code.

Our Tax Code is the product of years of small tweaks and layers of changes. We need to step back and ask ourselves: If we were to start over and rewrite the Tax Code today, what would it look like? With such limited resources, what do we need? What behavior should we be incentivizing?

Due in part to years of additions and changes, our current Tax Code is deeply recessive. According to a report released last week by the Congressional Budget Office, the richest 20 percent of households in America receive over 50 percent of the tax breaks. The top 1 percent benefited the most, receiving approximately 17 percent of all funds flowing from tax breaks.

It's time for a reexamination of our Tax Code: Who benefits from it? How much do we spend? What are our priorities?

Not only is it time for reform because of our fiscal situation; but at a time of frequent partisan gridlock, tax reform is one area where the two sides seem to agree. Members from both sides of the aisle have said tax reform is essential.

I commend Chairman CAMP and his counterpart in the Senate, Chairman BAUCUS, for their efforts to reform our Tax Code. I hope they will continue their bipartisan work and give the two Houses a package of reforms we can live with.

□ 1010

I have no illusion this will be simple or that everyone will like everything in the package, but that's the beauty of democracy—we don't have to agree on everything, but everyone's voice has to be heard. We have to compromise, and in the end, we vote. I hope we get to vote on a tax reform package that is big, bipartisan and balanced—and soon—because reforming our Tax Code will save us billions, lower tax rates, and help reduce the deficit. As we sit down to address our fiscal woes, everything has to be on the table, including the trillion dollars we spend each year on tax expenditures.

EGYPT

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

Mr. WOLF. News broke today that an Egyptian court sentenced dozens of NGO workers, including the son of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, our former colleague, to jail, for their involvement with prominent pro-democracy organizations.

Beginning with the December 2011 raids and throughout the course of the so-called ''investigation'' involving Freedom House, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute have been a highly politicized charade. Prior to their closure, these organizations carried out important and legitimate programs to help support citizen participation in the Egyptian transition process—the very essence of democracy and America's greatest export.

I was in Egypt in February and heard firsthand that the Egyptian Government's handling of this case is symptomatic of a broader crackdown on civil society. This was a sham trial from the start. If this decision stands, not a penny more of U.S. taxpayer money should go to the Muslim Brotherhood-led government in Cairo.

I call on President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry to personally raise this travesty of justice with the Egyptian President, Mr. Morsi, and I would urge every Member of the House and Senate to send a letter to the Egyptian Government protesting what took place yesterday in Cairo.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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

Mr. BERA of California. Today, I rise to celebrate our core values, American values, of religious freedom and tolerance. These are values that our Founders held sacred, and they are core to our Constitution.

In that light, this year across this country and across the globe, we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda. Born in India, he was known as Hinduism's Ambassador to the West. Many say he was the first Hindu monk to visit the U.S., spreading that same message of religious freedom and tolerance. Today, my friends from the Hindu American Foundation are here in Washington, D.C., for their annual meeting. As they visit Members of this body, they will be carrying that same message of religious freedom and tolerance.

As someone who was raised in a culturally Hindu household, I was taught by my parents to honor and exhibit this same message of respect and tolerance for all religions and faith traditions. That's why, as an adult, I am part of the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a faith tradition that is rooted with our Founding Fathers and includes John Adams as one of its members, and it's this tradition that was embraced by Swami Vivekananda.

So on this 150th anniversary of his birth, let's celebrate his message of religious freedom and tolerance, and let's remember the core values that our Founding Fathers wrote into our Constitution. Let's celebrate our individual freedom of thought and faith, which was captured in this quote by Swami Vivekananda:

> Dare to be free; dare to go as far as your thoughts lead; and dare to carry that in your life.

THE AFGHANISTAN-IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, like all Members of Congress during the Memorial week break, I had two occasions to give different types of recognition speeches to the families of those who gave loved ones who never came back from war; so therefore I had several opportunities in eastern North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base and Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station.

Every time I would make the comment that it was time to bring our troops home from Afghanistan and that it was time to stop paying the crook named Karzai, who is the President of Afghanistan, truthfully, Mr. Speaker, I would get strong applause; and many times after the speeches, people would come up to me and say, We agree with you. It's time to stop spending this money in Afghanistan. It's time to start spending the money in America and to let the Afghans take care of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, probably a couple of weeks ago, I spoke on the floor of the House, and probably other Members had seen the article that was in The New York Times in which the CIA acknowledged that, after 10 years, they had been giving hundreds of millions of dollars to Karzai in cash. In that same article, Karzai was interviewed, and one of his comments was that of ''an easy source of petty cash.'' Karzai wants to continue to get an easy source of petty cash—tens of millions of dollars going to Karzai in order to prop him up until the Taliban takes Afghanistan over. When I think about the number of young men and women being killed in Afghanistan to prop up this corrupt leader, it reminds me of another tragedy in recent American history—the tragedy of the unnecessary war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this past week, in being home, I watched three times on HBO a movie called ''Taking Chance,'' which is the true story of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl's journey to escort the body of PFC Chance Phelps, a fellow marine who died in Iraq, from Dover Air Force Base to the young man's funeral in Wyoming. It is a beautiful story of love, of pain, and of concern. I hope that Members of Congress as well as the American people will get a chance to see the movie called ''Taking Chance.'' It's a true story. In that story about Taking Chance home, it is a beautiful understanding of the pain and the love of those at Dover Air Force Base who receive the remains from Afghanistan and who take care of those remains. It is absolutely heartwrenching to see the love that these people have for those who have given their lives for this country.

Mr. Speaker, after seeing this movie and then reading in the papers that Iraq is falling apart, I would like to say to Mr. Rumsfeld and to the previous administration: thank you for getting us into this unnecessary war. Mr. Rumsfeld, you were wrong. You said that Iraqi oil was going to pay for the war. No. The Chinese are benefiting.

This is another article in The New York Times in which it says that China is the biggest winner. According to this article, the Chinese buy almost half of the oil produced in Iraq.

Again, the previous administration got us into an unnecessary war. In fact, a Defense Department official from the Bush administration said:

> We lost out. The Chinese had nothing to do with the war, but from an economic standpoint, they are benefiting from it, and our Fifth Fleet and Air Forces are helping to assure their supply.

Even worse, we are borrowing this Chinese money to fund this corrupt leader.

I hope that Congress will wake up. Next week, we will be debating the armed services bill. I am on that committee. I have worked across the aisle with my friends on the Democratic side to cut the funding for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have this photograph of a flag-draped coffin. It could have been PFC Chance Phelps' coffin—it's not, but it could have been—or it could have been the coffin of 4,400 other servicemen and women who died in Iraq.

God, please continue to bless our men and women in uniform. God, continue to bless America; and please, God, let us never forget the sacrifices made by so many in these wars that are unnecessary and in these wars that are necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As a reminder, Members should address their remarks to the Chair.

SMALL BUSINESS TAX EQUITY ACT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Since 1996, when California voters legalized the medical use of marijuana, the movement has spread across America. Over the last 17 years, 19 States and the District of Columbia have been pioneering therapy involving the medical use of marijuana.

It has long been recognized that marijuana had therapeutic values which were utilized with chemotherapy patients to mitigate or to stop the constant nausea. People have used it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain. There is now a wide range of therapeutic uses, from a system of multiple sclerosis to helping some of our veterans with PTSD.

□ 1020

A million people seek treatment that is perfectly legal under their State laws. What is not legal is for these hundreds of legitimate businesses providing a product that is important to a million people to be able to treat their business expenses like every other business and be able to deduct them from their operating income for tax purposes.

Decades ago, a drug dealer attempted to deduct the cost of his yacht and his weapons as a business expense. Congress, understandably, responded in 1982 by making expenses associated with dealing in a controlled substance ineligible for a deduction. That fixed the drug dealer, but it is has now ensnared hundreds of legitimate businesses operating under State law, by the way, laws usually approved by a vote of the people. As a result, they cannot now deduct entirely legitimate business operating expenses; they cannot claim the work opportunity tax credit if they hire a veteran; and they cannot depreciate their American-made irrigation equipment. The deduction for the construction or operating costs of a facility that they may want to revitalize is not allowed. As a result, these small businesses end up paying an effective tax rate that is double or triple the 15 percent to 30 percent that would normally be associated with the profits on most businesses. Their effective tax rates often are 60 percent to 75 percent.

Washington and Colorado are about to begin operation of businesses for the recreational adult use of marijuana authorized by their voters last fall. The situation is thus to become more complex and a burden even greater for more emerging small businesses.

We don't have to penalize hundreds of legitimate small businesses across the country to deal with a drug dealer. I'm introducing bipartisan legislation, the Small Business Tax Equity Act of 2013. Any business under this act that operates under State law would be able to deduct legitimate expenses for their business.

We shouldn't impose punitive double, triple, or quadruple ordinary rates because Congress has not modernized either the Federal drug laws or the Tax Code. We should not force them to discontinue a vital service for a million Americans or drive it underground or, frankly, encourage evasion by punitive taxes that are unjustified or unnecessary.

Let's bring this out of the shadows and encourage these small businesses to be treated fairly. It's entirely possible that we will end up actually collecting more revenue, fostering more respect for the law, and ensuring a vital supply of medical marijuana for more than a million people who depend upon it.

BAD DECISIONS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to talk

about a couple of unrelated topics, except that they both are examples of officials in positions of power overreacting to situations and making very bad decisions as a result.

Mr. Speaker, when I read that a 5-year-old boy in Calvert County, Maryland, had been suspended from school for 10 days simply for showing a toy cap gun to his friend on the school bus, I was shocked and saddened. I became even sadder when I read the little boy was questioned for over 2 hours by school officials before his parents were called, and the boy uncharacteristically wet his pants during this interrogation. His mother said later this boy was all boy and all about rocks, frogs, and cowboys.

This interrogation was ridiculous, and a 10-day suspension was ridiculous overkill. I wondered if these school officials who did this to this little boy had lost their common sense and human decency. I am now pleased that the situation has been partially rectified by cutting the 10-day suspension back to the 3 days he has already served, and I hope the parents' request to remove the incident from the boy's school records are granted.

Rigid one-size-fits-all solutions almost never work and frequently lead to very bad, very unfair solutions. I hope that school boards all across this country will at least come to their senses and do away with so-called ''zero tolerance policies,'' especially when it comes to very small children, and especially 5-year-old boys who simply want to be boys.

A second topic that I wanted to mention today, Mr. Speaker, is about the Dodd-Frank law. The Dodd-Frank law has produced many thousands of pages of rules, regulations, and red tape in a misguided attempt to rein in abuses by some of the Nation's biggest banks; however, as is the case with most Federal regulations, this law ended up hurting the smallest banks in this Nation and, thus, helping the big banks to get even bigger.

Listen to these words from a columnist from the Washington Times:

> It's been 3 years since the Senate passed the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation.
>
> So far, the effects are not what Washington promised. More than 200 smaller banks have failed in the wake of Dodd-Frank.
>
> Does it comfort them that politicians proclaim smaller banks were exempt from the market distortions lawmakers created?
>
> Since community banks are being forced to stay below the asset threshold forced on them by Dodd-Frank, they are lending less and making less.
>
> This further strains banks and limits job growth.
>
> We have learned once again that whenever Washington announces new regulations, hold on to your wallet.

Increasing Federal regulations, Mr. Speaker, always end up helping extremely Big Business, but makes it even harder for our smallest businesses to survive. We have this Big Government, Big Business duopoly in this Nation, and I hope those who continue to vote for bigger and bigger government realize that all they're really helping are the extremely big giants in any industry and they're hurting the small- and medium-sized businesses. I hope that this trend will at least slow down so we don't run more small- and medium-sized businesses out of existence in this Nation.

Now, finally, as I hadn't intended to say anything, Mr. Speaker, but my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), spoke about the very unnecessary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was 100 percent correct. I admire his courage in speaking out in the way that he has done.

Unfortunately, the Armed Services Committee is about to produce a bill that continues this war funding at the rate of $85 billion for the war in Afghanistan just to continue in other overseas situations like in Iraq where we happen to have had the most deadly month in May that we've had in several years.

The situations are not getting better, and this country will be far better off when we start putting our own people and our own country first and stop trying to be the policemen for the world and start doing things that need to be done in this country.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. I rise today to bring much-needed attention to a serious threat to our Nation: climate change.

There are those of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that routinely dismiss this threat or brush it under the rug as normal or even false, but the true consequences of climate change are not lost on the American people.

Extreme weather is real. From monster tornados destroying Oklahoma, to Hurricane Katrina destroying the Jersey shore, to wildfires raging out of control in the West, climate change is not an issue that we can put off.

As Environment Task Force chair on the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, this issue is extremely important to me. In fact, it should be important to all of us because we all bear the cost. Climate change does not have geographic boundaries and it does not discriminate on whom it wreaks havoc.

If you do not believe that climate change is a threat or that the costs are real today, let me share with you a few facts:

In 2011 and 2012, there were 25 extreme weather events affecting 43 States.

In 2013, we have already started with an early and intense wildfire season in my home of southern California.

□ 1030

Extreme weather events in 2011 and 2012 caused $188 billion in economic damage and cost American taxpayers $136 billion. That is nearly $1,000 per individual taxpayer, or the equivalent of approximately a 2 percent tax increase. And these are low estimates. Literally thousands of heat, rain, and snow records were broken.

My State of California is particularly vulnerable to wildfires. In the previous decade, the average size of these wildfires was 89 acres. But in 2012, the average size was 165 acres, nearly double. And 9.2 million acres, mostly in the western U.S., were burned. And in the last 5 years, fires have been more damaging and more costly than ever before.

Other regions are vulnerable to floods, droughts, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Just recently, while storm waters were inundating homes in one part of our country, ships were unable to navigate the Mississippi River due to extremely low water levels. These are facts we cannot afford to ignore.

It is true that changes in the Earth's climate have occurred cyclically over eons. But human activity has accelerated these changes, fundamentally jeopardizing our environment. And, we do not have eons to fix it. We rely on this environment for water, air, food and so much economic activity. We cannot turn a blind eye to climate change. Instead, we need to start preparing for it and work harder to stop it. That's why I call on Congress to stop the attacks on our environment and finally pass legislation to reduce greenhouse gas and carbon pollution.

MISHANDLING OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my serious concern with Medicare's implementation of the durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies competitive bidding program.

Despite strong congressional concern about the need for further transparency, the lack of binding bids during the contract process, and the improper vetting of the financials of many firms that have been awarded contracts, Medicare still plans to move forward with implementing round two of the program on July 1.

We learned that Medicare awarded contracts under the program to dozens of firms that do not have the proper credentials to serve these contracts. In other words, leaving Medicare beneficiaries without the needed access to the durable medical equipment that allows them to live with dignity during times of disease and disability.

Unfortunately, CMS has created a situation where servicing these contracts will either violate State licensure requirements or leave contracts unfulfilled, again leaving beneficiaries and consumers without access to the

health care equipment that they need. Furthermore, unqualified bids from firms that are unlicensed to service contracts create significant distortions of the bid prices in every bidding area nationwide.

I'm extremely concerned that mishandling of the bidding process is going to have a devastating impact on Medicare beneficiaries. This is a serious issue that warrants a full review of the process and a delay of round two until this fatally flawed program is fixed.

I encourage my colleague to join me and Congressman BRUCE BRALEY in cosigning a letter to the Medicare administrator requesting an administrative delay of the durable medical equipment competitive bidding program. This is absolutely necessary to ensure that older adults have access to the equipment that they require to live at home with independence and dignity. It also is about jobs as one of the unintended consequences, I believe, but it is still a devastating consequence regarding how the implementation of round two will continue to see the loss of small businesses all throughout this great Nation. And so I just encourage my colleagues to join Congressman BRALEY and I in signing this letter to the Medicare administrator.

HOW MANY MORE CHILDREN HAVE TO DIE?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, it has now been almost 6 months since the tragedy of Newtown. The American response to that tragedy was quick and overwhelming. And yet, we have done nothing to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

In fact, many of my colleagues here in this institution seem all too ready to forget Newtown and the gun violence epidemic that is devastating families and communities across our country every single day.

According to Slate's gun-death tracker, an estimated 4,620 people have died as a result of gun violence in America since Newtown—4,620 people.

In 12 U.S. States, gun deaths now outpace auto deaths.

A new analysis from the Violence Policy Center found that in 2010, there were 31,672 firearm deaths and 35,498 motor vehicle deaths, compared with 1999, when there were 28,000 firearm deaths and 42,000 motor vehicle deaths, which is startling considering more than 90 percent of the American households own a car while less than one-third of American households own a gun.

We require auto manufacturers to include safety features like seatbelts and airbags, and to pass crash safety tests, and lives are being saved as a result.

By 2015, gun deaths will outnumber auto deaths on a national scale. Think about that. More gun deaths than auto deaths, and we require all these precautions and restrictions on manufacturers to make sure our cars are safe and we do nothing—nothing—when it comes to gun manufacturers. Think about that. Mandatory safety measures, and auto manufacturers can be held liable for defects in their products. We expect cars to be built safely, but when it comes to guns, a product designed to kill, manufacturers have been given a free pass. They can't be held liable for the deaths and destruction their products may cause. We don't even require gun manufacturers to make guns child-safe.

How many more children have to die as a result of senseless gun violence and avoidable gun accidents? New York Times columnist Joe Nocera is producing a weekly ''Gun Report'' that compiles gun deaths and injuries from around the country. I'm going to read a few of the recent posts since Newtown that deal specifically with children.

A 2-year-old boy is dead after an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound. Trenton Mathis shot himself in the face with a 9-millimeter pistol in a house in Cherokee County, Texas, while at home with his great-grandmother.

A 6-year-old girl was shot in the leg by her father during a boisterous party in Federal Heights, Colorado.

Joshua Johnson, 4, was playing with a gun at a Memphis apartment complex when it went off. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

A Garland, Texas, toddler was fatally shot in his home in what police are calling a tragic accident. Three-year-old John O'Brien was shot in the head with a handgun in front of his mother, father, and two young sisters. He was taken to Children's Medical Center in Dallas, where he later died from his injuries.

The 4-year-old son of a Jackson County, Michigan, sheriff's deputy accidentally shot and killed himself. Authorities say it happened around 5 p.m. in the deputy's home.

Michael Easter, a 3-year-old boy in Liberty Township, Michigan, died after he accidentally shot himself in the head while alone in his parents' bedroom. Police are unsure how the boy gained access to the gun. Michael was home with his mother and two sisters at the time.

A 3-year-old toddler accidentally shot himself in the head with a relative's gun but was listed in stable condition at a Nashville, Tennessee, hospital.

A teen boy accidentally shot and killed his 12-year-old brother in Orlando, Florida. The shooting happened at home in the Lake Nona area. Investigators said they are working to determine what led to the shooting.

A dad accidentally shot his son dead as he cleaned his gun in the family's living room. Christopher Stanlane, 34, was wiping down a loaded weapon in his home in Fairmont, North Carolina, when it discharged. His 10-year-old son, Christopher Stanlane, Jr., was watching television, and was struck in the back of his head with a bullet. His 8-year-old daughter was also in the room. The boy was pronounced dead at the scene.

How many more children have to die before Congress acts?

□ 1040

MORE CAN BE DONE FOR VETERANS ACROSS THE NATION

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the veterans' disability backlog, but this time on a positive note.

First I want to thank Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Committee Chair JOHN CULBERSON and Ranking Member SANFORD BISHOP for their work on the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill and for including report language that my California colleague, Representative PAUL COOK, and I recommended to address the backlog of claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our veterans are heroes, and they deserve the benefits they've earned. The VA has set a goal of processing all disability claims within 125 days by the year 2015. This is an ambitious goal that deserves our attention as the agency works to meet its self-imposed deadline.

Unfortunately, too many VA regional offices across the country are underperforming by failing to process benefits claims for veterans in a timely manner. Recent data indicates that it takes 552 days, on average, for a claim to be processed at the VA's Oakland regional office, which serves the veterans in my district. This is unacceptable. While I'm pleased that the VA has made a concerted effort to improve accuracy and timeliness at the Oakland RO, more can be done for veterans across the Nation.

The VA has made a genuine effort to help veterans suffering from Agent Orange, posttraumatic stress, and to recognize the special needs of women veterans, among others. In addition, the VA recently announced it would mandate overtime at its regional offices and place a priority on claims pending for more than 1 year.

However, we must hold the VA accountable for its results. Additional oversight and accountability will not only benefit our Nation's veterans and their families, but it will allow Congress to ensure the VA has the resources it needs to properly support our heroes.

In addition to these efforts, I was joined by a bipartisan group of colleagues in requesting that the VA submit quarterly reports for each regional office where disability claims are pending for an average of 200 days or more.

These reports must outline any progress the RO has made as well as the steps it's taking to reduce the backlogs, such as hiring more claims processors or requiring additional training.

I am pleased that this language was included in the committee report accompanying H.R. 2216. This is a move in the right direction as Congress continues its oversight of the VA to improve the lives of our veterans.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF FOUR FALLEN HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a very sad duty and, as well, an appreciation to my colleagues from Texas who joined me yesterday with a 1-minute request of silence, commemoration of the four fallen firefighters in Houston, Texas.

First responders belong to all of us, no matter where they live. When a devastating incident occurs that causes them to lose their lives, we all feel the pain and sadness for them and the families that mourn them.

We in Texas recently lost a number of firefighters in West, Texas. Now, sadly, I come today to acknowledge the loss of four firefighters in the Houston Fire Department in the city of Houston: Matthew Renaud, Robert Bebee, Robert Garner, and Anne Sullivan. Unfortunately, these wonderful people lost their lives in a fire where they were fighting to save the lives of others.

The mission of firefighters is constantly with courage and commitment and compassion, and today I recount the history of the Houston firefighters and fire department.

March 14, 2012, was the last time the city of Houston lost a firefighter in the line of duty when Senior Captain Thomas Dillon died. 1929 marked the last time more than two firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty, when Edgar Grant and Harry Oxford and John Little were killed when their engine was struck by a train.

But on May 31, just a few days ago, 2013, a 5-alarm fire, just after noon, at the location of a motel and restaurant, is now the most deadly fire in the history of the 118 years of the Houston City Fire Department.

Sadly, Captain EMT Matthew Renaud of Station 51, Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee of Station 51, Firefighter EMT Robert Garner of Station 68, and Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan of Station 68 died in the line of duty.

All we can see as we look to the heavens is that we hope that they will rest in peace. But they were our brothers and our sisters.

Anne Sullivan of Station 68 was a gifted athlete who played soccer and was a cross-country runner, focused her life's ambition upon graduating from high school to become a firefighter and began her quest by joining the Wharton County Junior College Fire Academy. After graduation, she became a student at the Houston Fire Department Academy, while also previously doing work in another jurisdiction.

Whereas, Firefighter EMT Robert Garner of Station 68 was proud to call himself a Houston firefighter who sought out this honor after leaving the United States Air Force, where he honorably served his country and completed two tours of duty in Iraq and his fire department career at the Val Jahnke Fire Academy.

Captain Matthew Renaud, who served the Houston Fire Department for 11½ years, joined the Houston Fire Department in October of 2001 and was assigned to Station 51 upon graduation from the academy and awarded the Unit Meritorious Medal for saving a female who had been trapped in an apartment.

And Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee of Station 51 graduated from Dobie High School in southwest Houston in 1990 and began his fire department career at the fire academy on August 6, 2001, but served the majority of his career at Station 51.

Over the last couple of days, I've visited the command station, logistics, and the firemen's union, and then went to Fire Station 51.

To Fire Stations 51 and 68, we offer our deepest sympathy in understanding that your brothers and sister have been lost. But today we also pay tribute, because the members of the Texas delegation will be introducing a resolution in honor of these heroes. And we're reminded of their words and the words in the Fireman's Creed, that their work is to save lives, the lives of men, the lives of women, but it is God's work.

Those fallen heroes were engaged in God's work, for they were looking for lost souls that might have been in that building, that horrific, horrible fire that has seen thousands of Houstonians go by to pay tribute; and thousands more to go by and pay tribute at Fire Stations 51 and 68 and also to acknowledge Local 341.

Tomorrow, Houston will grieve together and, as well, I want them to know that the Members of the United States Congress grieve with them as we introduce this resolution.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at noon.

PRAYER

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Kauai Aadheenam Hindu Monastery, Kapaa, Hawaii, offered the following prayer:

May today's session of the House of Representatives, to which Americans rightly turn for leadership, be abundantly blessed by the Lord Supreme.

Through personal introspection, a collaborative heart, and by God's all-pervasive grace, may the Members present here, despite differing views and staunchly held convictions, find the wisdom to craft mutually acceptable solutions to our Nation's challenges.

The tragic Boston Marathon bombings, still vivid in all our minds, implore us to advocate the humanity of a nonviolent approach in all of life's dimensions. Hindu scripture declares, without equivocation, that the highest of high ideals is to never knowingly harm anyone.

May we here in this Chamber, and all the people of our great Nation, endeavor to face even our greatest difficulties with an unwavering commitment to seek out and to find nonviolent solutions.

Peace, peace, peace to us, and peace to all beings.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COTTON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING SATGURU BODHINATHA VEYLANSWAMI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman TULSI GABBARD and I are proud to have the opportunity to welcome Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, the spiritual leader and head of Kauai's Hindu monastery. He has come here today to give the opening prayer on the Hindu American Foundation's 10th Annual Capitol Hill Advocacy Day, and he is a true leader in the Hindu community.

Satguru has been head of the monastery since 2001, and works to spread

the principles of peace and inclusiveness around the community. Additionally, his achievements have international reach. Not only does he oversee the Himalayan Academy's various publications, he serves as a publisher of the international magazine Hinduism Today.

Furthermore, Satguru dedicates his time to cultivating the religious instruction of Hindu youth around the world through producing a series of books that teach Hinduism's ethical restraints, and teach religious observances as well.

Thank you, Satguru, for your opening prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING THE MEMORY AND SACRIFICE OF CODY CARPENTER AND JOEL CAMPORA

(Mr. COTTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COTTON. Today, on behalf of a grateful State, I rise to honor Scott County Sheriff Cody Carpenter and Arkansas Game and Fish wildlife officer Joel Campora, who died heroically last week trying to save their fellow Arkansans from flash floods.

Sheriff Carpenter leaves behind a wife and four children. Officer Campora leaves behind a wife and two daughters. Along with my fellow Arkansans, I want to express my deepest condolences to their families, their communities, and their brothers and sisters in law enforcement.

But even as we mourn their deaths and console their loved ones, let us also honor their sacrifice and courage. Sheriff Carpenter and Officer Campora died in the line of duty protecting their fellow citizens. John 15:13 says:

> Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

These men volunteered for duty that can call for that ultimate sacrifice every day. Now that they have laid down their lives, I join my State and my country in mourning and celebrating their cherished memory.

JOBS NOW ACT

(Ms. WILSON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it has now been 884 days; no serious jobs bill yet.

I'm proud to announce a powerful alternative to this shameful inaction. Today, I am again introducing the Jobs Now Act, a bill that would give local officials the resources and flexibility they need to retain, hire, and train workers immediately.

If this sounds like some left-wing idea, I ask you to consider who served as the key initiator and advocate for the CETA program on which this legislation is based: President Richard Milhous Nixon.

I have no doubt that many Americans hearing me today benefited—either directly or indirectly—from CETA.

Mr. Speaker, let's return to the days when investing in job creation and human potential was a bipartisan cause. Let's bring this important bill to the floor for a vote.

Our mantra in this Congress should be jobs, jobs, jobs.

DEAL WITH THE DEBT NOW

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this week the national debt reached an unprecedented record of over $16.85 trillion. Such a figure is so mind-boggling that I will make this simple. This means that every person in the United States now owes $53,329 to pay down the debt, and every U.S. taxpayer's debt share is now $148,186.

With a debt at such high levels, it is not surprising that we are still experiencing an anemic 2 percent growth rate, which has produced the lowest job participation rate in 30 years. The ever-rising public debt threatens to drive up interest rates, crowd out private investment, and increase inflation. The implications will be severe and pronounced for all Americans, but most especially for the poor, the elderly, and the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't deal with the debt now, the debt will deal with us.

□ 1210

LET'S BRIDGE THE INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, last month we saw two bridges in this country collapse in 1 week. If that fact doesn't get us to act, maybe this one will:

According to the Federal Highway Administration, over 70,000 bridges nationwide have been ''deemed structurally deficient.'' That's one in nine bridges.

Congress can't continue to kick this can down the road on this critical issue. That's why I've called on my colleagues on the Transportation Committee to hold hearings to focus on the state of our Nation's bridges.

Last week we had the Special Freight Transportation Panel in southern California on a 3-day fact-finding trip to see how businesses rely on our transportation arteries, bridges, highways, ports to grow and sustain the trade industry and our global economy.

When we invest in our infrastructure, we create a future with good-paying jobs; a strong, thriving economy; and an efficient, safe transportation system.

We have Americans who need work. We have an infrastructure that needs fixing. Let's bridge that gap.

THE NORTH FORK WATERSHED PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. DAINES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, as a fifth-generation Montanan and sportsman, I know how special the Treasure State is. Our State's rivers and mountains and our outdoor heritage are an important part of every Montanan's way of life and play an important part in our State's economy.

It's important that we work together to protect these valuable resources so that future generations can enjoy them for years to come. The North Fork Watershed, on the western slope of Glacier National Park, is critical to our State's outdoor heritage and the tourism economy in the Flathead Valley.

Efforts to protect the North Fork Watershed, like the North Fork Watershed Protection Act, is a good example of how we can work together to put Montana first. That's why I'm introducing legislation to protect this valuable resource, while also ensuring that current recreational uses, livestock management, and forest management in this region are maintained.

I'm glad to be part of this important, bipartisan effort in leading the charge in the House to achieve the goals that the Flathead community supports.

IT'S TIME FOR COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. SWALWELL of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I rise today to ask Speaker BOEHNER to recognize that the time is now for this House to take up comprehensive immigration reform.

I spent all of last week on an innovation road show. I went up and down Silicon Valley—and I have northern Silicon Valley in my district—and I listened to the job creators, I listened to the innovators. And one message is clear: we have unfilled jobs here in America that require immigration fixes, require increasing the H–1B visas so that we can create jobs behind high-skilled immigrants.

We know that Silicon Valley was built on a three-legged stool: access to capital, brain trusts, and a risk-taking culture. And we know that immigrants

build jobs behind them. They have that brain trust. They have that risk-taking culture. Forty percent of the largest companies in America were built by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

It's time to also put the 11.5 million Americans who are undocumented on a pathway to citizenship. I've been on the ground. I've talked to the innovators, and I hear their cry.

The time is now. So for the sake of our economy, and the sake of our communities, the right thing to do is to put these undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship and to make sure that we can take high-skilled workers from across the world, put them in our country, and create thousands of new jobs behind them.

SEQUESTRATION AND THE TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT

(Mr. MARINO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARINO. Last week, thousands of my constituents felt even more pain as a result of the President's sequestration when Tobyhanna Army Depot began to furlough over 5,000 of its civilian employees.

One constituent called my office and asked, ''How are we supposed to afford our mortgage if my husband is not allowed to work? There must be a more logical way to cut the budget.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what I would like to know. Why can the President jet around the country to play golf on the taxpayers' dime when the hardworking families cannot make ends meet?

The House acted twice last year to replace the sequestration with more commonsense solutions, but the Senate refused to consider these bills. They even rejected a measure that would have given the administration more flexibility in implementing these cuts.

Because of the President's insistence and the Senate's inaction, these families will now face even more financial uncertainty, struggling to pay their bills instead of earning a steady paycheck.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the 10th Congressional District have had enough of the President's rhetoric, and they have certainly had enough of his sequestration. It's time that the President started working for the American people.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a policy that allows Federal agencies to determine whether it makes sense for certain construction projects to have project labor agreements, PLAs, which are agreements between owners, including Federal agencies, and workers that establish worksite conditions.

Federal agencies are currently empowered to consider PLAs as a means of reducing on-the-job conflicts, saving money, speeding up construction, and improving efficiency and worker safety. Unfortunately, this body will soon consider removing this tool from our construction toolbox.

While they may not always be the answer on complex projects, PLAs make it more likely that a project will be done right the first time, on time, and on budget. That's why some of the most successful companies in the world, including Boeing, in my State, use a similar model for construction. It's why the Department of Energy uses a PLA at Hanford, and the Department of Energy has a PLA at the Explosives Handling Wharf in Kitsap County in my district.

PLAs are open to all companies, union and nonunion, who see the value of this tool. At a time when we're looking to rein in wasteful spending, PLAs can be a successful model in improving and promoting high-quality, cost-efficient construction.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

(Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of spending time with first responders and public safety personnel in my district. I toured facilities in seven counties, meeting with the men and women who are the first line of defense, the ones who go into danger rather than run away from it, the folks who are so critical to the safety of our citizens.

I believe it's important for our first responders to know that their hard work and sacrifice are appreciated. As one final step of this tour, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all those whom I did not get to personally speak with last week. On behalf of South Carolina's Third District, and Americans all across the country, we thank you for everything that you do.

Mr. Speaker, it is also with great sadness that I rise today in honor of the fallen first responders, many of whom are volunteers, who gave their lives in Houston, Texas, and West, Texas, recently. May the Members of this House honor the memory and heroism of every first responder who has lost their life serving this great Nation.

May God bless the families of the fallen. And I ask every American to remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

May God continue to bless the United States of America with heroes such as these.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

(Mr. CARNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the urgent need to make college more affordable. As the father of a rising college freshman, I have renewed appreciation for the astronomical cost of college.

On July 1, the problem will get even worse. Interest rates on Federal student loans are set to double; and that's why I cosponsored the Student Loan Relief Act, which would extend the current, lower rates for 2 more years.

Last month, I voted against a proposal that would have increased rates with the extra money raised going to the Federal Government. Balancing the budget on the backs of our college students is just plain wrong.

The amount of money Americans owe in student loans is greater than the amount we owe in credit card debt. This is a serious problem with serious consequences, and it's getting worse.

The future of our country, we know, depends on the ability of our young people to compete in this global economy. This means making it easier to go to college, not harder.

I urge my colleagues to support legislation that will keep interest rates low and make college more affordable.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF STAFF SERGEANT BOBBY BRIDGET AND MR. AND MRS. STEVE MASSA

(Mr. PITTENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor and tribute to three wonderful North Carolina heroes, Army Staff Sergeant Bobby Bridget, and his neighbors back home, Steve and Pat Massa.

Sergeant Bridget served us in Afghanistan with three tours. During that time, his job was to go find IEDs and then take those IEDs and dismantle them to protect his fellow soldiers.

Meanwhile, his neighbors back home, Pat and Steve Massa, they would take care of his lawn, they would do the errands around the house to make sure that their neighbor could go and serve his country and defend our freedoms.

Well, the rest of the story is, Mr. Speaker, that the Massas, during this time, were going through their own challenges. They had cancer surgeries; they had cancer treatments. It was a very difficult, emotional time; yet they did what it took to take care of their neighbor.

We're grateful for the service of Sergeant Bridget and particularly grateful for the wonderful neighbors that he had in the Massas.

May God richly bless these people.

□ 1220

REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 2 months since across-the-board sequestration cuts were enacted, devastating so many important programs that Americans rely upon. Instead of working together to find compromise to fully reverse these automatic, indiscriminate spending cuts, House Republicans have voted for the Ryan budget, leaving these cuts in place and hurting our economy, just to gain political points.

This is not President Obama's sequestration. The GOP effort to make sequestration a reality shows they are ready and willing to take our economy backwards at a time when Americans are desperate to move the Nation forward. In fact, sequestration will cost 750,000 jobs this year alone.

House Democrats want sequestration repealed and replaced with a combination of revenue and cuts. The President has proposed $2 in spending cuts for every $1 of revenue. But Republicans remain dug in. Republicans refuse to address 70,000 children who could lose Head Start. They refuse to address the SNAP program, which is very important to feed the elderly and children. Republicans refuse to address the cuts to NIH and other very important programs.

We must work together. We must repeal sequestration.

VISIT OF PRESIDENT OF BURMA TO THE U.S.

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the visit a couple of weeks ago of Burma's President, with the surrounding high-level honors, was a little disturbing. This leader's regime has engaged in well-documented horrific attacks against the various ethnic minority groups in his country—ethnic cleansing of minority groups.

When looking to the future of the country, President Thein Sein said last year that the ethnic youth should ''hold laptops'' and ''try to live a good life.'' Laptop computers are going to suddenly erase the effects of years of violence, racism, rape, and decimation by the ruthless military? I don't think so.

We must stand firmly with the minority ethnic groups in protecting their rights and ensuring justice is done for all the violence perpetrated by the Burmese military before we rush in to extracting resources and applauding democracy gains with no record of results.

And to the minority ethnic groups of Burma, many of us still stand with you.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE UPCOMING HURRICANE SEASON

(Mr. PETERS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PETERS of California. I rise today as chair of the Climate Task Force in the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition. June 1 marked the start of hurricane season, and this is a reminder that we must start planning ahead for extreme weather that we now face regularly, while also recognizing the cost of inaction.

Taxpayers spent $136 billion on disaster relief in just the last 2 years. However, FEMA estimates that every $1 spent on planning, preparation, and prevention yields the Nation $4 in future benefits. We are facing harsher droughts, deadlier heat waves, more severe storms, and, in San Diego, increasingly intense wildfires. In 2012 alone, wildfires burned 9.2 million acres in the United States, an area larger than the States of Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined.

There's no clear national plan for how to make our society more resilient in the face of extreme weather. This is unacceptable. We deserve better. Developing a planning structure for community resiliency is necessary. It will reduce Federal spending, save lives, and it's what Washington could do more of. We must act now.

FOCUSING ON SOLUTIONS

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to serve in the House, where we're continuing to work on the American peoples' priorities: encouraging job creation, growing our economy, and stopping policies that hurt American families.

Already this year, we voted to create tens of thousands of jobs and move toward North American energy independence by passage of Keystone pipeline legislation.

We've also voted to save jobs from policies that hurt our economic growth by passing a budget that will balance in 10 years and repealing the President's health care law that is already costing jobs.

In addition, we've worked to expand opportunities for all Americans by passing legislation that allows for a better trained workforce in removing barriers to help balance the needs of family time and work.

Our focus is on solutions—not blame and excuses—to help encourage a healthy and prosperous economy, to create jobs, and to expand opportunities for all Americans.

IN HONOR OF HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Houston firefighters who lost their lives and were injured battling a deadly five-alarm blaze.

Every year, our Houston Firefighters Pension Board holds a memorial service to honor all firefighters, but especially those who gave their lives in the service as firefighters. I have attended many of those services over the years.

Last Friday, May 31, the deadliest fire in the 118-year history of the Houston Fire Department broke out in southwest Houston. Unfortunately, four brave firefighters lost their lives performing their duties. Captain Matthew Renaud, Engineer Operator Robert Bebee, Firefighter Robert Garner, and Firefighter Anne Sullivan tragically fell during the fire. Many firefighters were injured, including Engineer Operator Anthony Livesay, EMT Robert Yarbrough, EMT Foster Santos, Engineer Operator and Paramedic Marcus Hernandez, and Captain William Dowling. These firefighters were injured and died trying to save people in a motel unit.

Our hearts and our prayers go out to their families and friends. Being the grandson and nephew of a family of Houston firefighters, I understand the sacrifice their loved ones made. We shall never forget their heroic efforts to keep us safe.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

(Mr. POSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POSEY. Where are the jobs?

I'll tell you where they're not. They're not created or seemingly even encouraged by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Department is still bullying small mom-and-pop businesses to complete lengthy, time-consuming, and expensive questionnaires about their personal business; but they don't have time to answer my questions about the need, the justification, or the actual use of the information in those questionnaires.

A letter received by a constituent just yesterday threatens that if they don't get their economic census back within 2 weeks, they will refer their case to general counsel. How can constituents trust this agency when even the formerly independent IRS is now used as a partisan tool to punish people the administration does not like?

If the Department of Commerce really cared about improving our commerce, they would leave our mom-and-pops alone to make a living, creating jobs.

ANNIVERSARY OF PASSAGE OF TITLE IX

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, 41 years ago, President Nixon signed the landmark Title IX legislation into law, giving girls and boys equal opportunities in sports. But what many people don't know is that there was a 5-foot, 2-inch Japanese American woman from Hawaii who was behind this law. While she may not have been a contender for the WNBA, she laid the groundwork for women to participate in sports at every level. She was a fierce fighter for equal treatment and rights for women and held the seat in Congress which I'm privileged to hold today.

Congresswoman Patsy Mink led the way to create equal opportunities for women and girls with her landmark Title IX bill. She grew up wanting to be a doctor and was rejected from over a dozen medical schools in the 1940s simply for being a woman. She went on to attend law school and dedicated her life to battling the status quo.

Title IX is a mere 37 words, but over the last 40 years it has made an incredible impact in the lives of young women around the country. Today girls can play basketball, volleyball, golf, tennis, or even football. Patsy opened the door for these opportunities. Many young women have walked through this door, paving the way for great athletes everywhere.

GET OUR ECONOMY GOING AGAIN

(Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as many have heard me say on the floor of this Chamber many times before, we have a tremendous opportunity to revitalize America's economy through domestic energy production. We can create jobs, lower energy costs, and become energy independent. We simply need to seize that opportunity. And to do that, we need this administration and its Federal agencies to be partners in progress rather than roadblocks to prosperity. Job creation does not mean hiring more bureaucrats, and ''no'' should be the answer of last resort after all other avenues have failed.

Two weeks ago, the Department of Energy approved one of many requested permits to export liquefied natural gas. Given that a recent study showed that exporting liquid natural gas can lead to over 200,000 U.S. jobs, it's time for the Department of Energy to approve the rest of the applications and let the market drive our success. Cut the red tape for job creators. And if we embrace a path to energy independence, one that allows the market to pick winners and losers rather than Washington, D.C., we'll get our economy going again.

□ 1230

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am a strong advocate for the First Amendment and for the freedom of the press. I believe that there is no question of the sanctity of that provision, even to the extent of being a strong supporter of the SHIELD Act so many years ago, and now joining my colleagues, Congressmen TED POE and JOHN CONYERS and others, on legislation to provide that armor.

But I will not stand by while malicious and unsubstantiated attacks go against a very fine and outstanding public servant, and that is the Attorney General of the United States of America, Eric Holder. I was in the Judiciary Committee when he was asked a question about whether or not he had prosecuted or intended to prosecute anyone in the press. And his words were very clear:

> We have a long way to go to prosecute the press. You've got to go a long way. With regard to the potential prosecution of the press for the disclosure of material, that is not something I have been involved in or heard of or would think would be wise to do.

That is what Holder said in the hearing. Holder did not have anything to do with prosecuting anyone, and that particular affidavit or subpoena was in 2010. The Justice Department has not charged or prosecuted anybody in the press. Stop the malicious attacks on Eric Holder and the President of the United States of America. Enough is enough.

INEXCUSABLE IRS ACTIONS

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the inexcusable actions taken by the IRS. Their decision to target conservative groups based on their political beliefs transcends party politics and represents an indefensible abuse of power. These actions indicate that the agency was operating with political agendas in mind—and not the best interests of the American people—and that must change.

We must refuse to tolerate this egregious behavior, and we must provide major oversight into the IRS so the American people remain protected and can trust that the Tax Code will treat them fairly.

The American people demand answers—not just an apology—from the Internal Revenue Service. That is why Congress, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee have led, and will continue to lead, vigorous and thorough investigations into this issue, seek out those responsible, and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions.

Federal Government officials should implement the law fairly, not abuse their power for political gain.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF CAPTAIN BRANDON L. CYR

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of a true American hero, Captain Brandon L. Cyr.

Yesterday morning, I was humbled to attend Brandon's interment at Arlington National Cemetery. Standing on that hallowed ground surrounded by Brandon and his fallen comrades is a sobering testament to the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the defense of freedom.

Brandon was killed in the line of duty when the plane he was commanding was shot down over Afghanistan on April 27, 2013.

A distinguished officer, accomplished pilot and dedicated friend, Brandon received the Meritorious Service Medal, five Air Medals and the Air Force Achievement Medal. At the time of his death, Brandon had logged 1,700 flight hours—900 of those in combat. Brandon enters into the honored company of those who, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, ''gave the last full measure of devotion'' so ''that this Nation might live.''

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I recognize Brandon, his family, and American veterans and their families everywhere for their service and dedication to this Nation.

OBAMACARE

(Mr. STUTZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of 600 people in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who are earning smaller paychecks today because of ObamaCare. Just last week, the largest school district in Indiana, Fort Wayne Community Schools, announced it would cut the hours of 610 part-time cafeteria workers and teachers' aides. These are hardworking folks who play a vital role in the education of our children. Officials running schools across Indiana and the Nation are beginning to realize these unsustainable costs and are taking similar measures to comply with its mandate.

Mr. Speaker, we know now that President Obama's claim that ''under ObamaCare if you like your health care you can keep it'' was false. Now we know that ObamaCare is also hurting the very people it was meant to help.

Employees in school districts across the country deserve certainty and security, and they don't have it. Americans are being crushed by the cost of

the Affordable Care Act. We must repeal ObamaCare and start over for the sake of Americans and our Nation's children.

RECREATIONAL FISHING AND HUNTING

(Mr. HOLDING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, Americans are struggling to find jobs in our economy, so we must take advantage of the opportunities for job growth where and whenever they arise. And today I want to highlight the positive economic impact of recreational fishing and hunting.

Mr. Speaker, nationwide, sportsmen contribute over $3 billion of State and Federal revenue annually through hunting and fishing licenses, fees, and excise taxes.

In my home State of North Carolina, hunters and anglers produced over 35,000 jobs in 2011—more than the combined employment of the two largest private employers in the State. Sportsmen and -women generated $249 million in State and local taxes in 2011—enough to support the salaries of over 6,000 police and sheriff's patrol officers.

I rise today to support this important industry and what it is doing for my home State. Hunting, fishing, boating, and other recreational sports foster growth in our economy and create jobs.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

JUNE 4, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, The Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 4, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 588.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

RUTH MOORE ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 671) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 671

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ruth Moore Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. REPORTS ON CLAIMS FOR DISABILITIES INCURRED OR AGGRAVATED BY MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 1164. Reports on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma

''(a) REPORTS.—Not later than December 1, 2014, and each year thereafter through 2018, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on covered claims submitted during the previous fiscal year.

''(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) The number of covered claims submitted to or considered by the Secretary during the fiscal year covered by the report.

''(2) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1), the number and percentage of such claims—

''(A) submitted by each sex;

''(B) that were approved, including the number and percentage of such approved claims submitted by each sex; and

''(C) that were denied, including the number and percentage of such denied claims submitted by each sex.

''(3) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1) that were approved, the number and percentage, listed by each sex, of claims assigned to each rating percentage.

''(4) Of the covered claims listed under paragraph (1) that were denied—

''(A) the three most common reasons given by the Secretary under section 5104(b)(1) of this title for such denials; and

''(B) the number of denials that were based on the failure of a veteran to report for a medical examination.

''(5) The number of covered claims that, as of the end of the fiscal year covered by the report, are pending and, separately, the number of such claims on appeal.

''(6) For the fiscal year covered by the report, the average number of days that covered claims take to complete beginning on the date on which the claim is submitted.

''(7) A description of the training that the Secretary provides to employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration specifically with respect to covered claims, including the frequency, length, and content of such training.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered claims' means claims for disability compensation submitted to the Secretary based on a covered mental health condition alleged to have been incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma.

''(2) The term 'covered mental health condition' means post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, or other mental health diagnosis described in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association that the Secretary determines to be related to military sexual trauma.

''(3) The term 'military sexual trauma' means, with respect to a veteran, psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a mental health professional, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred during active military, naval, or air service.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''1164. Reports on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma.''.

(3) INITIAL REPORT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress an initial report described in section 1164 of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), by not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. Such initial report shall be in addition to the annual reports required under such section beginning in December 2014.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should update and improve the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to military sexual trauma by—

(1) ensuring that military sexual trauma is specified as an in-service stressor in determining the service-connection of post-traumatic stress disorder by including military sexual trauma as a stressor described in section 3.304(f)(3) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(2) recognizing the full range of physical and mental disabilities (including depression, anxiety, and other disabilities as indicated in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association) that can result from military sexual trauma.

(c) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—During the period beginning on the date that is 15 months after the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the date on which the Secretary updates and improves regulations as described in subsection (b), the Secretary shall—

(1) provide to each veteran who has submitted a covered claim or been treated for military sexual trauma at a medical facility of the Department with a copy of the report under subsection (a)(3) or section 1164 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), that has most recently been submitted to Congress;

(2) provide on a monthly basis to each veteran who has submitted any claim for disability compensation or been treated at a medical facility of the Department information that includes—

(A) the date that the Secretary plans to complete such updates and improvements to such regulations;

(B) the number of covered claims that have been granted or denied during the month covered by such information;

(C) a comparison to such rate of grants and denials with the rate for other claims regarding post-traumatic stress disorder;

(D) the three most common reasons for such denials;

(E) the average time for completion of covered claims;

(F) the average time for processing covered claims at each regional office; and

(G) any information the Secretary determines relevant with respect to submitting a covered claim;

(3) in addition to providing to veterans the information described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall make available on a monthly basis such information on a conspicuous location of the Internet website of the Department; and

(4) submit to Congress on a monthly basis a report that includes—

(A) a list of all adjudicated covered claims, including ancillary claims, during the month covered by the report;

(B) the outcome with respect to each medical condition included in the claim; and

(C) the reason given for any denial of such a claim.

(d) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this section:

(1) The term ''covered claim'' has the meaning given that term in section 1164(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

(2) The term ''military sexual trauma'' has the meaning given that term in section 1164(c)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF ROUNDING DOWN OF PERCENTAGE INCREASES OF RATES OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) MONTGOMERY GI BILL.—Section 3015(h)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2019''; and

(2) by striking ''fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2018''.

(b) SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 3564(b) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2019''; and

(2) by striking ''fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2018''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 671, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 671, as amended, will demand that the Department of Veterans Affairs place an immediate and concerted focus upon updating and improving its regulations for processing claims based upon military sexual trauma, commonly known as MST.

Reported incidences of military sexual trauma have risen markedly in recent years, a disturbing trend affecting both women and men serving in the military. I have spoken with many servicemembers who have suffered MST, and one sentiment is commonly echoed—these servicemembers feel a sense of betrayal and lack of trust. They have said that they feel betrayed by their fellow military attacker; and, without proper handling of the crime, they also feel betrayed by their command and their service branch.

The Department of Defense must take the lead on this issue and must address military sexual assault and trauma throughout the ranks in the strongest possible terms. Additionally, our veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma who live with this sense of betrayal must be confident that they will not be further traumatized by the Department of Veterans Affairs when they seek necessary and proper assistance.

Survivors of MST must not be subjected to outdated and antiquated regulations of the Department.

□ 1240

VA's approach to claims of MST and its processing thereof require immediate and thoughtful review, and that is the intent of H.R. 671, as amended.

I want to thank Congresswoman PINGREE for bringing this important bill to the committee. And I commend Subcommittee Chairman RUNYAN and Ranking Member TITUS for their bipartisan work on bringing this bill to the floor today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I wholeheartedly support H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013. This bill was introduced by my colleague and good friend of mine from the State of Maine, Congresswoman CHELLIE PINGREE. It is named after a constituent of mine, Ruth Moore.

This important legislation seeks to better serve those men and women who have become victims of military sexual trauma. This legislation makes clear that we expect the VA to update its regulations in regards to military sexual trauma, which we believe are outdated and do not reflect the needs of those who are living through this awful experience. This bill would encourage the VA to update its regulations to ensure that military sexual trauma is specified as an in-service stressor and that those updated regulations also recognize the full range of physical and mental disabilities that may result.

Mr. Speaker, VA did the right thing by our Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange by updating their regulations. We expect VA to also do the right thing by veterans who have been suffering from military sexual trauma.

H.R. 671, as amended, contains language to ensure VA follows through on the requirement to do better by those who have suffered military sexual trauma. It will dramatically increase the reporting requirements of VA in the event that these regulations are not updated within 15 months in an appropriate manner.

Let's be clear: Congress disagrees with VA's assessment that MST is being adjudicated effectively. We expect VA to take a good, hard look at this issue and update its regulations in a timely fashion. We will be watching, and we will be having oversight hearings to make sure that the reporting requirements are upheld.

I would urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield as much time as he might consume to the subcommittee chairman of Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN).

Mr. RUNYAN. Thank you, Chairman MILLER, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 671, as amended, is known as the Ruth Moore Act of 2013.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I am pleased once again that our subcommittee worked in a productive and bipartisan manner on this important bill for our Nation's servicemembers. I also applaud the leadership shown by Ms. PINGREE in sponsoring this legislation.

Military sexual trauma is a terrible act, a betrayal of trust, and it is not to be tolerated. Furthermore, those veterans who were victimized by their fellow servicemembers are entitled to VA assistance, and they are entitled to a fair and thoughtful review of their claims.

Thus, H.R. 671, as amended, sets stringent reporting requirements and urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to make necessary changes to their regulations on military sexual trauma to ensure their fair review.

I strongly support H.R. 671, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to also support this bill.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the author of the bill, the gentlewoman from my home State of Maine, Congresswoman CHELLIE PINGREE.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague from Maine, Mr. MICHAUD, for his time, for his leadership on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and for sharing his brave constituent, Ruth Moore, with me.

I also want to thank Chairman MILLER for his bipartisan work on this bill, as well as subcommittee chair, Mr. RUNYAN, and Ms. TITUS, the ranking member, for their work on this issue as well. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, lately it has been hard to escape the news about the crisis of sexual assault in the military. Senior military personnel charged with preventing sexual assault are themselves investigated or arrested for the very same thing.

A new Pentagon report showing 26,000 men and women were sexually assaulted in the military last year—up 35 percent. And only about one in 10 of those assaults were reported, and even fewer ended up with a prosecution. In fact, the Pentagon says that every week—every single week—400 sexual assaults go unreported.

But even though we've heard much more about this problem lately, in no way is it a new problem. Almost every day I hear from another veteran who is the survivor of sexual assault in the military. Men and women of all ages, from every branch of the service, from every era. I have heard from survivors of sexual assault from World War II, the war in Afghanistan, and every conflict and every era in between.

There is no question that we have to get to the root of the problem, that we have to reform the legal service and

change the culture so sexual assault in the military is no longer tolerated and is thoroughly prosecuted.

But the sad fact remains: even if sexual assault in the military ended today, even if a woman or man in uniform was never raped again, there would still be tens of thousands of veterans who survived a sexual assault and suffer a disability because of it, but still can't get veterans disability benefits that they are owed.

That's why we need this bill, the Ruth Moore Act. This bill doesn't create any new benefits for survivors of sexual assault. This bill doesn't give any special treatment to the survivors of sexual assault. This bill just levels the playing field and makes it easier for those survivors to get the benefits they are owed.

A few years ago, the Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledged that too many combat veterans were suffering from PTSD and they were being denied benefits because it was too difficult to document what happened to them on the battlefield. So the VA made a commonsense change. They said if you were in combat and a VA doctor gives you a diagnosis of PTSD, and if an examiner links that diagnosis to the combat you experienced, then you are eligible for benefits.

The Ruth Moore Act asks the VA to do the same thing for victims of military sexual assault. If a VA doctor gives a veteran a diagnosis of a mental health condition and there is a medical link to the sexual assault, then the VA will have to qualify the veteran for service-related disability benefits.

Currently, the VA requires ''secondary markers'' to show the sexual assault occurred. Those secondary markers—statements from relatives or friends or a supervisor—are often hard to come by, especially for veterans who suffered an assault years or even decades ago. In the case of combat-related PTSD, those secondary markers are no longer required and the sworn statement of a veteran is sufficient. The same reform should apply to survivors of sexual assault.

We named this bill after a very brave woman from Maine. Ruth Moore was in the Navy when she was 19, serving her country. At a base in the Azores she was raped. When she reported it, she was told to keep quiet, and then she was raped again. For 23 years she fought for the benefits she was owed. Her records were tampered with, she was diagnosed with mental illness, and her life fell apart. After decades of fighting, Ruth was finally given the benefits we owed her, and slowly she has put her life back together.

When I met her in my office in Maine 2 years ago, she could barely tell her story. Her friends, her neighbors, even many of her loved ones didn't know what had happened to her. But bit by bit, Ruth has rebuilt her trust of people in positions of responsibility to the point where she came here to Washington and testified before the Veterans' Affairs Committee—a very brave woman.

But there are thousands and thousands of Ruth Moores out there who have been fighting for their benefits for years or even for decades. As survivors of sexual assault, they have suffered and sacrificed enough. We can make the process of getting the benefits they are owed a little bit simpler.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

□ 1250

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Thank you, Ranking Member MICHAUD.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013.

This bill specifies military sexual trauma as a type of stressor for posttraumatic stress disorder. This is an important step forward in assuring that the VA gives full consideration for disability claims originating from sexual violence committed against military personnel while they serve our country.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 671 and as a member of the Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus, I believe we must support our veterans who may confront challenges upon returning to civilian life. This includes obtaining compensation for violence committed by a fellow servicemember.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are ready to close if the ranking member is ready as well, so I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, today, we can take a meaningful step to ensure the VA better serves veterans who were subject to sexual trauma while serving in our military. These veterans' disabilities were not the result of fire from the enemy, and they were not the result of injury incurred during training. They were the result of the armed services' continual failure to systematically address the culture of sexual assault in the military.

This situation is unacceptable and unconscionable, and we must act. With this legislation, we hope to ensure that the VA helps these disabled veterans. We have a duty to make the lives of these men and women a little better. They never should have had to deal with these events in the service of our Nation anyway, so I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee and the chairman of the subcommittee and their staffs for their hard work in bringing this bill before the floor for us to vote on today. I know the committee staffs on both sides of the aisle have worked very hard to amend this bill so that it's acceptable to both sides of the aisle. I thank the chairman for all his hard efforts, not only on this legislation, but also on legislation as it affects veterans and their families throughout the country.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think the words speak for themselves as well as the comments that have been made here on the floor. I would just close with this: that I urge all of my colleagues to support the Ruth Moore Act. I support H.R. 671, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health—and an original co-sponsor of the bill—I would like to express my wholehearted support for H.R. 671 and to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this critical legislation.

I would also like to thank my colleague from Maine for introducing this important bill.

It is absolutely intolerable for any servicemember to be subjected to sexual assault while serving in our nation's armed forces.

It is also unacceptable that veterans are being denied treatment at the VA because they don't have adequate proof that the assault happened.

Under existing VA policies, a lack of military documentation and inconsistencies among VA regional offices have resulted in veterans, like Ruth Moore, being denied disability benefits.

For 23 years Ruth was told by the VA that she did not provide enough evidence proving the assault happened.

Instead of receiving the high quality VA care and benefits she had earned immediately upon separation, she had to fight and wait for over two decades for benefits.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 671 to correct this injustice.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I submit this statement in support of H.R. 671, the Ruth Moore Act of 2013, introduced by Rep. CHELLIE PINGREE of Maine.

This legislation makes it easier for veterans to receive benefits for disabilities (PTSD) that stem from sexual assaults. The Pentagon reports that the number of sexual assaults in the military has grown from 19,000 to 26,000 since last year. One in 3 servicewomen report having been sexually assaulted, but an estimated 86 percent of assaults are never reported.

Our military is a source of great strength and national pride, and we should expect nothing less than the highest standards of conduct, from rank and file troops to the upper echelons of leadership.

We must eradicate the criminal, violent acts of sexual assault, and we must remove institutional barriers that allow perpetrators to go unpunished and victims to be revictimized.

I agree with the provision of H.R. 671, which asks the Department of Veterans Affairs to lower the burden of proof to receive benefits. Currently, servicewomen are required to provide secondary evidence to show that the trauma occurred—a burden not required for other combat-related claims.

Let's stand up for our brave servicewomen by building a better system—one that honors and affirms them as members of the mightiest military force on the globe.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 671, Ruth Moore Act of 2013. This bill will right a wrong in our veterans' compensation process for those servicemembers suffering from military sexual trauma.

One of the problems we have when trying to help veterans victimized by their superiors is lack of information about how often it happens and how many veterans are victims.

This bill requires the VA to collect and report on many aspects of those who are suffering from MST, but are unable to get relief from the VA.

The VA will be required to provide on a monthly basis its progress with regards to military sexual trauma of every veteran that has applied for benefits or has been treated at a VA facility. This update shall include: The three most common reasons for denial, the average time for completion of these claims, the average time for processing MST claims and how MST compares to other PTSD claims.

We cannot know how to begin to treat and compensate victims of Military Sexual Trauma until we know more about this disability.

I fully support this legislation and urge its passage by the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 671, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress an annual report on claims for disabilities incurred or aggravated by military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2216, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2217, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 243 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 243

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2217) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except for section 563. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Pending the adoption of a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2014, the provisions of House Concurrent Resolution 25, as adopted by the House, shall have force and effect in the House as though Congress has adopted such concurrent resolution, and the allocations of spending authority printed in Tables 11 and 12 of House Report 113-17 shall be considered for all purposes in the House to be the allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1300

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the two underlying bills.

House Resolution 243 provides for an open rule for consideration of H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014, and H.R. 2217, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2014.

This rule provides ample opportunities for Members from both the minority and majority to participate in the debate, and it does not limit the number of amendments that may be considered, so long as the amendments comply with the rules of the House.

My colleagues from both sides of the aisle agree that these appropriation acts for fiscal year 2014 are the products of an open, collaborative, and bipartisan process.

They provide critical funding for military construction, housing, schools, and medical facilities for our servicemembers and their families, important veteran programs, the protection and security of our airports, seaports and national border, and disaster relief efforts. They also reduce duplication, improve oversight, encourage efficiency, and increase coordination of services.

Mr. Speaker, these bills address nonpartisan issues that affect every one of us. The seamless operation of these agencies and programs and projects will benefit all Americans.

Let me first address H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014.

This fiscally sound bill funds programs that are necessary to keep our promises to our veterans and to train, equip, house, and support the brave men and women in uniform, as well as their families.

This bill provides over $73 billion in discretionary funding, which is $1.4 billion above the enacted fiscal year 2013 level. It continues to provide advanced funding that was approved in fiscal year 2013 for veteran medical care and funds programs to reduce the staggering backlog which severely delayed the process of veteran benefits claims. This advance funding will ensure that our veterans have full access to medical care regardless of where we stand in the annual appropriation process.

H.R. 2216 funds military construction projects, including family housing, military medical facilities, and Department of Defense education facilities. It also funds critical VA medical services and provides for a unified electronic health record system to integrate Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs health records.

Currently, our veterans must physically present a hard copy of their DOD health records at their VA appointments, and physicians are unable to look up the patient's medical history if a patient does not have their records with them. This bill addresses this frustrating and inefficient process and will begin to replace an archaic paper record system with an electronic system that will ensure our veterans will be efficiently served and receive the care they need and deserve.

Next, I'd like to talk about and highlight a few of the important provisions in H.R. 2217, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2014. This bill is essential to protect the security of our national borders and the safety and well-being of all Americans.

This bill provides $38 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security, which includes funding for 21,370 Border Patrol agents and nearly 22,800 Customs and Border Protection officers—the largest totals in history. It also directs U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to train agents to identify and assist victims of human trafficking and directs ICE to increase spending on human trafficking and smuggling investigations.

H.R. 2217 also provides funding for FEMA to ensure our Nation is prepared to provide disaster relief and funds the Coast Guard.

Finally, I'd like to reiterate that these bills strengthen our national security and continue the well-being of our brave servicemembers, their families, and other veterans. They also recognize that our growing debt threatens the stability and safety of our Nation, and for this reason these bills make recommendations to reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, duplication, and overhead.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. The Appropriations Committee has worked hard to provide us with two fiscally responsible appropriation bills that will meet the housing construction and medical needs of our military and provide support to their families. They will keep our promises to America's veterans, and they will enhance our national security.

I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the underlying bills, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'd also like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida, the former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, who clearly championed there and here, likewise, regular order.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2216 and H.R. 2217, as outlined by my colleague from the other side, two appropriations measures that fund military construction and family housing projects, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Homeland Security.

Once again, my friends on the other side are using this particular rule as yet another attempt to deem and pass the controversial budget offered by our colleague PAUL RYAN.

This is exactly what they did in April of last year when they reneged on their promises in the Budget Control Act and also during consideration of H.R. 5326, the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations for fiscal year 2013.

My Republican colleagues have been calling for regular order; however, both the House and the Senate each passed a budget this year and regular order would have them go to conference to negotiate a budget for the 113th Congress. But instead of appointing conferees, the Speaker of the House and the House Republican leadership are deeming the Ryan budget passed.

□ 1310

Someone in a graphic that I saw said they're deeming the impossible deem.

I, as one exemplar, should know, having served on the Rules Committee in the majority when we were going forward. We did consider deem and pass, and we learned along the way that that was going to skew the process. Therefore, we retreated from that, and I would urge my friends, the Republicans, to do likewise.

They would rather see, it appears, greater military spending, at the expense of vital programs that millions of Americans rely on, than work with Democrats to replace the sequester and properly fund our Nation's government.

Now, I'm not going through the litany of all the things that the sequester has cut and the problems that it has caused. Most people know that. But the Meals on Wheels program has been the one put forward, and I just think it is plain dumb and crazy to not take care of older people in our society. Never mind all the ideology, all the deficit, all the other hawk talk, who cares when someone that is a grandmother goes to sleep hungry because we didn't do what we should have done and that we passed a foolish sequester that has caused these problems.

As a result, we're working with different budget target levels. In the House, it is $0.966 trillion and approximately $1.07 trillion for the Senate, which both sides agreed upon in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

These differences are important. The reductions imposed by the House 302(b) allocations mean greater cuts for agencies and programs that already face difficult budget decisions due to sequestration. The two funding bills coming before us for consideration this week, along with those for defense and the legislative branch, are the only ones expected to receive an increase over the 2013 post-sequester levels. This means that we'll be forced to sacrifice health care, environment, education, transportation, and other important spending priorities in order to meet the new overall reductions required by the sequester.

Furthermore, the appropriation for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs is the only budget with a 302(b) allocation that is higher than pre-sequestration funding levels, whereas funding for Homeland Security, in my opinion, is unacceptably low in some areas, and the bill is encumbered by very, very troublesome riders, and I would urge the Members of the House to look carefully at those riders.

Consequently, the 302(b) allocation would provide a 22 percent reduction to the pre-sequestration budget for health care, education, and labor programs. In my opinion, that's just plain outrageous.

Republicans are again asking—I'm fond of saying in the Rules Committee that when I was 11 and 12 years old, my favorite radio program that my grandmother would let me listen to on Saturdays was a program called ''Let's Pretend.'' Little did I know 65 years later that I would be in an august body that is also in and of itself sitting around with people pretending that things are happening that are not happening.

Republicans are asking us to pretend that the Ryan budget is law, when in fact it is not. This unilateral action is a formula for conflict, and I predict for you that that's what we'll have. While I appreciate the spirit of bipartisanship, and those gentlemen who came yesterday, Mr. PRICE and Mr. BISHOP, the ranking members, and Judge CARTER and his counterpart did an exceptional job, as did JOHN CULBERSON, in showing this body that there can be bipartisan efforts. They did so, and I would hope that would serve for the rest of appropriations and for this body to take notice that people can work together when they try. And that bipartisanship led to the funding levels contained in both of these bills that we are considering under this rule. It is regrettable that it was not extended to the entire process.

Simply put, the framework within which we are considering these bills—the Ryan budget that House Republicans have deemed as passed—is a nonstarter.

Administration folks said yesterday that unless this bill passes the Congress in the context of an overall budget framework that supports our recovery and enables sufficient investments in education, infrastructure—and a footnote right there: Do we need to be reminded about the bridge that fell in the State of Washington, about the number of bridges in this Nation that are in disrepair and have been in disrepair? When Bill Clinton became President, he advocated that there were 14,000 bridges in need of repair, and he asked for a little bit of money that we should have allocated then. Now we have thousands of bridges in disrepair, and we are going about a process like this ignoring them.

Where do we get the innovation at NIH for the health needs that are coming and the technological needs that are coming? How do we protect national security for our economy to be able to compete in the future?

The President's senior advisers indicated that they would recommend to the President that he veto H.R. 2216 and H.R. 2217, and any other legislation that implements the House deemed budget framework. As I've said time and again, this is no way to run a budget process, and no way to conduct the business of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind everyone that we're talking about a rule here. And this rule, different from those that were proposed in the Congresses before I got here, in the 111th Congress, is an open rule. It allows for amendments. If there are those who do not like what's in these bills, they can do everything that they need to do in an amendment and get 218 votes and pass it, and it'll change. If this bill needs perfecting, either one of these bills need perfecting, they can be perfected.

I believe that is as close to regular order as we can get. If we can come down to this floor, offer an amendment, get an opportunity to debate that amendment, have our say, hopefully get the votes to pass it, change the bill, that's the way this process should work.

This rule provides for that. It provides for two very well-thought-out appropriation bills, which may have flaws. But if there are flaws, whether you're a Republican or Democrat, come on down. Once we pass this rule, we'll be taking those bills up one at a time. And any amendment, as long as it's within the germaneness rules of this House, can be offered. We would welcome that. I think both sides would welcome that.

That's why when both of these bills came out of committee, there were glowing reports, both from the minority report and from the majority report. They are well-thought-out bills. They are well-done bills. They are bipartisan. They're done in an open and collaborative way, in an open, real, and regular order process. So for those reasons, I think this is a great rule because it sets forward the opportunity of people on this floor, no matter who they are, from a freshman to a senior Member, from Republican to Democrat, from moderate, liberal, and conservative, no matter who they are, to offer amendments to these bills, both of them. And if they get a majority vote, they can pass them. So I think that to me is an open process. That's also regular order.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my colleague began by saying that's as close to regular order as we can get. I would tell him, close, but no cigar.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to yield 2½ minutes to my very good friend from New York, Mrs. LOWEY, who has been on the Appropriations Committee at times when we didn't deem things and we did, in fact, pass appropriations measures.

□ 1320

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule, which would deem the discretionary spending levels in the Ryan budget as law.

The Ryan budget endorses sequestration, is unrealistic, unworkable, economically misguided. The Senate and the White House are using a different set of numbers.

By adopting the rule and the Ryan budget and breaking caps in the Budget Control Act which passed this body, we guarantee gridlock. The House majority will pass a small number of bills at roughly the President's requested levels, but will be unable to get bipartisan support for the remaining bills.

It would also jeopardize our economic recovery. Europeans are experiencing the limits of austerity in the midst of a fragile recovery. We should invest more in education, biomedical research, transportation infrastructure, clean energy and other initiatives that grow our economy and create jobs. Instead, the deeming resolution would take a step back, all but ensuring significant reductions.

To turn off the sequester, ensure the House's relevance in the process, and pass reasonable bills, Democrats offered in committee a motion to postpone consideration of subcommittee allocations until a budget resolution could be conferenced.

And I do want to say this, and I would like to say this to my friend, the distinguished Chair on the other side of the House, there has been a call for a budget resolution on the Senate. They did a budget resolution on the Senate that has been requested by my good friends on the other side of the aisle. That budget resolution passed.

However, I know the ranking member of the House Budget Committee, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, has called for a conference, went to the Rules Committee five times and said, Let's have a conference so we can move forward. That was denied.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. LOWEY. So, my colleagues, with a balanced deficit reduction plan, we could establish an alternative allocation that would sufficiently fund our priorities and allow us to follow regular order for the appropriations process.

Instead of my friends engaging today in a futile process—it's just a futile exercise—the House should abide by the discretionary caps in the Budget Control Act. Turn off the sequester before we consider spending bills.

My friends, vote ''no'' on the rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mrs. LOWEY, just before you leave, you have just an additional few seconds. Will the gentlelady yield to me?

Mrs. LOWEY. I would be delighted to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I just want to say, in addition to the fact that CHRIS VAN HOLLEN came to the Rules Committee five times, HARRY REID has offered eight times to go to conference and Republicans have blocked it. And I just want that to be understood, because later on we're going to hear somebody stand up here and say it's Democrats that are holding it up, and it's not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Mrs. LOWEY. I just want to make a point to my friend on the other side of the aisle: the bill before us today is a bipartisan bill. There was strong support on both sides of the aisle. The chair and the ranking member worked together in a collegial way because this bill is so important for our country.

The problem here is, after this bill and Homeland Security, there's nothing left. Education, National Institutes of Health are in a bill that's going to be cut 22 percent.

So, my friend, the issue is not these bills today; it's the process and the fact there isn't a complete plan in place.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I've been in this process a long time, not necessarily here, but in other venues, and what I have found is what's before you is before you, and what comes later may or may not come later.

But I would say this to the gentlelady, that what we have here are two bills that are bipartisan bills, and they have a great deal of input from both sides. They came out of committee with a strong vote, with both Republicans and Democrats.

And so my thought is: here we are. We're here. We're addressing this particular issue. Now, when these other bills come to the floor of the House, before they get here they're going to pass through the Rules Committee, too, these appropriation bills. I will do everything I can to make them open, also, so that anybody that wants to amend them or perfect them has the opportunity.

I believe in an open process. I believe that Members, no matter how long it takes, should have the opportunity to say their piece. And no matter what your philosophy is, no matter what your party is, no matter what your position is, no matter what your rank is, if you're 435th it doesn't really matter, you should have an opportunity to present your case.

And so, these are these two bills. We have talked about the fact that we're

going to have an open process here, and people want to perfect these bills; then great, offer an amendment. When the other appropriation bills come, that'll be the time to talk about them. But when they do, just know this: I'm going to be one that is going to be pressing hard to have open rules for them, also.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'm very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my very good friend, the minority whip of the House of Representatives.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend.

Mr. Speaker, what's before us is before us. What's before us is a rule, not the MilCon bill, not Homeland Security.

What's before us is the bill. And what does the bill do?

It doesn't have an open process. It doesn't allow us an amendment. Mr. VAN HOLLEN wanted to have an amendment and say let's go to conference on the budget; let's decide what these numbers ought to be. No, it's our way or the highway.

You've passed a budget. You're going to stick with those numbers. They won't work. You know they won't work. That's why you don't go to conference, because Mr. RYAN knows he couldn't make a deal that he could bring back to this House and your side would vote for, I tell my friend on the Rules Committee.

So what's before us is before us, a ratification of sequester, which starts with ''S,'' which stands for ''stupid.'' It is a terrible process. It is an irrational, commonsense-defying process.

And yet my Republican friends continue to demand that we mark to figures that were contrary to the understanding, agreement—deal, if you want—that we made.

In August of 2011, we made a deal and we said these are going to be the numbers, and the ink was not dry on the paper until such time as you violated that agreement. And the Ryan budget violates it once again and is $91 billion, almost 9 percent, less than the deal we made.

What's before us is before us, the gentleman says. What's before us is the rule to ratify the sequester.

Now, your side blames the President for it. The President doesn't want the sequester. We don't want the sequester. Mr. VAN HOLLEN, who's sitting here, doesn't want the sequester, and he's tried to offer amendments to obviate the sequester and hasn't been allowed to have those amendments on the floor, I tell my friend on the Rules Committee.

And I congratulate him for his position, but he ought to allow the Van Hollen amendment so the House can, in fact, work its will, so that we can, in fact, have a process that will work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. HOYER. Now, my friend says he's been here for some time and he's participated in another legislative body. Well, I've been here for a long time myself, as the gentleman knows, some 33 years, and 12 years in the Maryland Senate, President of the Senate for the last 4 I was there. So I've been around for some years myself.

The fact is, I will tell the gentleman, there is no possibility you're going to consider all 12 bills because, as the gentlelady said, you're going to run out of money. Why? Because you're front-loading that which you like, and that which you're not too happy about is going to be not only breaking the agreement we made, but far below your own budget numbers because you didn't want to mark to your 966 with this bill.

□ 1330

Why? Because you want to make sure the veterans were taken care of. God bless you. I agree with that. But there's only X number of dollars in that pot, and somebody's going to lose.

What the President is saying is let's consider them all together. That's what we ought to be doing. Reject this bill, reject this sequester, reject this deeming resolution, and let us have a rule that makes common sense for our country.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I will reiterate the fact that it is what is before us. We cannot get to these two bipartisan, well-thought-out, well-debated, well-collaborated pieces of legislation which deal with some issues that are very, very important without passing a rule to allow us to do that. That's what this rule does. It deals with those two bills. No, those two bills aren't before us, but this rule is the gateway to get to those bills. How are we going to get there? We're going to pass this rule. Once we get there, what are we going to do? We're going to have an open process—one that has been foreign until the Republicans took control of this legislature—foreign, no matter what your standing in this body was.

There were closed bills after closed bills after closed bills after closed bills that came up. Was there an opportunity to amend it, to perfect it, to do anything with it? Absolutely not. But that's not the way it is now. If we pass this rule, we're going to get to a process that allows every Member to come down to this floor and offer an amendment, debate that amendment, and have the possibility of passing that amendment.

So, yes, there are other issues, there are other appropriations, there are other bills that will be coming to this floor at some point in time. And at that time we can debate them. But right now, this is the issue before us. These two very important bills—and very much agreed-on bills—are only going to be taken up on this floor if this rule passes.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. May I inquire how much time is remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) has 13½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) has 19 minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased and privileged at this time to yield 3 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. I rise in strong opposition to this rule, which aims to approve the House majority's inadequate appropriations allocation level for 2014, a level that is over $90 billion below that of the Senate and the President and violates the agreement that we all voted on a year ago, Democrats and Republicans, in the Budget Control Act to increase that funding above the number that they present to us today.

The budget reflects our values, reflects our priorities, and our responsibilities to the people that we represent. It is our job to make sure that that is the case. And yet for the third time in 3 years, this House majority has put forward a reckless and ideological funding level that ensures that our government cannot even meet its most basic responsibilities to the American people.

Under this House majority's plan, we will see cuts that are deeper than the indiscriminate across-the-board cuts. The funding for the Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services is drastically cut. And this rule accepts those cuts made to the program this year and then it multiplies that by four in 2014. What are those cuts? Where do they fall? And if enacted, the wrong choices will cause incalculable damage. They severely weaken these critical programs that protect public health and safety, that promote and develop our workforce, training programs, education, Pell Grants, Meals on Wheels, special education, and biomedical research so that people can live. It affects our seniors, our veterans, our middle class, and our most vulnerable families.

I, along with Congressman VAN HOLLEN and others, have offered legislation that cuts $30 billion from the Federal deficit and replaces the deep and indiscriminate cuts for the next 2 years with a more balanced and a targeted approach. That's the direction we should be moving in—keeping up with our fundamental responsibilities to the families who have elected us to stand up for them.

Rather than going down this path, the House majority should appoint budget conferees and do its job and negotiate with the Senate. Our appropriations chairman claims to want to undo sequestration. Yet rather than showing leadership, the House majority fails to address the sequester and create conditions for another budget crisis down the road.

We hear so much talk from this majority about regular order. What does that mean? The House passes a bill, the Senate passes bill, they work out their differences, they get it to the President, and the President signs the bill. Well, Mr. Speaker, where is the regular order? It is autocracy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. DELAURO. No more games. I urge all of my colleagues to vote against this disastrous funding level. Let's work together to fix the sequester and get us back on the path to economic growth. This is our top priority. It must be our top priority. And this House of Representatives needs to show the American people that it can lead.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to reiterate again the benefits of these two bills that we're going to be debating if we pass this rule. They provide critical funding for military construction, housing, schools, and medical facilities for our servicemembers and their families, as well as important veterans programs. They protect security for our airports, seaports, and national border, as well as disaster relief efforts. They also reduce duplication, improve oversight, encourage efficiency, and increase coordination of services.

If there were one provision in a bill that would push you over the edge of voting for or against something, it would be the idea of getting rid of this old paperwork. I've had someone come and tell me that they had gotten a tetanus shot, I think, about 3 weeks before they got out of the service. Once they got out, they went to the VA and they forgot to take the record with them. So they had no proof. They went to the VA and they said, You're going to have to get a tetanus shot. He says, Wait a minute, I've already gotten one. You don't have that record? No. And if you don't have it with you, we don't know. Because you can tell us you had one 3 months ago, but that doesn't matter.

We need to do it. This one bill gets rid of that process and says we're going to move towards a modern system of electronically transferring these records. There's so many good things in these two bills; it's just pretext for the fact that this rule needs to be approved.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. If we defeat the previous question, we'll offer an amendment to the rule that strikes the provision of the rule that deems the passage of the Ryan budget and will allow the House to consider the resolution calling on Speaker BOEHNER to proceed to conference on the budget.

It is time for the majority to follow regular House procedure by immediately requesting a conference and appointing conferees to negotiate a fiscal 2014 budget resolution conference agreement with the Senate.

To discuss our proposal, I'm very pleased to yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my friend, Mr. HASTINGS.

I've been listening to Mr. WEBSTER. And if I were Mr. WEBSTER, I'd be doing exactly what he's doing, which is focusing on the underlying bills: the spending bill to support our veterans, to support military construction, and homeland security.

□ 1340

But as others have pointed out, the vote before us is not on those underlying bills. It's on the rule. And everybody needs to understand that what's at play here is a scheme to use the rules to affect not just the veterans budget, but to affect other parts of our budget.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I find it especially cynical that our colleagues would use the spending bills on veterans and military construction as the vehicle to pass their budget levels which will result in dramatic cuts to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that fund the investments in science and research to find cures and treatments to things like cancer, because we know the Appropriations Committee has already set out what the levels for those categories to the budget will be. And do you know what they are? A $30 billion cut below the sequester level to the parts of the budget that fund our kids' education and that fund that scientific research.

So, yes, this is the rule for two particular bills. They are good bills. The veterans bill is a good bill. But the rule, ladies and gentlemen, has embedded in it the Republican budget levels for the overall budget process. And that's going to hurt education for the kids of those veterans and the family members of those veterans who have diseases whose funding for research is going to be dramatically cut. A 20 percent cut below the sequester level, that's what you're adopting in this rule, a 20 percent cut for the category of the budget on education.

Now, why are we here? We're supposed to have a budget process. The House passed a budget. I don't like the budget, but it passed a budget. The Senate passed a budget. Under the rules of the Congress, in fact, as a matter of law, the House and Senate are supposed to have completed a conference committee by April 15. That was quite a while ago. In fact, it's been over 70 days since the Senate passed a budget and the House passed a budget.

Now, we don't have a House-Senate conference committee report. Why might that be? Well, it turns out that the Speaker of the House has refused to appoint conferees to work with the Senate to come up with a budget. Now, our Republican colleagues beat up for years on the Senate for not having a budget. I can understand that complaint. But the Senate has a budget now, and yet our Republican colleagues refuse to go to conference.

You made a big deal about ''no budget, no pay.'' Guess what? We don't have a budget. We have a House budget and we have a Senate budget, but we don't have a Federal budget, and yet everybody is getting paid. What happened to that?

Now, why would we not want to go to conference? Mr. Speaker, just today in the United States Senate, PATTY MURRAY, the chairwoman for the Budget Committee, for the 11th time tried to get consent to go to conference to work these differences out in a transparent way, blocked by a Republican Senator.

Here is what Senator MCCAIN has had to say about the whole process, because I would urge our colleagues to listen to him. This is a quote from Senator MCCAIN:

> I think it's insane for Republicans who complained for 4 years about HARRY REID not having a budget and now we're not going to agree to conference? That is beyond comprehension for me.

And I think it's beyond comprehension for the American people. Why are you sitting on the budget?

So what are we doing in this rule? This rule says let's pretend. Let's make believe that the House and Senate went to conference, and let's pretend that they agree, except let's pretend that they agreed on the House budget numbers, the numbers that would cut the part of the budget that deals with our kids' education by over 20 percent. Let's pretend that because we don't want to go through the normal process. That's what this rule does. It's a total fake. And it's a fake because of the refusal to work these issues out in a transparent manner for the American people.

So, the previous question is a very simple statement. It just says let's comply with the law which says a conference committee was supposed to have met and completed action by April 15; let's at least start down the process of complying with the law. It says that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Speaker should follow regular House procedure and immediately request a conference and appoint conferees to negotiate a fiscal year 2014 budget resolution so we can have a real Federal budget, not a fake budget, which is what you're calling for in this rule under the guise of saying let's just fund our veterans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. As I said, Mr. Speaker, I find it especially cynical that we would use a good bill to provide spending and support to our veterans as the vehicle to impose this scheme on the Congress which will have terrible, negative effects on other parts of the budget.

Do you know that while this Congress was away, I don't know if people

saw it, but down in Fort Bragg, the home of the 82nd Airborne, they just said that teachers who were going to teach the kids of our servicemen and -women are going to be furloughed for 5 days this fall—for 5 days this fall. So we want to replace the sequester. Let's go to conference and get it done.

I urge my colleagues who said they want a transparent process to vote for our measure.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes of my time to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Florida for yielding me the time.

I hadn't anticipated coming down here today, Mr. Speaker. I came down to listen, but I hadn't anticipated coming down to speak. And I will say to my friend from Maryland his words struck me, because twice in his presentation he said, you know, I think it's especially cynical that we're using this process to bring forward two bills that in a bipartisan way we agree on.

I would say to my friend with a heavy heart, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's especially cynical, since we both know these bills need to be passed, to describe what is happening here in any terms other than that which is exactly necessary in order to get these bills passed.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. Let me get this off my chest, and I'd be happy to yield to my friend. I would be happy to yield when I'm done, because I have a copy of the rule here.

And the gentleman was in the Rules Committee last night, and the gentleman knows this is what section 3 provides, that pending the adoption of a concurrent resolution on the budget, we're going to move forward, pending the adoption.

Now, my friend knows, Mr. Speaker, how hard it is to find that agreement. And the reason my friend knows is because I voted for the Budget Control Act in August of 2011, which put my friend and five other Members of the House, it was six House Members, six Senate Members, six Republicans, six Democrats, it put them in a room together for August, September, October, and November with the entire Federal budget over the next 100 years in front of them, allowing them to choose anything they wanted to to agree on to let us move forward as a nation.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Collectively they agreed on not one dollar. I don't fault my friend for that. I know my friend was working as hard as my friend could possibly work to find agreement. But finding agreement is hard. What we're talking about finding agreement with, Mr. Speaker, this comes from The Washington Post editorial page. It's entitled, ''The Democrats' complacent budget plan.'' It says:

> Partisan in tone and complacent in substance, the budget scores points against the Republicans and reassures the party's liberal base but deepens these Senators' commitment to an unsustainable policy agenda.

This is what it is that we're trying to find agreement on. Now, my friend from Maryland knows, in fact, he may have even brought it to my attention yesterday, a letter directing the chairman of the Rules Committee, on which I sit, Mr. Speaker, from the chairman of the Budget Committee, also on which I sit, that's signed by Chairman PAUL RYAN. It says this, over PAUL RYAN's signature:

> I want to emphasize that this is a request for an interim measure while the Committee on the Budget continues to work towards an agreement with the Senate on a budget resolution for the coming fiscal year.

And I would, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my friend from Maryland, does he doubt the chairman's word when the chairman says this is an interim solution until we find agreement?

I'd be happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. My colleague, what I know are the facts, which is just today, as I said on the floor, the chairwoman of the Senate Budget Committee, for the 11th time, said to Mr. RYAN, Let's go to conference so we can work out these differences in a public way. And she was blocked over here just like we've been blocked over here.

Mr. WOODALL. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman knows that Chairman RYAN has no control over the inside workings of the United States Senate, and Chairman RYAN did not block what was going on in the United States Senate. The United States Senators were blocking it.

I would ask the gentleman again: Does the gentleman doubt the chairman's word? I understand that the gentleman is frustrated about process, and goodness knows, as someone who supports open rules, I'm frustrated with process, too. We have that in common. But notwithstanding that process, what I have here is a letter from a man which you and I both support—and ''support,'' I mean we believe in his integrity. And he tells us that he is working towards a solution and that what we're doing here today is just an interim step to get these bills that we all agree are so very important, we all agree are so very important, the interim step to get these moving down the process.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. I would yield to ask the gentleman does he disagree with the commitment made by the chairman? And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I'm not questioning the integrity of the chairman of the Budget Committee.

This is not just about process. As I indicated, you adopt this rule and you're essentially applying a 20 percent cut below sequester to the part of the budget that deals with our kids' education and science and research. So this is way beyond process.

□ 1350

So this is way beyond process.

Mr. WOODALL. Reclaiming my time, I would say to the gentleman that's just not the case.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. That is the case. The gentleman should go read the Appropriations Committee 302(b) allocations.

Mr. WOODALL. I'm aware of the Appropriations Committee 302(b) allocations. And what I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to have those allocations to begin the process. The gentleman is talking about where we are going to finish the process on October 1. I'm trying to get it started today. The gentleman knows that we can't get started.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Why are those levels at the levels they are? Would the gentleman answer that question?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

I want to quote what one of my Democratic colleagues quoted last night in the Rules Committee, and that's Federalist Paper No. 58, written by James Madison for the Independent Journal back on February 20, 1788. And he said this:

> This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure.

Because that's the constitutional responsibility of this body, Mr. Speaker, to appropriate these dollars. This process of appropriations, this constitutional responsibility, cannot begin until we have some numbers against which to budget and appropriate.

What my chairman on the Budget Committee has asked is that as an interim step, and an interim step only, we adopt these numbers today on bills about which we all agree. What is cynical, Mr. Speaker, is that these are things on which we all agree, and we're using this as a position to talk about other issues about which we disagree.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield, because we don't agree on cutting the kids' education budget?

Mr. WOODALL. As my friend knows from his time having to negotiate on the joint select, what we'll call the supercommittee, my friends at The Washington Post go on to say:

> In short, this document—

Talking about the budget passed by the Senate.

> —gives voters no reason to believe that Democrats have a viable plan for—or even a responsible public assessment of—the country's long-term fiscal predicament.

Now, I will say, Mr. Speaker, that gives me great concern about whether

we will be able to reach agreement with the Senate. As my friend from Maryland knows, Mr. Speaker, the House budget reduces spending by trillions of dollars and the Senate budget increases spending even more. In many years, it spends more than even the President requested.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. As my friend from Maryland knows, we keep tax revenues the same and the Senate increases taxes by almost $1 trillion.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I just want to know why you're afraid to go to conference. Why is that? That's what this is about.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Georgia has again expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my very good friend from California, Ms. BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Let me just say, first, as a member of both the Appropriations and the Budget Committees, I rise in strong opposition to this rule. The allocations provided under this rule will savage vital programs that protect the public health and safety, promote and develop our workforce, and educate the next generation of Americans.

Sequester cuts are already hitting low-income families throughout our country and also in my congressional district in my home State of California. And every single household in America, especially the millions of Americans who are struggling still to find a job, these cuts are hitting them disproportionately.

Our economy cannot afford these cuts. Hungry children do not deserve these cuts. Students who depend on Pell Grants, TRIO, and Head Start do not deserve these cuts. And certainly, our seniors and our veterans do not deserve these cuts.

The Military Construction-Veterans bill on the floor this week assumes the sequester cuts have been replaced. Why in the world can't we do this for the other bills as well? We all know that the allocation for the rest of the subcommittees will make it nearly impossible to fund education, senior programs, infrastructure, and job creation. While all of us believe it is important to keep the government functioning, governing by a continuing resolution is really no way to run the Federal Government, and that is exactly what course we are on unless we come to some agreement.

The majority claims that they care about the middle class and the poor, yet these cuts really do begin to erode the middle class and force more people into poverty. So it's time for Congress to reject these draconian cuts and replace the sequester with a bipartisan agreement on the budget resolution to create jobs and to lift the economy for all.

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. We need to vote ''no'' on the rule, and we need to go back to the drawing board.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, that last discussion was worth paying the price to come here. But I would like to say this, to bring it back to where we are, and that is:

We have before us a rule. This rule is going to be the gateway—the gateway—to an open process. That open process, when it opens up, is beautiful to behold. We have two bills that will be heard. Both of those bills are going to be able to be amended by any Member that would like to do it. And to me, that is what I have searched for, and I think it's a great thing.

We have the opportunity to come to this floor, agree or disagree, but in the end we will produce a product that was put together by a bipartisan group of members of two different committees of the Appropriations Committee. And it went through the regular process. Bringing it to the floor with an open rule is the regular process. That is why I'm supporting this rule, because the rule gives the gateway to us doing those bills.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my colleague that I have no further speakers, and I'm prepared to close. So I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to ask the question at the beginning that Mr. VAN HOLLEN has persisted in asking, and I as well and others: Why are you afraid to go to conference? I have no idea why you can't do that and follow the regular order.

I agree with my colleague that this bipartisan measure is a very good thing that we are bringing here, but I also agree with other speakers that when we finish doing these two bills—and I predict for my friend that we will not reach a single other measure of appropriations for the reason that if you're going to cut 22 percent from everything else and you're going to hold harmless the things that you and I like, then be assured we are in serious trouble as the appropriations process moves forward.

We have a responsibility to implement a budget framework that supports programs which help Americans provide for their families, to stay in their homes, and remain competitive in the global economy. The Ryan budget picks winners and losers, and we are picking two winners today, and we are going to have 11 losers on down the road.

''Deem and pass'' did not work the last Congress, it didn't work when Democrats thought that they could try it, and it ain't gonna work now. It is long past time that House Republicans work together with Democrats in conference, just as these two committees did, to negotiate a budget and put an end to the devastating sequester.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question. I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule, and I'm prepared to yield back the balance of my time after I ask the question one more time: Why are you afraid to go to conference?

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1400

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit two letters into the RECORD.

The first letter is from the Budget Committee chairman, PAUL RYAN. In his letter, Chairman RYAN asks the Rules Committee to follow standard practice by addressing budget enforcement pending a conference report on the budget resolution. To prevent greater uncertainty and further delays in the appropriations process, House Resolution 243 will include a provision and does include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution, H. Con. Res. 25, as an interim budget enforcement measure until an agreement may be reached with the Senate on the budget resolution for the coming fiscal year.

I would like to read an excerpt from that letter. This is from Chairman RYAN to Chairman SESSIONS, who is the Rules Committee chairman:

> As you know, the budget passed by the House reduces spending by $4.6 trillion and achieves balance in 2023—all without raising taxes on the American people. In contrast, the budget resolution adopted by the Senate raises taxes by over $900 billion, increases spending by $265 billion and never balances. While I continue to work with my Senate counterpart to find common ground, we have not yet been able to reach agreement.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Let me finish this first.

Another part of that reads:

> Until such time as we are able to reach agreement and consistent with the practice in previous years when the House and Senate have been delayed in completing action on a budget resolution, I am asking that the rule include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution as an interim budget enforcement measure that will allow the appropriations process to proceed without further delay.

The second letter is just a response from Representative SESSIONS, who is the chair of the Rules Committee, acknowledging that the rule would include the requested interim budget enforcement measure.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I just have a simple question, which is: How is it that we are going to get agreement from the House and the Senate in a conference

committee if the Speaker of the House continues to refuse to go to conference? How are we going to get that agreement?

The reason we don't have a conference committee budget report and you have to use this device is that there is no conference, and the reason there is no conference is that our Republican colleagues in the House refuse to appoint conferees, which is why we want to pass this amendment and let the Members vote on whether or not we go to conference.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I reclaim my time and will not yield any more time after this.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am not involved in that process. However, I can tell you this: I was a speaker at one point in time in a different body and at a different time in my career. Even if a conference committee has not been formed, there are discussions that go on. Then, eventually, there will be a conference committee, and things work out, but it doesn't necessarily mean that nothing is happening. I think things are happening. I think they are working on solutions. We have to have a solution at some point in time, and that's happening.

This resolution provides for an open rule to allow all Members to offer their ideas and to debate them through regular order. Two underlying bills fund necessary programs that train, equip, house, and support the brave men and women who sacrificially defend our freedoms, and the bills also support their families. Our debt of gratitude to these individuals does not expire when they retire, as the legislation also funds important programs to provide benefits and medical care for our veterans. Additionally, the legislation equips our Coast Guard and supports the individuals who guard our borders, secure our airports and seaports, and who respond to natural disasters.

However, we would be doing a great disservice, Mr. Speaker, to future generations if we were to fail to consider the effect our current spending will have on the future fiscal health and safety our Nation. For that reason, these bills reduce costs, require the coordination of medical care and ensure the efficient operation of those critical programs so that we may continue to support those who protect us.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this rule and in the passage of the underlying bills.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, May 31, 2013.

Hon. PETE SESSIONS,
Chairman, Committee on Rules,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Yesterday you announced that the Committee on Rules will meet on June 3 to report a rule to govern the floor consideration of the first appropriations bills for fiscal year 2014. I am writing to ask that you include in that rule a provision providing for the enforcement of the concurrent resolution on the budget as passed by the House (H. Con. Res. 25) until such time as the House adopts a conference report on the budget for fiscal year 2014.

As you know, the budget passed by the House reduces spending by $4.6 trillion and achieves balance in 2023—all without raising taxes on the American people. In contrast, the budget resolution adopted by the Senate raises taxes by over $900 billion, increases spending by $265 billion, and never balances. While I continue to work with my Senate counterpart to find common ground, we have not yet been able to reach agreement.

Until such time as we are able to reach agreement and consistent with the practice in previous years when the House and Senate have been delayed in completing action on a budget resolution, I am asking that the rule include a provision that adopts the House-passed budget resolution as an interim budget enforcement measure that will allow the appropriations process to proceed without further delay.

Pursuant to the authority provided in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and in title VI of the House-passed concurrent resolution on the budget and consistent with longstanding practice, once the House passes the rule adopting the House-passed budget resolution, as the Budget Committee Chairman I intend to file the allocations and adjustments in the Congressional Record to put in force such concurrent resolution.

To ensure the Rules Committee and House members have full transparency on the budget levels that would be enforced, enclosed are the relevant budget aggregates and committee allocations that I will file if the House adopts the rule. The House-passed budget resolution was based on CBO February budget projections and estimates. The funding levels for global war on terror (GWOT)/overseas contingency operations (OCO) and for veterans programs were based on an extrapolation of the President's budget request from last year. Because the House acted on the budget resolution before CBO had completed its updated budget projections and before the President had submitted his fiscal year 2014 budget request, the resolution provided authority for the Chairman to adjust the relevant levels in the resolution to reflect CBO's updated budget projections and the President's request for GWOT/OCO and veterans advance appropriations. The adjustments for CBO's updated baseline will be limited to changes due to updated technical estimates. Now that we have CBO's revised baseline projections and the President's budget request, it is possible to update the levels in the House-passed budget resolution to reflect this updated information. Enclosed are tables showing aggregate budget and committee allocations that will be used for budget enforcement purposes.

I want to emphasize that this is a request for an interim measure while the Committee on the Budget continues to work toward an agreement with the Senate on a budget resolution for the coming fiscal year. The nation's fiscal problems cannot be addressed solely through the appropriations process and the budget remains the critical vehicle for identifying a solution.

To ensure full transparency as to my intent should this request be granted, I ask that you include this letter and the enclosures in the Rules Committee's record of consideration of the rule. I appreciate your consideration. If there are any questions, please contact Paul Restuccia, Chief Counsel of the Committee on the Budget.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,
Chairman.

Enclosures.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
ID Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Global War on Terrorism:	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,059,213
OT	1,165,685
Current Law Mandatory:	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Agriculture:		
Current Law:		
BA	92,956	906,903
OT	89,341	900,800
Resolution Change:		
BA	−2,631	−209,044
4OT	−2,501	−208,556
Total:		
BA	86,840	692,244
Armed Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
4BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Financial Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	12,981	114,942
OT	2,112	−57,397
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,465	−94,439
OT	−10,428	−94,325
Total:		
BA	1,516	20,503
OT	−8,316	−151,722
Education & Workforce:		
Current Law:		
BA	−25,740	−661
OT	−18,800	2,383
Resolution Change:		
BA	−21,712	−217,458
BA	−7,430	−198,921
Total:		
BA	−47,452	−218,119
OT	−26,230	−196,538
Energy & Commerce:		
Current Law:		
BA	356,892	4,936,804
BA	356,892	4,936,804
OT	354,784	4,935,838
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,996	−1,604,166
OT	−20,659	−1,596,356
Total:		
BA	333,896	3,332,638
OT	334,125	3,339,482
Foreign Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Oversight & Government Reform:		
Current Law:		
BA	102,657	1,199,434
OT	99,645	1,170,525
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,758	−165,996
OT	−11,758	−165,996
Total:		
BA	90,899	1,033,438
OT	87,887	1,004,529
Homeland Security:		
Current Law:		
BA	1,916	22,255
OT	1,779	22,321
Resolution Change:		
BA	−305	−12,575
OT	−305	−12,575
Total:		
BA	1,611	9,680
OT	1,474	9,746
House Administration:		
Current Law:		
BA	40	371
OT	6	206
Resolution Change:		
BA	−34	−295
OT	0	−130
Total:		
BA	6	76
OT	6	76
Natural Resources:		
Current Law:		
BA	6,441	63,590
OT	7,069	66,964
Resolution Change:		
BA	−900	−17,995
OT	−632	−17,225
Total:		
BA	5,541	45,595
OT	6,437	49,739
Judiciary:		
Current Law:		
BA	19,809	102,678
OT	11,573	105,537
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,506	−47,461
OT	−637	−45,809
Total:		
BA	8,303	55,217
OT	10,936	59,728
Transportation & Infrastructure:		
Current Law:		
BA	71,454	728,035
OT	16,822	193,098
Resolution Change:		
BA	−78	−116,444
OT	−47	−951
Total:		
BA	71,376	611,591
OT	16,775	192,147
Sdence, Space & Technology:		
Current Law:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Small Business:		
Current Law:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Veterans Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Ways & Means:		
Current Law:		
BA	963,421	14,458,848

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
OT	962,271	14,455,530
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,567	−1,298,202
OT	−21,667	−1,291,946
Total:		
BA	940,854	13,160,646
OT	940,604	13,163,584

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a General Limit of $28,852,000,000)

Payment to Postal Service

Employment and Training Administration
Education for the Disadvantaged
School Improvement Programs
Special Education
Career, Technical and Adult Education

Tenant-based Rental Assistance
Project-based Rental Assistance

VETERANS ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a Separate Limit of $55,634,227)

VA Medical Services
VA Medical Support and Compliance
VA Medical Facilities

COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 3, 2013.

CHAIRMAN PAUL RYAN,
Committee on the Budget, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RYAN: Thank you for your letter of May 31, 2013. I appreciate your desire and commitment to achieving a final resolution of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 with the Senate. Your leadership on the budget challenges facing the Nation is unmatched.

I agree with you that, pending a conference report on the budget, it is both timely and proper to ensure that we have the necessary budget enforcement mechanisms in place as we begin the annual appropriations process. Despite the fact that the President's Budget was submitted more than two months after the statutory deadline, we must move forward on the annual appropriations process if we have any hope of meeting the deadlines imposed by the end of the fiscal year.

To that end, I intend to recommend to the Committee on Rules that we agree to your request for the inclusion of budget enforcement language in the rule that will be considered by the Committee later today. This will allow you to continue your negotiations with the Senate and allow the House to begin its work on the appropriations bills, which I believe is a responsible approach.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

PETE SESSIONS.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule for H.R. 2216, Military Construction/VA Appropriations act for Fy 2014.

I oppose the rule because it adheres to the draconian spending limits imposed by the Ryan Budget resolution rather than more realistic and responsible limits to be negotiated and agreed to by House and Senate budget conferees.

Indeed, the Republican House leadership has refused for months to appoint conferees empowered to reach a budget agreement that is fair, balanced and would end sequestration.

I agree with President Obama that prior to consideration of appropriations bills the House and Senate should first reach agreement on an appropriate framework for all appropriations bills and one does not harm our economy or require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities.

Without such an agreement, House Republican appropriation bills will result in: hundreds of thousands of low-income children losing access to Head Start programs; tens of thousands of children with disabilities losing federal funding for their special education teachers and aides; thousands of federal agents who will not be able to secure the border, enforce drug laws, combat violent crime or apprehend fugitives; and thousands of scientists without medical grants to conduct research to find new treatments and cures for diseases like breast cancer and Alzheimer's.

As Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, I will continue working with my colleagues across the aisle and in the Senate to ensure that our firefighters and other first responders have the resources needed to keep the American people safe.

But I oppose this rule and urge all Members to join me in voting against it.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 243 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

Strike Section 3, and insert the following new sections:

Sec. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 174) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Speaker should immediately request a conference and appoint conferees to complete work on a fiscal year 2014 budget resolution with the Senate. The first reading of the resolution shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the resolution and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget. After general debate the resolution shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. At the conclusion of consideration of the resolution for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the resolution to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the resolution, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the resolution.

Sec. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of the resolution specified in section 3 of this resolution.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 193, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 186]

YEAS—229

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—193

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Campbell
Deutch
Franks (AZ)
Granger
Honda
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Rangel
Sanchez, Loretta
Slaughter
Watt

□ 1430

Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SINEMA, and Messrs. FOSTER and McGOVERN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. NUNNELEE changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 194, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 187]

YEAS—227

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—194

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Bachus
Campbell
Deutch
Granger
Honda
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Rangel
Sanchez, Loretta
Slaughter
Watt
Woodall

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1437

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 186 and 187. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote Nos. 186 and 187.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2013.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to title VI of House Concurrent Resolution 25 (113th Congress), the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, which was put into effect by House Resolution 243 (113th Congress), I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the aggregates, allocations and other budgetary levels set forth pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, as put into effect by House Resolution 243.

These revisions are provided for bills, joint resolutions, and amendments thereto or conference reports thereon, considered by the House subsequent to this filing, as applicable.

The adjustments made by this communication are pursuant to the terms of the H. Con. Res. 25. They are made in order to take into account new information included in the budget submission by the President for fiscal year 2014 for the following: veterans' programs, Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism, or the 302(a) allocation to the Committee on Appropriations set forth in the report on H. Con. Res. 25, as deemed in force, to conform with section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as adjusted by section 251A of that Act).

The chair of the Committee on the Budget is also permitted to adjust the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate budgetary levels to reflect changes resulting from technical assumptions in the most recent baseline published by the Congressional Budget Office.

The adjustments made by this communication are pursuant to the authority granted in section 603 of H. Con. Res. 25. The adjusted levels also incorporate a technical correction to the committee allocations included in House Report 113–17 to accurately reflect the levels of the budget resolution.

Associated tables are attached. These adjustments are made for the purposes of enforcing titles III and IV of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and other budgetary enforcement provisions.

If there are any questions on these adjustments to the aggregates, allocations, and other budgetary levels in the concurrent resolution on the budget, please contact Paul Restuccia, Chief Counsel of the Budget Committee.

Sincerely,
PAUL D. RYAN of Wisconsin,
Chairman, House Budget Committee.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LEVELS IN HOUSE REPORT 113–17

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Global War on Terrorism	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action	
BA	1,059,213
OT	1,165,685
Current Law Mandatory	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
Agriculture:		
Current Law:		
BA	92,956	906,903
OT	89,341	900,800
Resolution Change:		
BA	−2,631	−209,044
OT	−2,501	−208,556
Total:		
BA	90,325	697,859
OT	86,840	692,244
Armed Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	150,138	1,764,863
OT	149,922	1,768,772
Financial Services:		
Current Law:		
BA	12,981	114,942
OT	2,112	−57,397
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,465	−94,439
OT	−10,428	−94,325
Total:		
BA	1,516	20,503
OT	−8,316	−151,722
Education & Workforce:		
Current Law:		
BA	−25,740	−661
OT	−18,800	2,383
Resolution Change:		
BA	−21,712	−217,458
OT	−7,430	−198,921
Total:		
BA	−47,452	−218,119
OT	−26,230	−196,538
Energy & Commerce:		
Current Law:		
BA	356,892	4,936,804
OT	354,784	4,935,838
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,996	−1,604,166
OT	−20,659	−1,596,356
Total:		
BA	333,896	3,332,638
OT	334,125	3,339,482
Foreign Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	29,118	241,385
OT	26,085	235,012
Oversight & Government Reform:		
Current Law:		
BA	102,657	1,199,434
OT	99,645	1,170,525
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11,758	−165,996
OT	−11,758	−165,996
Total:		
BA	90,899	1,033,438
OT	87,887	1,004,529
Homeland Security:		
Current Law:		
BA	1,916	22,255
OT	1,779	22,321
Resolution Change:		
BA	−305	−12,575
OT	−305	−12,575
Total:		
BA	1,611	9,680
OT	1,474	9,746
House Administration:		
Current Law:		
BA	40	371
OT	6	206
Resolution Change:		
BA	−34	−295
OT	0	−130
Total:		
BA	6	76
OT	6	76
Natural Resources:		
Current Law:		
BA	6,441	63,590

RESOLUTION BY AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE—Continued

(On-budget amounts in millions of dollars)

	2014	2014–2023
OT	7,069	66,964
Resolution Change:		
BA	−900	−17,995
OT	−632	−17,225
Total:		
BA	5,541	45,595
OT	6,437	49,739
Judiciary:		
Current Law:		
BA	19,809	102,678
OT	11,573	105,537
Resolution Change:		
BA	−11 ,506	−47,461
OT	−637	−45,809
Total:		
BA	8,303	55,217
OT	10,936	59,728
Transportation & Infrastructure:		
Current Law:		
BA	71,454	728,035
OT	16,822	193,098
Resolution Change:		
BA	−78	−116,444
OT	−47	−951
Total:		
BA	71,376	611,591
OT	16,775	192,147
Science, Space & Technology:		
Current Law:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	101	1,010
OT	104	1,013
Small Business:		
Current Law:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Veterans Affairs:		
Current Law:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Resolution Change:		
BA	0	0
OT	0	0
Total:		
BA	2,939	93,544
OT	3,098	95,206
Ways & Means:		
Current Law:		
BA	963,421	14,458,848
OT	962,271	14,455,530
Resolution Change:		
BA	−22,567	−1,298,202
OT	−21,667	−1,291,946
Total:		
BA	940,854	13,160,646
OT	940,604	13,163,584

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS

ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a General Limit of $28,852,000,000)

Financial Services and General Government

Payment to Postal Service

Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education

Employment and Training Administration
Education for the Disadvantaged
School Improvement Programs
Special Education
Career, Technical and Adult Education

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development

Tenant-based Rental Assistance
Project-based Rental Assistance

VETERANS ACCOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

(Subject to a Separate Limit of $55,634,227)

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs

VA Medical Services
VA Medical Support and Compliance
VA Medical Facilities

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET RESOLUTION RELATED TO LEGISLATION REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2013.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the aggregate budget levels and committee allocations set forth pursuant to H. Con. Res. 25, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014, as put into effect by H. Res. 243. The revision is for new budget authority and outlays for provisions designated as disaster relief, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, contained in a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security reported by the Committee on Appropriations. A corresponding table is attached.

This revision represents an adjustment for purposes of enforcing sections 302 and 311 of the Budget Act. For the purposes of the Budget Act, these revised allocations are to be considered as allocations included in the levels of the budget resolution, pursuant to section 101 of H. Con. Res. 25 and H. Rept. 113–17, as adjusted.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN of Wisconsin,
Chairman, House Budget Committee.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

(On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars)

	Fiscal year	
	2014	2014–2023
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,755,317	[1]
Outlays	2,810,979	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081
Adjustment for Disaster Designated Spending:		
Budget Authority	5,626	[1]
Outlays	281	[1]
Revenues	0	0
Revised Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	2,760,943	[1]
Outlays	2,811,260	[1]
Revenues	2,310,972	31,089,081

[1] Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2015–2023 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2014
Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	966,924
OT	1,117,675
Adjustment for Disaster Designated Spending:	
BA	5,626
OT	281
Global War on Terrorism:	
BA	92,289
OT	48,010
Total Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,064,839
OT	1,165,966
Current Law Mandatory:	
BA	749,400
OT	738,140

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the following resolution:

S. RES. 160

Whereas the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the memorial observances of the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey be held in the Senate Chamber on Thursday, June 6, 2013, beginning at 2 p.m., and that the Senate attend the same.

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph this memorial observance.

Resolved, That the Sergeant at Arms be directed to make necessary and appropriate arrangements in connection with the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives, transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased, and invite the House of Representatives and the family of the deceased to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

Resolved, That invitations be extended to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, and the members of the Cabinet, the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, the Diplomatic Corps (through the Secretary of State), the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard to attend the memorial observances in the Senate Chamber.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House's requested:

S. Con. Res. 18. Concurrent Resolution providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the United States Senate Chamber for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

□ 1440

PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF THE CATAFALQUE IN THE EXHIBITION HALL OF THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER IN CONNECTION WITH MEMORIAL SERVICES TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER FOR THE HONORABLE FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, LATE A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table Senate Concurrent Resolution 18, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 18

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Architect of the Capitol is authorized and directed to transfer the catafalque which is situated in the Exhibition Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center to the Senate Chamber so that such catafalque may be used in connection with services to be conducted there for the Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg, late a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration and include extraneous material on the consideration of H.R. 2216, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 243 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2216.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1442

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is my privilege, along with my good friend from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), to present to the House for its consideration the 2014 appropriations bill for Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

One of the most important obligations this Congress has is to ensure that our men and women in uniform have everything they need to do their job without worry. We think of ourselves on this subcommittee as the peace-of-mind committee for our military so that they can focus on their missions, standing on the walls of Rome, protecting our freedom, at the far corners of the world.

I think of all the appropriations bills we consider, we're honored to bring this one to the House first because of its importance to our men and women in uniform, to their families, and to our veterans who have served our Nation. We want to be sure, as I say, that they have no worries and that they don't ever have to look over their shoulder and be concerned that the United States Congress and the American people don't support them 110 percent, as we have done in this legislation, which my colleague from Georgia and I have drafted arm-in-arm.

This is a bipartisan bill that we present to the House today to ensure that the military construction needs of the armed services are fully met. We have also done our best to ensure that when our men and women in uniform retire and move into the Veterans Affairs system, they will have the best medical care possible and that this backlog of disability claims that's been plaguing us for a number of years will be cleared as rapidly as possible.

We've done this in a way that's also fiscally responsible. We have found every dollar we could that was left unspent from previous years and returned that to the taxpayers. At the same time, we make sure that our veterans and our men and women in uniform have everything that they need to do their job.

Our committee has also been very committed to ensuring that their families are taken care of and that the Defense Department schools on bases are the best that they can be and in the best condition that they can be in. I know all of us as parents are concerned about the quality of our kids' education. The last thing that a man or woman who's deployed at a United States base overseas—we don't want them to worry about the caliber of the school that their children are attending. So we've also placed emphasis on the ability of our military base commanders to contract with the State in which they're located to set up charter schools at their military bases if the base happens to be located in an area where the local schools can't provide the quality that they need.

We have in this appropriations bill, as I say, fully funded the Department of Veterans Affairs. Some of this money is advance appropriated. So while we've got a total funding level in this bill for 2014 of $73.3 billion, that's

$1.4 billion more than last year. We provide an additional $2.1 billion more than last year for the Department of Veterans Affairs. But of that increase, $1.9 billion was provided as an advance appropriation from previous years.

The Congress began several years ago to appropriate funding in advance for our Veterans Affairs Department to ensure that because of the uncertainty and the unpredictability of the appropriations cycle, again, we want our men and women in uniform and our veterans to have absolute peace of mind and no worries as they serve our country or as they move into retirement in the veterans hospital system, so we advance appropriate some of this money.

Any reductions that we made in this bill, again, were done to make sure that we're doing our part to control spending at a time of record debt and deficit, which is at the top of our minds. As fiscal conservatives, we want to ensure that we have done everything in our power to reduce the debt and to reduce the burden that is passed on to our children and grandchildren.

So we have not provided funding in the bill for 10 military construction projects that the committee believed it lacked sufficient justification for. And we funded only what the Department of Defense expects to spend in fiscal year 2014 for six military construction projects. We've also reduced the funding available for the Contingency Construction account, which has not even been used since fiscal year 2008. Our marvelous staff did a good job in identifying $659 million in unobligated balances from previous years for construction projects that have been left unspent, and we're able to return that to taxpayers.

We have also reduced the Department of Veterans Affairs request for funding in a program where they substantially overestimated their projections. The scope of this committee's jurisdiction also includes military memorials and cemeteries. We've made sure those are fully funded and that our memorials and cemeteries here in the United States and around the world are going to be well tended and that veterans, no matter where they may be in the United States, will be able to get the health care and benefits that they have earned by their service to this country.

□ 1450

We did everything we could in this bill to ensure that our men and women in uniform are taken care of and that our veterans are taken care of, but we are very concerned about the backlog in the disability claims that the VA has accumulated. The VA has promised us that they would have the backlog cleared up by the year 2015, so the bill contains very strong language that holds the VA to account ensuring that they will give the committee and the Congress detailed accounts and reports to ensure that they stay on target. Mr. KINGSTON of Georgia is going to offer an amendment later, which I intend to accept, to help ensure that the VA holds themselves to the standard that they have set for themselves to reduce the backlog.

And then, finally, Madam Chairman, I want to mention something that we are particularly exercised about. Our committee chairman, HAL ROGERS from Kentucky, has told us a story that I have never forgotten of a young man who I believe was wounded in Afghanistan—Iraq, who lost one eye, lost eyesight in one eye. When he left the service to go into the VA system, in order to save his remaining eye, he had to have medical records that could be read by the VA doctors. And because of bureaucratic inefficiency and pure idiocy, we've got a completely separate set of medical records in the DOD and the Veterans Administration. And for years, taxpayers have spent upwards of a billion dollars or more over the last 10 years to get the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs operating in a single, using a single unified medical record so that when a young man like this moves out of active service and into the VA, when it's a time-critical surgery such as this young man needed to have to save his eyesight, that the doctors in the VA could read those medical records and get him the help that he needs. But, sadly, because of bureaucratic inefficiency and refusal to cooperate—and, of course, we're all human and we're all flawed, but there's this instinctive human, I think, reaction to make sure you protect your own turf. Whatever it is, the VA and the DOD have not adopted a unified medical record. As a result, this young man lost his eyesight. He could not get the surgery he needed in the VA, and he is now permanently blinded as a result of the failure of these two departments to do their job.

Now, the week before last when we were considering this bill in committee, the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hagel, said that the DOD was just going to go ahead and adopt their own medical record system separate from the VA. This is just unacceptable. I ask all my colleagues in Congress to work with Mr. BISHOP and me and to work with Chairman ROGERS, Ranking Member LOWEY, with the members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the members of the Armed Services Authorizing Committee and the members of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee so that we develop identical, parallel language that compels the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to come up with a single, integrated, unified medical record so that no one will ever suffer the fate that this young man did who is now permanently blinded because of bureaucratic inefficiency.

It's unacceptable. The Congress won't stand for it any longer, and we've got strong language in this bill and will continue to work to strengthen it to ensure that these men and women, as they move from their days of uniformed service to the country into the VA, that it is seamless, that it is easy, that they can get their disability claims handled in a timely and efficient manner and that they can get their medical records read quickly and efficiently by the doctors in the VA system who do such a good job.

We deeply appreciate our extraordinary staff working together with my good friend from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) in a truly bipartisan way. I'm proud to present to the House, Madam Chairman, the 2014 Military Construction and VA appropriations bill for approval by the House, a bill that is fiscally conservative and responsible yet fully funds and takes care of our men and women in uniform and our veterans in a way that they deserve, because our men and women who have fought so valiantly for this country deserve nothing less than the very best of the United States Congress, and we've done that for them in this bill today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE					
Military construction, Army	1,682,639	1,119,875	1,099,875	-582,764	-20,000
Military construction, Navy and Marine Corps	1,547,615	1,700,269	1,616,281	+68,666	-83,988
Military construction, Air Force	322,220	1,156,573	1,127,273	+805,053	-29,300
Military construction, Defense-Wide	3,578,841	3,985,300	3,707,923	+129,082	-277,377
Total, Active components	7,131,315	7,962,017	7,551,352	+420,037	-410,665
Military construction, Army National Guard	613,185	320,815	315,815	-297,370	-5,000
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	24,235	---	---	-24,235	---
Subtotal	637,420	320,815	315,815	-321,605	-5,000
Military construction, Air National Guard	42,344	119,800	107,800	+65,456	-12,000
Military construction, Army Reserve	305,540	174,060	174,060	-131,480	---
Military construction, Navy Reserve	49,482	32,976	32,976	-16,506	---
Military construction, Air Force Reserve	10,968	45,659	45,659	+34,691	---
Total, Reserve components	1,045,754	693,310	676,310	-369,444	-17,000
Total, Military construction	8,177,069	8,655,327	8,227,662	+50,593	-427,665
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program	253,909	239,700	199,700	-54,209	-40,000
Family housing construction, Army	4,636	44,008	44,008	+39,372	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Army	529,521	512,871	512,871	-16,650	---
Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps	102,080	73,407	73,407	-28,673	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps	377,852	389,844	389,844	+11,992	---
Family housing construction, Air Force	83,740	76,360	76,360	-7,380	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force	497,331	388,598	388,598	-108,733	---
Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-Wide	52,186	55,845	55,845	+3,659	---
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund	1,784	1,780	1,780	-4	---
Total, Family housing	1,649,130	1,542,713	1,542,713	-106,417	---
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-Wide	150,849	122,536	122,536	-28,313	---
Base realignment and closure:					
Base realignment and closure account, 1990	408,987	---	---	-408,987	---
Base realignment and closure account, 2005	126,570	---	---	-126,570	---
Base realignment and closure account	---	451,357	451,357	+451,357	---
Total, Base realignment and closure	535,557	451,357	451,357	-84,200	---
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 126)	---	---	-89,000	-89,000	-89,000
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec.127)	---	---	-49,920	-49,920	-49,920
Military Construction, Defense-Wide (Sec. 128)	-20,000	---	-358,400	-338,400	-358,400
Rescission (P.L. 113-6):					
Base Realignment and Closure, 2005	-132,513	---	---	+132,513	---
Military construction, Army, Planning and design FY12 (Sec. 129)	---	---	-50,000	-50,000	-50,000
Military construction, Defense-Wide, Unspecified minor construction FY09 and FY10 (Sec. 130)	---	---	-16,470	-16,470	-16,470
Military construction, Air National Guard, Unspecified minor construction FY09 and FY10 (Sec. 131)	---	---	-45,623	-45,623	-45,623
42 USC 3374 (Sec. 132)	---	---	-50,000	-50,000	-50,000
Reduction of funds (Sec. 133)	---	---	-4,668	-4,668	-4,668
Navy Land Transfer (P.L. 113-6)	10,989	---	---	-10,989	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 135)	---	---	75,000	+75,000	+75,000
Total, title I, Department of Defense	10,624,990	11,011,633	9,954,887	-670,103	-1,056,746
Appropriations	(10,753,268)	(11,011,633)	(10,614,300)	(-138,968)	(-397,333)
Rescissions	(-152,513)	---	(-659,413)	(-506,900)	(-659,413)
Emergency appropriations	(24,235)	---	---	(-24,235)	---
TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS					
Veterans Benefits Administration					
Compensation and pensions	60,599,855	71,248,171	71,248,171	+10,648,316	---
Readjustment benefits	12,023,458	13,135,898	13,135,898	+1,112,440	---
Veterans insurance and indemnities	104,600	77,567	77,567	-27,033	---
Veterans housing benefit program fund:					
(indefinite)	184,859	---	---	-184,859	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(500)	(500)	(500)	---	---
Administrative expenses	157,656	158,430	158,430	+774	---
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account	19	5	5	-14	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(2,729)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(-229)	---
Administrative expenses	346	354	354	+8	---
Native American veteran housing loan program account	1,088	1,109	1,109	+21	---
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration	73,071,881	84,621,534	84,621,534	+11,549,653	---
Veterans Health Administration					
Medical services:					
Advance from prior year	(41,354,000)	(43,557,000)	(43,557,000)	(+2,203,000)	---
Current year request	154,845	157,500	---	-154,845	-157,500
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	43,557,000	45,015,527	45,015,527	+1,458,527	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	21,000	---	---	-21,000	---
Subtotal	43,732,845	45,173,027	45,015,527	+1,282,682	-157,500
Medical support and compliance:					
Advance from prior year	(5,746,000)	(6,033,000)	(6,033,000)	(+287,000)	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	6,033,000	5,879,700	5,879,700	-153,300	---
Subtotal	6,033,000	5,879,700	5,879,700	-153,300	---
Medical facilities:					
Advance from prior year	(5,441,000)	(4,872,000)	(4,872,000)	(-569,000)	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2015	4,872,000	4,739,000	4,739,000	-133,000	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	6,000	---	---	-6,000	---
Subtotal	4,878,000	4,739,000	4,739,000	-139,000	---
Medical and prosthetic research	582,091	585,664	585,664	+3,573	---
Medical care cost recovery collections:					
Offsetting collections	-2,527,000	-2,485,000	-2,485,000	+42,000	---
Appropriations (indefinite)	2,527,000	2,485,000	2,485,000	-42,000	---
Subtotal	---	---	---	---	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (transfers out)	(-279,720)	(-254,257)	(-271,000)	(+8,720)	(-16,743)
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (by transfer)	(279,720)	(254,257)	(271,000)	(-8,720)	(+16,743)
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (Transfer out)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	---	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (by transfer)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	---	---
Total, Veterans Health Administration	55,225,936	56,377,391	56,219,891	+993,955	-157,500
Appropriations	(736,936)	(743,164)	(585,664)	(-151,272)	(-157,500)
Emergency appropriations	(27,000)	---	---	(-27,000)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---
National Cemetery Administration					
National Cemetery Administration	258,026	250,000	250,000	-8,026	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	2,100	---	---	-2,100	---
Subtotal	260,126	250,000	250,000	-10,126	---
Departmental Administration					
General administration	424,312	403,023	403,023	-21,289	---
General operating expenses, VBA	2,161,910	2,455,490	2,455,490	+293,580	---
Information technology systems	3,324,117	3,683,344	3,683,344	+359,227	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	531	---	---	-531	---
Subtotal	3,324,648	3,683,344	3,683,344	+358,696	---
Office of Inspector General	114,885	116,411	116,411	+1,526	---
Construction, major projects	531,938	342,130	342,130	-189,808	---
Supplemental (P.L. 113-2) (Emergency)	207,000	---	---	-207,000	---
Subtotal	738,938	342,130	342,130	-396,808	---
Construction, minor projects	606,922	714,870	714,870	+107,948	---
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities	84,915	82,650	82,650	-2,265	---
Grants for the construction of veterans cemeteries	45,954	44,650	44,650	-1,304	---
Total, Departmental Administration	7,502,484	7,842,568	7,842,568	+340,084	---
Emergency appropriations	(207,531)	---	---	(-207,531)	---
Administrative Provisions					
FY 2014 Advance Rescission (Sec. 230)	---	---	-156,000	-156,000	-156,000
FY 2014 Current Reduction (Sec. 230)	---	---	-24,000	-24,000	-24,000
Section 225					
Medical services	1,498,500	1,400,000	1,400,000	-98,500	---
(Rescission)	-1,500,000	-1,400,000	-1,400,000	+100,000	---
Medical support and compliance	199,800	100,000	100,000	-99,800	---
(Rescission)	-200,000	-100,000	-100,000	+100,000	---
Medical facilities	249,750	250,000	250,000	+250	---
(Rescission)	-250,000	-250,000	-250,000	---	---
Total. Administrative Provisions	-1,950	---	-180,000	-178,050	-180,000
Total, title II	136,058,477	149,091,493	148,753,993	+12,695,516	-337,500
Appropriations	(83,309,846)	(95,207,266)	(95,025,766)	(+11,715,920)	(-181,500)
Emergency appropriations	(236,631)	---	---	(-236,631)	---
Rescissions	(-1,950,000)	(-1,750,000)	(-1,750,000)	(+200,000)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,229)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(-229)	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Discretionary	(63,145,705)	(64,629,857)	(64,292,357)	(+1,146,652)	(-337,500)
Advances from prior year less FY 2015 advances	-1,921,000	-1,172,227	-1,172,227	+748,773	---
Less emergency appropriations	-236,631	---	---	+236,631	---
Net discretionary	(60,988,074)	(63,457,630)	(63,120,130)	(+2,132,056)	(-337,500)
Mandatory	(72,912,772)	(84,461,636)	(84,461,636)	(+11,548,864)	---
Total mandatory and net discretionary	133,900,846	147,919,266	147,581,766	+13,680,920	-337,500
TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES					
American Battle Monuments Commission					
Salaries and expenses	61,348	58,200	57,980	-3,368	-220
Foreign currency fluctuations account	14,818	14,100	14,100	-718	---
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission	76,166	72,300	72,080	-4,086	-220
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims					
Salaries and expenses	31,665	35,408	35,272	+3,607	-136
Department of Defense - Civil					
Cemeterial Expenses, Army					
Salaries and expenses	64,146	45,800	70,685	+6,539	+24,885
Construction program	100,412	---	---	-100,412	---
Total, Cemeterial Expenses, Army	164,558	45,800	70,685	-93,873	+24,885
Armed Forces Retirement Home - Trust Fund					
Operation and maintenance	63,941	66,800	66,400	+2,459	-400
Capital program	1,950	1,000	1,000	-950	---
Armed Forces Retirement Home - General Fund					
Capital program	---	---	---	---	---
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home	65,891	67,800	67,400	+1,509	-400
Total, title III	338,280	221,308	245,437	-92,843	+24,129
TITLE IV - OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS					
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps	150,768	---	---	-150,768	---
Rescission (P.L. 112-10)	-150,768	---	---	+150,768	---
Total, title IV	---	---	---	---	---
Grand total	147,021,747	160,324,434	158,954,317	+11,932,570	-1,370,117
Appropriations	(94,401,394)	(106,440,207)	(105,885,503)	(+11,484,109)	(-554,704)
Rescissions	(-2,102,513)	(-1,750,000)	(-2,409,413)	(-306,900)	(-659,413)
Emergency appropriations	(260,866)	---	---	(-260,866)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2015	(54,462,000)	(55,634,227)	(55,634,227)	(+1,172,227)	---
Overseas contingency operations	---	---	---	---	---
Advances from prior year appropriations	(52,541,000)	(54,462,000)	(54,462,000)	(+1,921,000)	---

Military Construction - Veterans Affairs - and Related Agencies Appropriations Act - FY 2014 (H.R. 2216)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
(By transfer)	(294,720)	(269,257)	(286,000)	(-8,720)	(+16,743)
(Transfer out)	(-294,720)	(-269,257)	(-286,000)	(+8,720)	(-16,743)
(Limitation on direct loans)	(3,229)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(-229)	---

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, as you know, the allocation provides $73.3 billion for the FY14 Military Construction-VA bill, which is $1.4 billion above the FY13 and $1 billion below the request. In my opinion, the allocation is what we could have expected had the Republican leadership addressed sequestration.

Madam Chairman, I know some folks will say that title 2 of this bill is exempt from sequestration and that is why the bill received a decent allocation, but I just want to point out that the funding in the bill largely mirrors the administration's request which does not reflect sequestration, even for the portions of the bill that were not exempted. I think that we all agree that we need to address the sequester, and I hope that we do it in the near future, because if we don't, the long-term effects will be devastating to our economy.

With that being said, I'm pleased to join Chairman CULBERSON as the House takes up the FY14 appropriations bill for Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and related agencies. The MilCon-VA bill is critically important to the strength and the well-being of our military, our veterans, and the families who sacrifice so much to defend our country. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I find it quite fitting that we are debating this bill immediately after observing Memorial Day last week.

Working with Chairman CULBERSON and the members of our subcommittee, we have crafted a bill that will address the funding needs for military construction and family housing for our troops and their families, as well as other quality-of-life construction projects. In addition, it will provide funding for many important VA programs, as well as agencies like the Veterans Court of Appeals and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The bill before us today touches every soldier, sailor, marine, and airman. In addition, the bill also will impact military spouses, their children, and every veteran that participates in VA programs.

I want to commend the chairman for his work. Together, we sat through numerous hearings, gaining valuable insight to the workings of all the agencies under the subcommittee's jurisdiction. Also, we would like to thank our subcommittee members and recognize them for their hard work on this bill. I believe that the minority was treated fairly during this process, and I want to thank the chairman for ensuring this bipartisan result.

Chairman CULBERSON has already provided the funding highlights in the bill, and I will not repeat them all, but I would like to point out a few items that I believe are extremely important.

The bill before us today includes $797 million for the renovation and replacement of 17 Department of Defense schools. I believe that providing the funds for the DOD schools will help our servicemembers' children get a quality education in safe facilities and will give our servicemembers peace of mind.

I'm pleased that the bill includes $151 million for the third increment of the Landstuhl Medical Center replacement in Germany. As you know, a large portion of the serious casualties from Afghanistan are treated there, and I'm pleased to see that we are making this important investment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is funded at $63.1 billion, and overall, the subcommittee recommendation meets the discretionary budget request in all areas of administrative expenses, research, information technology, and facilities.

In addition, the bill contains $55.6 billion in advance appropriations for medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities at the VA, which is $1.1 billion above the amount included in FY13. Madam Chairman, I strongly believe that advance funding provides timely and predictable resources for the veterans' health care system, and I'm so glad that we have been able to do it now for this 5th year in a row.

Now, I know that a lot of Members of this body are deeply concerned about the claims backlog and the electronic health records challenge. Trust me, the members of our committee, especially Chairman CULBERSON and I, have spoken directly with Secretary Shinseki about these issues numerous times, and I believe that our bill provides the resources and the accountability needed to address these two problems:

First, the bill funds the general operating expenses for the VBA, which will support 20,851 claims processors, which is 94 more than FY2013, and all 94 new claims processors will work disability claims;

Second, the bill fully funds the Veterans Benefits Management System at $155 million and the Veterans Claim Intake Program at $136.4 million.

□ 1500

These two efforts should speed up the VA's efforts to take old claims that are filed on paper and convert them into digital files that are easily searchable by claims processors, thus speeding up the claims process.

Second, we include a monthly reporting requirement every 30 days for the VA to provide Congress with several statistics, such as the average wait time at each regional office, rating inventory that has been pending for 125 days, rating claims advocacy, and month-to-month updates in changes in those statistics.

Third, we require a report on the VA's expedited claims initiative that was announced just a few weeks ago. This report should give the committee and the Congress insight into whether or not the Secretary's new initiatives are having positive results.

Finally, the bill directs the VA and the Department of Defense toward one integrated electronic health record system in bill language, and it restricts the availability of funds for the development of a system that meets the requirements of being single, joint, common, and integrated with open architecture and is the sole system used by both the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense. This initiative would ensure that veterans get their records to the VA electronically, thus reducing the number of claims filed on paper and speeding up the claims process.

Now, the committee's action—and I want to make this point clear—the committee's action and this bill do not mandate the adoption of a particular system, only that it be a single system that is used by both Departments. I don't think that we should get into the business of picking the software, but I do believe that by mandating a single system between the Department of Defense and the VA, that veteran claims in the future will not continue to fall victim to the slow inefficiencies that we're dealing with today.

Madam Chair, I believe that we have a strong, bipartisan bill that supports our military, their families, and our veterans. I would hate to see the hard work of our committee up-ended by contentious partisan riders intended to serve in scoring political points instead of those that serve our Nation. I also believe that the most important parts of this bill are the resources and accountability provided to assist the VA in tackling this outrageous claims backlog.

So I say to my colleagues that our committee strongly shares the deep commitment of this body to fixing the claims backlog issue. We looked at numerous approaches and further believe that our bill has found the optimal approach in dealing with this pressing concern of our veterans.

Before I close, Madam Chair, I would like to recognize the staff for all of the hard work and time that they've put into this bill. From the minority committee staff, I would like to thank Matt Washington, as well as Michael Reed and Adam McCombs from my personal staff. From the majority committee staff, I would like to thank Donna Shabazz, Sue Quantius, Sarah Young, and Tracey Russell.

I would also like to thank Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. ROGERS, the chairman and the ranking member, who served so valiantly and who are so diligently trying to seek the well-being of our servicemen and -women, their families, and our veterans.

At this time, Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, the House budget that we adopted set a total spending limit of $967 billion in the 3 years that the Republicans have had the majority in the House and the leadership of Chairman HAL ROGERS of Kentucky. For the first time since

World War II, we have reduced annual spending from year to year, each year, under Chairman ROGERS' leadership.

It's also, I think, important for the country to know that one of the first and most important responsibilities of the chairman of the full committee is to take that total spending number that's given to us by Chairman RYAN's Budget Committee, that $967 billion—Chairman ROGERS, one of his first responsibilities is to take that $967 billion and use his best judgment to allocate or divide that money among the subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee. And it's a real tribute to this good man's commitment, a demonstration of his commitment to our men and women in uniform, a vivid illustration of the bipartisan nature of this bill, that with the help of Ranking Member LOWEY, that Chairman ROGERS gave this subcommittee for military construction and VA allocation that enabled us to fully fund the request to the military and the Veterans Affairs.

It is my privilege now, Madam Chairman, to recognize the distinguished chairman of the full committee, HAL ROGERS of Kentucky, who has done so much to save our taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, and do everything that can be done to help support our men and women in uniform, and yield him as much time as he may consume.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman for the generous introduction.

I rise in support of this, the first of 12 appropriations bills that I hope to bring to the floor under regular order. Although we received the President's budget nearly 2 months beyond the deadline, I have every intention of drafting and considering all 12 appropriations measures in a timely fashion and in the traditional open process that allows all Members to have their say in how taxpayer dollars should be spent.

As we kick off the appropriations season on the floor today, we face some of the most challenging circumstances in recent memory—a tardy Presidential budget, a divided Congress, the ham-handed cuts of sequestration, and historically low funding levels.

Given our tight budget, my committee has and will continue to prioritize funding in areas of the highest national need—our security and enforcement of law. However, virtually all areas of the government will face cuts this year, including critical national security programs.

Clearly, this is an austere budget year, to put it mildly. Our top line number is severely low and billions apart from the Senate's number. It is my sincere hope that there will soon be a budget compromise that will undo the harmful sequestration law and give us a single common top line allocation that we can work with the Senate to pass all of the funding of the government.

In spite of all this, I want to reiterate my commitment to regular order. This is not a pie-in-the-sky endeavor. It's what our Founding Fathers wanted and directed in the Constitution. Under regular order, each of my esteemed colleagues in this body will have their chance to put their stamp on this bill, to have their voices heard and represented on these must-pass bills.

We have a lot of work to do in a very limited amount of time, so I suggest we get down to it. Today, we are considering the Military Construction and VA bill, a truly bipartisan effort that this entire body can and should support.

This bill funds critical Department of Defense infrastructure that gives our men and women in uniform the quality of life they deserve, including hospitals, schools, and family housing. This bill also includes $63.1 billion to provide our veterans with the benefits and care they've earned for their service.

Notably, we support medical treatment for 6.5 million veterans, including funding for traumatic brain injury treatment, suicide prevention, and important mental health care programs.

This bill also addresses two of the VA's biggest problems, Madam Chairman—the disgraceful disability claims backlog and the lack of a seamless coordinated Department of Defense-Veterans electronic health record system.

□ 1510

The bill includes funding that will jump-start efforts to clean up the backlog and force DOD and VA to get moving on a system that should have been in place years ago.

But this is not the easiest of budget times. While most of the funding in this bill is not subject to sequestration, we could not in good conscience let a single dollar in this bill go to waste. Every nickel and dime appropriated was carefully assessed to ensure these funds are used properly, efficiently and responsibly.

We took the difficult but responsible step to reduce military construction funding to offset the increases in VA spending, but we made these reductions without affecting military readiness or effectiveness. To make sure that our careful work in this bill does not go to waste, we've implemented strict oversight protocols, and we have included certain benchmarks to help guarantee that disability claims are not piling up again and that we aren't throwing away precious taxpayer dollars as we try to get this DOD–VA electronic health records system up and running.

Before concluding, Madam Chairman, I would like to spend a half-minute here thanking the chairman of the MilCon Subcommittee on our committee, JOHN CULBERSON, for his time and attention to this bill and for his dedication and perseverance, as well as to thank the work of the ranking member, Mr. BISHOP. These two gentlemen of the House, dedicated appropriators, have spent untold hours working with each other to try to come to agreement on the items in this bill. It has worked, and it is a good example, perhaps the best I can think of, in which we see that bipartisanship in support of our military and our veterans takes place. So I want to congratulate Mr. CULBERSON and Mr. BISHOP for a job well done, and we thank you for your bipartisanship.

Madam Chairman, I think this bill is one that Members on both sides of the aisle can wholeheartedly support to keep our military in fighting form and to give our veterans the benefits that they have so sincerely earned, many of them in the loss of limb, some in the loss of life. So I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, who, along with the entire leadership and Members on this side of the aisle, is committed to this bipartisan work product in support of our military construction needs and our veterans, the distinguished gentlelady from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. I would like to thank distinguished Ranking Member BISHOP. I would like to thank Chairman CULBERSON. I would like to thank Chairman ROGERS. I would like to thank all of the outstanding staffs for putting together a really good bipartisan bill. It's an important bill, and I know how hard you worked together to produce a really good product, and we thank you.

This bill does represent a reasonable approach and continues a long commitment to our veterans and our military facilities. It continues the bipartisan tradition of providing funding levels that Members on both sides of the aisle could agree are appropriate while avoiding contentious legislative riders that complicate passage.

However, the Republican majority's refusal to go to conference to forge a bipartisan agreement on the budget resolution is really unacceptable. This imperils this year's appropriations process, making it nearly impossible to move all 12 bills. Instead, it is likely that we will consider in the full House only a few bills with reasonable allocations, including MilCon-VA, while others are left in limbo indefinitely until we pass a continuing resolution.

I am optimistic that this bill has a good chance of enactment as long as we don't attach any controversial riders, but other important priorities will assuredly suffer. While veterans programs are exempt from sequestration, $73.3 billion provided in the bill largely mirrors the administration's request and does not reflect sequestration even for the portions of the bill that were not exempted. In fact, the differences between this bill and the administration's request are relatively small: an adjustment of $1.05 billion, due to bid savings and other project adjustments, and the misguided decision not to provide $185 million for the requested 2014 civilian pay raise.

If the MilCon-VA bill assumes the sequester cuts have been replaced, why

can't we join with the administration and the Senate and assume it will be addressed for the other bills?

On a positive note, this bill would better support our female veterans who are struggling with the trauma of sexual assault and would support those in need of prosthetics. It also continues to focus on the mental health needs of our Nation's veterans.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentlelady an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. LOWEY. The bill, which takes several steps related to the shameful veterans claims backlog, would hire 94 additional claims processors; provide $155 million for the Veterans Benefit Management System and $136 million for the Veterans Claims Intake Program in order to significantly speed up claims by converting old paper files into digital files; restrict funds to force DOD and the VA to use a seamless electronic health records system; and require the VA to provide monthly reports.

We cannot accept any further excuses. The VA must make progress. This is a good bill. I hope we can avoid adding contentious and unnecessary legislative riders today, and I hope that the chairman from Kentucky's optimism about sequestration reflected in the allocation for the first bill is proven true.

I commend the chairman and ranking member once again on their good work, and I urge your support.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. First, let me thank Chairman CULBERSON for his stalwart leadership on this important bipartisan measure. Let me also thank Ranking Member BISHOP as well for his leadership and support.

Madam Chair, many people in America want Congress to find constructive solutions, seek good answers, overcome problems, and say ''yes'' to our essential needs. While Congress is stuck on certain areas, this bill takes a bipartisan step forward in defense of our country and in service to our veterans. This bill says ''yes'' in a bipartisan manner to meet our Department of Defense infrastructure needs and to properly care for those who have served us so well, our veterans.

The bill spends a little bit less than the President asked for and a little bit more than last year. Projects that are not justifiable are removed, but others receive increases. The bill also pushes forward, as we've heard, a seamless transition of care when our warfighters leave active service by integrating their medical records and expeditiously dealing with a very serious claims backlog. I am pleased as well that my colleagues have continued funding for the headquarters construction of the United States Strategic Command. STRATCOM is an important force in protecting our Nation from nuclear threats.

Madam Chair, we need to continue to work hard and smart to reduce budgets while also delivering essential policy services that are necessary and fundamental at the Federal level. I think that this bill accomplishes that goal. I think we also accomplish the goal of doing what is just and what is right.

□ 1520

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security and a distinguished member of the MilCon-VA Subcommittee.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in qualified support of the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

I want to thank Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP for their leadership and commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for a cordial, timely, and deliberative process.

I have to caution, however, that this bill's relatively generous allocation must be viewed in the context of the overall fiscal year 2014 appropriations process. To get workable allocations for the two appropriations bills we will consider this week, the majority has drastically underfunded other critical appropriations bills, from educational research, to health care, to repairing and maintaining our Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Earlier today, I joined with many colleagues to vote against the rule providing for consideration of the bill before us, because the resolution requires this body to carry out the fiscal year 2014 appropriations process within the framework of the so-called ''Ryan budget,'' which doubles down on sequestration and will have devastating consequences as our Nation continues its economic recovery.

So the overall appropriations process is in deep trouble. But the bill before us gives the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs adequate resources to address several critical challenges faced by our military and veterans community. I'm particularly pleased the bill would fully fund the President's request for military construction projects at Fort Bragg, which is adjacent to my district.

The bill also provides critical funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to assure that those who have served our country receive the benefits and services that they need and deserve. Our subcommittee paid particular heed to the ongoing disabilities claims backlog issue at the VA. The bill provides nearly $300 million for the continued implementation of electronic management systems and improved processing of both new and existing claims.

I'm also pleased the bill provides robust funding for medical and prosthetic research, suicide prevention and mental health treatment, addressing unacceptable levels of unemployment among veterans, and pressing to end veteran homelessness.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. These are priorities, and this is a bill I hope all of our colleagues will be able to support.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, at this time I yield 2 minutes to a distinguished and valued member of our subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Let me first of all thank Chairman CULBERSON and your staff. You've done a spectacular job. This has been among the most inclusive processes that I've ever been involved with. So thank you.

Madam Chairwoman, this bill includes almost $10 billion for critical military construction projects, as well as imperative funding for the NATO Security Investment Fund.

Our bill fully funds the fiscal year 2014 National Guard and Reserve construction programs as requested, by the way, as well as fully funding the family housing construction program.

The bill also includes $55.6 billion in fiscal year 2015 advanced appropriations for VA medical care, the level approved in the House budget resolution and the same, by the way, as was actually requested.

This bill provides targeted funding for various information technology programs to ensure that the VA can tackle the enormous backlog of compensation claims, something that this chair and Chairman ROGERS have already talked about.

These funds will provide the resources that the VA indicates it requires to meet its goals of ending the disability compensation claims backlog by 2015.

Additionally, it includes stringent reporting requirements for the VA so the Members of Congress and the American people can have direct oversight on the progress of the claims backlog.

The committee also included report language to address the issue of prescription painkiller abuse.

This important bill also funds critical programs like the American Battle Monuments Commission, the United States Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims, as well as cemeterial expenses, including Arlington National Cemetery.

So I thank the chairman and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this very important piece of legislation that has been done in a very bipartisan way.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), a distinguished member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Chair, I've been concerned also, as my ranking member and as the chairman also of the committee, the gentleman from Texas, about the claims backlog that exists at the VA.

Veterans of all generations deserve a benefits system that is easy to navigate and responsive to their needs. Currently, the VA is still experiencing a huge backlog in processing claims. As of May 2013, the VA claims totaled 843,000, with more than two-thirds that have been pending over 125 days.

Currently, in my congressional district, we're working with over 205 veterans: 60 them are from Laredo, 30 of them from the valley, and 115 in San Antonio with outstanding claims with the VA that have been unresolved for 18 to 24 months, which is unacceptable and shameful.

I am pleased that the chairman and the ranking member have worked in a bipartisan manner to make sure the Veterans Benefits Administration is able to support 20,851 claims processors.

Additionally, the bill includes the necessary funding so that old claims filed on paper can be converted to digital files, making them more accessible and researchable.

I also support the inclusion of the monthly reporting requirement of the claims backlog, so that way we can put performance measures also to make sure that we get rid of this backlog.

Finally, I know also my good friend will be having another amendment that I support with him, which is that if the VA doesn't do its work, I think some of those bureaucrats should have their pay cut; because if the veterans are not getting their benefits, then I think that should affect the bureaucrats also.

I want to the thank the chairman and the ranking member for all their good work on this bipartisan bill, and I appreciate their efforts to ensure that veterans receive their benefits.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I yield myself just a moment to particularly point out and thank my friend from Laredo.

Mr. CUELLAR and I have worked together since 1986 in the Texas Legislature. The people of the United States often read in the national press that Democrats and Republicans don't get along. That's just simply not true. HENRY CUELLAR and I have been the best of friends since 1986. Mr. BISHOP and I worked together beautifully on this subcommittee. This bill is a great example of bipartisan cooperation, and it's a privilege to work on this committee where we really don't pay attention to party labels as we try to do what is best for the country.

At this time, Madam Chairman, it's my privilege to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. First of all, I want to thank the chairman, my colleague from Texas, for putting together this critical bill. I know that Mr. CULBERSON has been a longtime advocate for the best care possible for our Nation's veterans, and I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his continued leadership and, of course, that of the ranking member, my Georgia colleague, Mr. BISHOP.

Madam Chair, I rise today to bring attention to the recent tragic events at the Atlanta VA Medical Center. According to an April report by the inspector general and continued news stories, mismanagement and lack of oversight at the Atlanta facility contributed to at least four deaths. Additionally, the Atlanta VA Medical Center has admitted that the combination of a large volume of patients and a lack of appropriate tracking has led to patients ''slipping through the cracks.''

The mental health unit at the Atlanta VA Medical Center has been of particular concern and is at the center of these recent tragedies. Mental health is a critical component of care for our veterans, and as our soldiers continue to return home from war, we must ensure that they're receiving the attention and care that they deserve.

I would ask that as this bill moves forward, Madam Chair, to the Senate and to conference, that the chairman and the ranking member join me and the chairman of the authorizing committee to get answers from the Department of Veterans Affairs as to why we have yet to see those responsible held accountable and what changes the Atlanta VA Medical Center is going to make.

And I ask that question of the subcommittee chair.

□ 1530

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I would say to the gentleman from Georgia that both Mr. BISHOP and I and the subcommittee are keenly aware of these terrible tragedies in Atlanta and the very critical and important inspector general's report, and we intend to aggressively pursue the recommendations in the inspector general's report and work with you and the delegation from Georgia to ensure that this does not happen again.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Chair, I thank the chairman.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. May I inquire how much time remains on our side?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia has 12½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. At this time I'm delighted to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the distinguished ranking member and distinguished chairman, and I know that they have worked collaboratively together on behalf of our veterans, so I rise in recognition of the important work that they have done and to compliment them for the work that involves fully funding the military construction and certainly something that rises every moment that I'm amongst veterans. Just recently, as I was in a town hall meeting and had the Veterans Affairs Department represented, the question came up about benefits. I was glad that the initiative that has been offered, all of us embraced it. All of us have been fighting to stop this backlog and to move this backlog forward. And now we see the funding of this initiative, and it is most important.

I am also glad that there's a focus on jobs for veterans. I will say that we need to do more, because when you talk to our veterans of various wars, particularly the Vietnam War, there's always the sense of lack of employment, along with those who come in from Iraq and Afghanistan.

But I do want to raise the point of what we have deemed ourselves into. We've deemed ourselves into a Ryan budget that causes a great deal of suffering: a cap of $967 billion versus the mark of $1.58 billion that would be more helpful that was produced by the consensus during the Budget Control Act. Basically, we are ignoring the suffering of the middle class, and we're allowing the sequestration to run rampant over those who are in need.

I can particularly say to you that teachers and schools in Texas are losing $67.8 million in education for children with disabilities; $51 million for 620 teachers. Head Start is going kaput with 4,800 children losing their seat. Military readiness is being challenged in Texas with 52,000 civilian Department of Defense employees furloughed. In law enforcement and public safety funds, Texas will lose $1.103 million.

And then when we look at the United States, we go far and beyond that. We're looking at the fires in the West, the devastation of what happened in West, Texas, and the tornadoes. And we see, for the Coast Guard, there's a 25 percent reduction. This is a crisis.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. This is a crisis not only in the making, Madam Chair, but it is a crisis that is going forward. Whether we're talking about the National Institutes of Health or the Centers for Disease Control, my main concern is that the middle class is suffering from the sequestration.

The Ryan budget cannot be deemed the appropriations cap as we go through this process of appropriations. There is a desperate need of responding to the middle class, allowing for the continuation of job creation, making

sure that we do not lose 125,000 in section 8 vouchers, rural rental assistance, or the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SEQUESTRATION

The middle class are suffering and they need help. We need to stop the sequestration—now.

In Texas—

The state of Texas will greatly be affected by sequestration in the following ways:

Teachers and Schools: Texas will lose approximately $67.8 million for primary and secondary education, putting around 930 teacher and aide jobs at risk. In addition about 172,000 fewer students would be served and approximately 280 fewer schools would receive funding.

Education for Children With Disabilities: Texas will lose approximately $51 million for about 620 teachers, aides, and staff who help children with disabilities.

Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 4,800 children in Texas, reducing access to critical early education.

Military Readiness: In Texas, approximately 52,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed, reducing gross pay by around $274.8 million in total.

Law Enforcement and Public Safety Funds: Texas will lose about $1,103,000 in Justice Assistance Grants that support law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.

Job Search Assistance: Around 83,750 fewer Texans will get the help and skills they need to find employment as Texas will lose about $2,263,000 for job search assistance, referral, and placement, meaning.

Child Care: Up to 2300 disadvantaged and vulnerable children could lose access to child care, which is also essential for working parents to hold down a job.

Vaccines for Children: In Texas around 9,730 fewer children will receive vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and Hepatitis B due to reduced funding for vaccinations.

Violence Against Women Grants: Texas could lose up to $543,000 to provide services to victims of domestic violence, resulting in up to 2,100 fewer victims being served.

Public Health: Texas will lose approximately $2,402,000 to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events. In addition, Texas will lose about $6,750,000 in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse, resulting in around 2,800 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs. And the Texas State Department of Public Health will lose about $1,146,000 resulting in around 28,600 fewer HIV tests.

In the U.S.A.—

Across-the-board cuts from sequestration began in March, and the detrimental effects are gradually coming into focus. These cuts are diminishing the effectiveness of federal initiatives, with a direct impact on the lives of virtually every American. Highlights of specific cuts to vital services and investments that have been documented to date are outlined below.

Public Safety

1. Wildland Fire: U.S. Forest Service understaffed and under-equipped for fire season with 500 fewer firefighters, 50–70 fewer fire engines, and 2 fewer aircraft.

2. U.S. Coast Guard: 25 percent reduction in training, maintenance and drug interdiction patrols.

3. Extreme Weather: A 3–6 month delay in NOAA's weather satellite launch will increase costs and risk of inaccurate forecasts.

4. U.S. Park Police: Up to 10,640 combined furlough days for officers leave national landmarks understaffed and increase response time for emergencies.

5. Food Safety: Fewer FDA inspections, increasing risk of food-borne illness, even as Congress demands stricter food safety standards.

Health

1. National Institutes of Health:

$1.5 billion cut from life-saving research projects,

Estimated loss of more than 20,000 jobs and $3 billion in economic activity.

2. Centers for Disease Control: $285 million cut from research to detect and combat disease outbreaks, facilitate immunizations, plan for public health emergencies, conduct HIV/AIDS tests, and more.

3. Environmental Health: More than 3,200 furloughs and layoffs delay cleanup from nuclear weapons development in Washington, New Mexico, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Housing

1. Section 8 Vouchers:

a. 125,000 fewer vouchers.

b. 750 Public Housing Authorities terminating tenants within 3 months.

2. Rural rental assistance: 15,000 aid recipients affected, usually elderly, disabled, or single mothers.

3. Community Development Financial Institutions Fund: Up to thousands fewer units of affordable housing built.

Education and Science

1. Head Start and Early Head Start:

70,000 children will lose access,

Thousands of layoffs of teachers and aides.

2. Impact Aid: $68 million cut from schools that educate 950,000 children of military members, or who are otherwise federally connected, resulting in layoffs and larger class sizes.

3. Research: 1,000 fewer National Science Foundation grants and thousands fewer jobs.

National Security

1. Defense: $37 billion in FY13, largest drag on broader economic growth, includes:

a. Cancelled deployment of aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman,

b. Cancelled Army training rotations,

c. Grounded Air Force squadrons,

d. 800,000 civilian employees facing furloughs of 11 days, and

e. Reduced equipment and facilities maintenance.

2. Defense Health Program (DHP): $2.6 billion reduction will result in TRICARE funding being exhausted by August and delayed payments of TRICARE contracts.

The Judiciary and Legal Representation for Low-Income Americans

1. Public defenders: Up to 15 furlough days per public defender will delay trials and force courts to hire private attorneys for defendants at $125 per hour.

2. Judiciary: 20 percent reduction in electronic monitoring & drug testing of offenders.

3. Violence Against Women Grants: $20 million cut from grants for prevention and prosecution of violence against women.

Senior Citizens

1. Senior nutrition: 4 million fewer meals for low-income seniors.

2. Social Security Administration:

3,300 additional staff lost, increasing backlog of disability claims by nearly 100,000 and increasing processing time of claims to more than one year.

82,000 fewer continuing disability reviews, which save $9 for every $1 spent.

3. Medicare: Thousands of cancer patients turned away by cancer clinics due to cuts in provider payments.

Commerce and Economic Security

Small Business: lending guarantees drastically reduced.

Oil and gas drilling permits: 300–400 fewer oil & gas drilling permits processed, 150 fewer leases issued, resulting in $150 million loss to taxpayers.

Customs Border Protection: Wait times at land border ports of entry up to 6x longer.

National Parks and public lands: Reductions in 900 permanent and 1,000 seasonal positions will reduce public access and result in hundreds fewer trained firefighters.

Unemployment compensation: 10.7 percent cut in weekly benefits.

Fiscal Malpractice Results in Job Loss and Stunted Economic Growth—The Federal Reserve announced, ''Fiscal policy is restraining economic growth.'' The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and independent economists forecast sequestration costing 750,000 jobs and a 0.6 percent reduction in growth in 2013. While many agree we can find additional spending cuts in the long-term, such large cuts now—instead of phasing them in responsibly when the economy is stronger—amounts to fiscal malpractice.

Squeaky Wheel ''Fixes'' Exacerbate Long-Term Problems—Congress acted to prevent furloughs of food inspectors and air traffic controllers, and departments and agencies are using limited transfer and reprogramming authority to mitigate other immediate problems caused by cuts. These gimmicks merely kick the can down the road, sparing short-term pain through one-time savings that delay long-term needs like construction, maintenance, and training.

These expenses will have to be repaid in future years even as the sequester cuts deeper into the overall budgets for these agencies. While industries' bottom lines were protected from flight delays and fewer meat inspections, infrastructure at airports will suffer this year, increasing needs in the future, and this year's fixes do nothing to address the cuts required of these same programs in the coming years.

Responsible Fix is Needed—In just two short months of sequester cuts, the impacts are hurting our economy, increasing financial burdens on families, and forcing the federal government to make false choices between essential services. We simply cannot afford 10 years of job loss and stunted economic growth. Congress must replace these mindless cuts with a sensible and balanced plan to promote growth and reduce the long-term deficit and debt.

Mr. CULBERSON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and a valuable member of the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs.

Mr. FARR. Madam Chair, I thank Ranking Member BISHOP for that kind introduction. And, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your leadership on this committee. I have been on this committee since I've been on the Committee on Appropriations, and I'm really excited about the ability for us to respond to the quality of life for people in uniform and their families.

This is the committee that helps the families with housing, with health care, with child care, with the benefit packages that the military allows. It's very, very important because we also have the responsibility for the Department of Veterans Affairs. It's the only one-stop in an entire Congress, because the Senate has no comparable committee where both the responsibility of the Active Duty and the veterans are in one place. You know, in this country you can't be a veteran unless you've first been a member of the Department of Defense, so it's a continuum of care.

If you add up the budgets of both the Defense Department and veterans and our military construction, it's the largest of all the budgets that the appropriations does, so it is important that we pay a lot of attention to detail. We have a lot of issues dealing with not only Active Duty military and their living conditions, but also conditions, serious conditions with veterans and the backlog that veterans have.

I think we're on the road to solving that problem. California has the worst backlog in the office in Oakland, but the Secretary has been paying a lot of attention and putting a lot of technology into it. I want to commend the chair and the ranking member of this committee for the leadership they've provided in trying to solve it.

I also want to commend, I think the Department of Defense has the best capital outlay program. It's called the FYDP. It stands for fiscal year improvement plan or something like that. What it does, all of the services, whenever they need anything constructed, they have to go in and compete against each other, and so it's on merit. Then the project with the most merit moves to the top of the list. We have been able to take care of that in a very responsible way.

Mr. CULBERSON. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I thank Mr. BISHOP for his courtesy. I also would really like to thank you, Chairman CULBERSON, for your excellent work on this bill. This is a massive undertaking.

One aspect here that I want to focus on is the policies. The Pentagon has set its sight on good policies. Not only do our troops benefit, but so does the American public. Nothing demonstrates this more than the recent Defense Department's Unified Facilities Criteria, UFC 2–100–01. Behind this strange-sounding title is the Pentagon's installation master planning document for over 500 installations around the world, four times the amount of space of Walmarts. This document, updated for the very first time since 1986, has the potential to positively impact every military servicemember and their families by making our military bases more welcoming, more connected, and more livable.

However, the UFC is only guidance for each branch of the military. In order for it to have a positive and transformative impact, we will need to see strong implementation guidance from each service branch. I believe this is a priority for the Department of Defense. Delay and deviation would only serve to harm or set back our military families who deserve nothing but the best.

As such, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to work with the chairman and ranking member to include language urging the Department of Defense to provide an assessment of the progress and barriers to the implementation of UFC 2–100–01.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman from Oregon raises a really important issue that the subcommittee will look into and will work to address in some way as we move through this process.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Terrific. Thank you very much.

□ 1540

If I have time remaining, I was curious if the chairman of the subcommittee feels comfortable with working with us to make some progress on this implementation.

Mr. CULBERSON. Of course we will do all we can to work together.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you. I really appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this and look forward to making this progress for our military families. Thank you very much.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, we have no further speakers on this side.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, it's a pleasure to bring this bill to the House and to recommend it to every Member of the House to support this bipartisan bill to make sure that our men and women in uniform—as my good friend, SAM FARR, said, this is such a privilege to be on this committee, the only one in Congress that can ensure the quality of life and peace of mind of our men and women in uniform and our men and women who, once they've served our country, move into the VA system. And I would urge the adoption of the bill by the Members of the House.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Chair, Jeff Calaicovo is a military veteran living with his loving wife in Ft. Lauderdale. He is an American hero who received two Purple Hearts for his courage and service during the Vietnam War. Jeff fought for, and suffered for this country, spending five months in a burn ward as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange.

Today, Jeff suffers from PTSD, loss of hearing and other medical complications that should be covered by his veterans' benefits. But our claims system failed him.

Jeff first initiated his claim in May 2011. Until his case was brought to my office's attention, he had made little progress towards receiving the benefits he deserves.

My staff worked with Jeff over many months so that he finally will begin receiving his benefits after waiting nearly two years.

Sadly, Jeff's story is not unique. The average wait time for claims processing is 292 days with some regional offices averaging 450 days.

Having just returned from visiting our service men and women in Afghanistan, and as the mother of a Marine veteran, I know firsthand the sacrifices our troops make for our freedoms. Our veterans have fought for this country and it is time we fight for them.

That is why I have joined my colleagues in enacting a number of measures that will help eliminate the veterans' claims backlog once and for all, in H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2014.

These measures include finally requiring the DOD and the VA to move towards one integrated electronic system, requiring more frequent reporting to Congress on the status of claims processing, and boosting VA funding to allow for 94 new claims processors to tackle head on the disability claims backlog.

I am confident these new measure will put us on the road towards eliminating an unacceptable problem that has neglected our America heroes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my strong support for funding veterans' programs. However, I am very concerned that this bill is part of a Republican budget that would shortchange other critical priorities—like education, nutrition and housing assistance, healthcare and medical research.

I voted in favor of H.R. 2216, the Military Construction—VA Appropriations bill for FY 2014 because I believe it is critical that we keep our promises to our veterans. Today's legislation provides $157.8 billion for veterans' programs and military construction in FY 2014, including the over $73 billion in advance appropriations for veterans' health care approved in last year's appropriations measure. It also contains $55.6 billion in advance FY 2015 funding for VA medical programs.

Among other critical priorities, it provides over $290 million to help the VA eliminate the disability claims backlog by 2015, including funding for the VA's paperless process claims system. It provides $344 million for the Pentagon and the VA to implement a joint integrated electronic health records system. These funds are critical: the VA has nearly

900,100 Pending disability claims and, of those, 72 percent have been pending for over 125 days. That is unacceptable; the backlog is causing serious hardships for veterans and families throughout our country, and it is imperative that we work with the VA to ensure that the backlog is eliminated and all claims are processed in a fair and timely manner.

While I am proud to support critical funding for those who served our nation, I have serious concerns about the implications this bill carries for the rest of the appropriations process. The Republican Budget sets the lowest cap on discretionary spending in a decade. Non-defense discretionary spending would be reduced even below the levels required under the sequester. Because of those limits, the adequate funding of this bill will result in inadequate funding of other spending bills down the line. Those other bills fund national priorities including education, nutrition and housing assistance, and programs to spur job growth. We cannot afford to abandon those important initiatives.

The White House warned, in its veto threat for this legislation, that enacting this bill "while adhering to the overall spending limits in the House Budget's top line discretionary level for fiscal year (FY) 2014, would hurt our economy and require draconian cuts to middle-class priorities." I couldn't agree more. We need to set a realistic spending ceiling so that all of our national priorities receive adequate funding.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment who has caused it to be printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2216

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, $1,099,875,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $64,575,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, $1,616,281,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $89,830,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, $1,127,273,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of this amount, not to exceed $11,314,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, $3,707,923,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $237,838,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, notwithstanding any other provision of law, $38,513,000 shall be available for payments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the planning, design, and construction of a new North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 4, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by $38,513,000)"

Page 5, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by $38,513,000)".

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by $38,513,000)".

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chairman, my amendment would zero out our contribution to the brand-new NATO headquarters in Brussels and transfer that amount, more than $38 million, to the spending reduction account to help us deal with our debt.

This line item within the bill is the very definition of ridiculous. The U.S. is furloughing civilian military personnel and sacrificing our own military readiness here at home, policies with which I disagree. And yet, here we are, sending millions of dollars overseas to build a lavish new headquarters for the international bureaucrats in NATO.

Madam Chairman, the planned NATO headquarters is an unfortunate example of excess and waste. While every NATO member-nation is cutting back on overall spending, the new headquarters remains on track as a monument to bureaucracy. In total, the building will cost well over $1 billion to build, and it's taken 13 years just to finalize the plans.

If we are serious about confronting our spending problem, we must fundamentally re-evaluate our priorities. We don't need to help NATO build a new headquarters. We need to ask what are we doing in NATO in the first place. The Cold War is over. It's time to stop policing Europe and start worrying about our deficit.

I encourage all Members to support this commonsense amendment to help us reduce our spending and to pay off our unsustainable debt.

Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I share my colleague from Georgia's passion and commitment to reduce the deficit to avoid passing on this debt to our children. This bill has bipartisan support. It has been put together very carefully to ensure that we're supporting our men and women in uniform, and I'm looking forward to finding ways to save money in other parts of the appropriations bill and in the parts of the budget that are actually, truly crushing our kids with debt and deficit.

It's the social safety net that has grown so tremendously that is causing the greatest burden on our kids, the Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid. The growth of these programs has been so astronomical it's swallowing up almost all of our national income on an annual basis. And that's where we need to focus our attention is saving those programs from bankruptcy. In fact, that's where we will really save the big money for our children in the future.

Medicare is in such dire straits that if you're 54 years of age or younger, the Medicare hospital fund can only pay about 50 cents on the dollar of the benefits that have been promised. So the

Medicare program, for all intents and purposes, for people that are 54 years of age or younger, is bankrupt.

And the Social Security program, if you're 47 years of age or younger, that program is bankrupt because it can only pay about 60 cents on the dollar.

So we've got to, as a Congress, in order to save our Nation from bankruptcy, to save our kids from crushing levels of taxation, to prevent this mountain of debt from being passed on to our children, save Medicare and Social Security from bankruptcy. And that's what Congressman RYAN, chairman of the Budget Committee is working on. Congressman SAM JOHNSON from the Ways and Means Committee is working on legislation to save Social Security, and that's where we're going to save the big money.

On things like NATO, we have over 600,000 troops in Europe. We have 127 military installations. I am no fan of the United Nations, but NATO has served a vital role since the end of World War II in preserving the peace in Europe. We've expanded NATO membership now to the former countries of Eastern Europe that were behind the Iron Curtain.

It was NATO and the leadership of President Ronald Reagan and the resolute courage of our men and women in uniform that led to the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Iron Curtain. But for NATO, but for that strategic alliance, we may still be facing Communist Russia. Today the Soviet Union is gone, the Iron Curtain is gone, and many of those nations that were once in the Soviet Bloc are members of NATO.

So with great respect for my colleague from Georgia and his conservative commitment to balance the budget, let us focus on saving Social Security and Medicare from bankruptcy, first and foremost, as the most effective, long-term way to save the Nation from bankruptcy and to get us back on track to a balanced budget.

Look for other opportunities to save money in our multiple appropriations bills that are coming up, but not at the expense of a great strategic alliance that has served this Nation well since the end of World War II.

I'd urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I'd like to join my distinguished chair in opposition to this amendment.

I certainly appreciate and understand the gentleman from Georgia's commitment to reducing the deficit. The deficit is something that is undermining the economic foundation of this Nation. It is like a cancer that is eating away at us, and we have to do all that we can to reduce that deficit and get us on track to a balanced budget.

However, I suspect that this amendment, while well intentioned, may be penny-wise and pound-foolish because NATO, this account from which these funds will be taken, supports a strategic alliance that has helped to protect the American people.

Just over the last decade, NATO has been our strategic partner in the war against terrorism in Iraq and in Afghanistan and in our efforts to protect the American people and to protect us abroad.

□ 1550

We simply cannot afford to turn our backs on our allies who have stuck with us and who have supported us in our efforts to protect this world from the bad actors in the war against terrorism. And as a result of that, I reluctantly oppose the gentleman's amendment, while understanding and commending him for his commitment toward deficit reduction.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by law, $315,815,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $24,005,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by law, $107,800,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $13,400,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by law, $174,060,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $14,212,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by law, $32,976,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $2,540,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by law, $45,659,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated, not to exceed $2,229,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, $199,700,000, to remain available until expended.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 8, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced to $0)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $199,700,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. My amendment would totally zero out the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program and transfer its nearly $200 million into the spending reduction account.

The world has changed dramatically since the creation of NATO. Its mission, as stated by the first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, is ''to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.'' I have a hard time seeing how this is relevant to our post-Soviet world and a post-Cold War world.

In this modern age and in this time of domestic fiscal emergency, it makes no sense for the United States to manage the defense of Europe through NATO. And it certainly makes no sense for us to pay such a large share of it. It's time for us to wind down our involvement with NATO instead of making up new justifications for this defense warfare.

Madam Chair, our Nation is broke. We have an unsustainable debt. We're spending money that's going to crush our children's future and make their future much dimmer than it is today. We have to reallocate our resources and put them towards what's going to deal with this unsustainable debt. We've got to stop this out-of-control spending. Both parties are guilty of doing so.

Though some would say nearly $200 million is just a paltry amount, when our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are not getting the finances that they need and when Americans are struggling just to make ends meet and we have an economy that is really hurting and jobs are not being created and students are not having jobs when they graduate from college, we have to deal with this debt that's unsustainable. This $200 million would be transferred into the spending reduction account and help us to start—just a small start—to stop this out-of-control spending. It's absolutely critical that we do so.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment and move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I oppose this amendment because I share the gentleman's concern about the debt and the deficit. As I mentioned a moment ago, the way we're going to save the country from bankruptcy and protect our kids from this crushing debt burden that they're about to inherit to is rescue Social Security and Medicare from their certain bankruptcy, which is just around the corner. The Republican constitutional conservative majority of this House is working hard to develop legislation to save those two programs from bankruptcy. But this amendment would zero out the funding that the Congress has invested in the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations for NATO.

NATO has been a vital part of our Nation's security since the end of World War II. We have over 600,000 men and women in uniform in Europe who depend on the resources that this Congress provides to them, in part, through the work of NATO. We have 127 military installations in Europe that depend, in part, on the work that is done through our contribution to NATO.

If the gentleman offers an amendment later on, for example, on the foreign operations part of the bill to cut funding for the United Nations, I look forward to supporting that because I have no particular love for the United Nations. They vote against us at every chance they get. We contribute the majority of money that the United Nations receives and they happily vote against us at every opportunity.

But when it comes to NATO, that's of strategic importance to the security of the United States. And while I share the gentleman's passion to cut the deficit and the debt, let's save it for cutting the United Nations and foreign aid, other than for Israel. I'm wearing proudly my pin of the two lone star States, the State of Texas and the State of Israel. Except for our funding for the great State of Israel, which we need to preserve and protect, I look forward to helping the gentleman cut foreign aid and cut funding for the United Nations, but not for NATO.

I urge the House to reject this amendment.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CULBERSON. I will happily yield to my friend from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I appreciate the comments from my dear friend from Texas. He and I have been involved in trying to cut spending in many ways for a long period of time. In fact, I have a freestanding bill to zero out spending for the United Nations. I want to get the U.N. out of the U.S. and the U.S. out of the U.N. And so that's to come, I promise you. That will be coming. I'll give you that opportunity.

And you're exactly right, Social Security and Medicare need to be fixed so that our senior citizens and poor people have the proper help that they need. And I'm all for that, too. But we've got to cut where we can. I'm a marine. I was deployed to Afghanistan last year as a Navy reservist. And I believe in a strong military. I believe in peace through strength. And we've got to have the strongest military in the world. I don't believe our military should ever be in a fair fight. We need to be in a fight that's overwhelming.

But NATO is a relic of the Cold War. It's a relic that we need to look at. And when we have such a huge debt—almost $17 trillion—we need to cut wherever we can, whenever we can. I think it's extremely important for us to reorder our priorities, particularly across the world, and getting rid of this money for NATO is a way of doing that.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, reclaiming my time, the gentleman is correct that $200 million is a lot of money, but we have to preserve our investment in NATO. I would point out that the former Soviet Union is sending submarines into the Gulf of Mexico. The former Soviet Union, now Russia, is aggressively sending their strategic nuclear bombers pushing up against the outer limits of our airspace around Guam and around Alaska.

□ 1600

So the Russians are no longer overtly and openly Communist, but they are not necessarily our friends. They and the Communist Chinese are aggressively attacking the United States in the cyberworld. If a state of war could be declared in the cyberworld, a state of war already exists. The Communist Chinese have already attacked us and are at war with the United States over the Internet and over in Russia, as well. They are not our friends. And we, of course, are going to look for every opportunity to work together with them, but NATO is a vital part of America's strategic security.

I urge defeat of the gentleman's amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Again, I certainly understand and commend the gentleman for his commitment and his passionate support for reduction of the debt and the deficit, and I think that we on this side of the aisle join him in that quest. However, again, I submit that this amendment is probably one that is penny-wise and pound-foolish. We have an alliance with the countries in NATO. Those countries have been our staunch supporters in Operation Iraqi Freedom, our efforts in Afghanistan; and, of course, each of those NATO countries has a developing presence of al Qaeda just as we in the United States. So it's very, very important that we maintain that strategic alliance.

This amendment would cut our share of the responsibility for NATO which we share with the other member countries. And I think that since we are deriving a mutual benefit that we should have a mutual responsibility to support, this joint support, and I think that it would not be wise for us to withdraw our aspect of that support. We should assume our responsibility with our allies for the mutual support and the mutual benefits.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The amendment was rejected.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $44,008,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $512,871,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $73,407,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $389,844,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, $76,360,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, $388,598,000.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, $55,845,000.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, $1,780,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of construction, not otherwise provided for, necessary for the destruction of the United States stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions in accordance with section 1412 of the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1986 (50 U.S.C. 1521), and for the destruction of other chemical warfare materials that are not in the chemical weapon stockpile, as currently authorized by law, $122,536,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, which shall be only for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), as amended by section 2711 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112-239), $451,357,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed $25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than $25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed $500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Sea, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries within the United States Central Command Area of Responsibility, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed $1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: *Provided*, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: *Provided further*, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed $100,000.

SEC. 114. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 115. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 117. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, proceeds deposited to the Department of Defense Base Closure Account established by section 207(a)(1) of the Defense Authorization Amendments and Base Closure and Realignment Act (10 U.S.C. 2687 note) pursuant to section 207(a)(2)(C) of such Act, may be transferred to the account established by section 2906(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to be merged with, and to be available for the same purposes and the same time period as that account.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 118. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in ''Family Housing'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in ''Military Construction'' accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: *Provided*, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code,

pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the accounts established by sections 2906(a)(1) and 2906A(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 120. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: *Provided*, That not more than $35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: *Provided further*, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. GRIFFITH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 18, line 8, strike ''$35,000 per unit'' and insert ''$15,000 per unit''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Madam Chair, this is a simple little amendment. Currently, any expenditures for flag officers' general housing on base has to be reported if there is an expenditure in excess of $35,000. This lowers this number down to $15,000. It doesn't mean they can't do the work. It just means that if they're going to spend more than $15,000, they have to file a report with Congress before they do so.

In this day and age where we're trying to make sure that we're spending the taxpayers' money wisely, this seems to be appropriate. My wife and I put a roof on our house a couple of years ago for about $15,000. If they need more than that, that's fine, but make a report to Congress. If there's something terribly wrong with the flooring and it costs more than $15,000, they can report it. But most repairs to a home can be done under $15,000.

This is just simply saying, hey, tell us what you're doing so that we can have a more transparent expenditure and a more transparent government.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. We'd be happy to accept it. I think it's more than reasonable to report that you're going to expend more than $15,000. Certainly, we want to help make sure that our officers have everything that they need, but it would be nice to have them report it. And I would be willing to accept the gentleman's amendment if my colleague from Georgia is in agreement.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. FATTAH. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. I just wanted to come to the floor. I have had the opportunity to serve on this subcommittee under the leadership of my great friend from Texas and our ranking member, Congressman BISHOP from Georgia.

□ 1610

The focus of the work is in a bipartisan process to come up with the best possible set of proposals to move our country forward to respond to our needs in terms of military construction.

I rise today, in particular, to thank the two leaders of the subcommittee, and in particular, the chairman for his great leadership on veterans benefits. I had breakfast with General Shinseki, and the staff of the VA I think has been clearly moved by the ranking member and the chairman's insistence that we deal with the challenges around the backlog.

I want to particularly note the great work in this bill on neuroscience and brain disorders. The chairman and I began some work together in the CJS appropriations process a year and a half ago, which has moved our country, I think, forward in terms of dealing with some 600 different brain diseases and disorders in a much more aggressive fashion, and we compliment the President on the brain initiative. Right here in this VA bill there are actual concrete steps being taken to deal with posttraumatic stress, to deal with traumatic brain injury. And I had a Nobel Prize laureate, who has done work on TV, really come just to say that the focus we put on this has been so important because some 40 percent of our injured veterans have some type of traumatic brain injury or posttraumatic stress challenges that they face. I visited the Intrepid Center.

So I didn't want this moment to pass without thanking the two leaders of the subcommittee for their work. I could go on and on about the Epilepsy Centers of Excellence, but I know I only have a few minutes, so I'll cease here. I want to thank them, because it won't necessarily be recorded. But in the lives of tens of thousands of our veterans and servicemen, differences in their life circumstances will be made for the positive because of what's in this bill. So thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 121. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

SEC. 122. None of the funds made available in this title, or in any Act making appropriations for military construction which remain available for obligation, may be obligated or expended to carry out a military construction, land acquisition, or family housing project at or for a military installation approved for closure, or at a military installation for the purposes of supporting a function that has been approved for realignment to another installation, in 2005 under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (part A of title XXIX of Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note), unless such a project at a military installation approved for realignment will support a continuing mission or function at that installation or a new mission or function that is planned for that installation, or unless the Secretary of Defense certifies that the cost to the United States of carrying out such project would be less than the cost to the United States of cancelling such project, or if the project is at an active component base that shall be established as an enclave or in the case of projects having multi-agency use, that another Government agency has indicated it will assume ownership of the completed project. The Secretary of Defense may not transfer funds made available as a result of this limitation from any military construction project, land acquisition, or family housing project to another account or use such funds for another purpose or project without the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress. This section shall not apply to military construction projects, land acquisition, or family housing projects for which the project is vital to the national security or the protection of health, safety, or environmental quality: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Defense shall notify the congressional defense committees within seven days of a decision to carry out such a military construction project.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 123. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation ''Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense'', to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 124. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any action that relates to or promotes the expansion of the boundaries or size of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado.

SEC. 125. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Secretary of the Army to relocate a unit in the Army that—

(1) performs a testing mission or function that is not performed by any other unit in the Army and is specifically stipulated in title 10, United States Code; and

(2) is located at a military installation at which the total number of civilian employees of the Department of the Army and Army contractor personnel employed exceeds 10 percent of the total number of members of the regular and reserve components of the Army assigned to the installation.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply if the Secretary of the Army certifies to the congressional defense committees that in proposing the relocation of the unit of the Army, the Secretary complied with Army Regulation 5–10 relating to the policy, procedures, and responsibilities for Army stationing actions.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 126. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Army'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $89,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 127. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $49,920,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 128. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $358,400,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 129. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Army'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 130. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Defense-Wide'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $16,470,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 131. Of the unobligated balances available for ''Military Construction, Air National Guard'', from prior appropriations Acts (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $45,623,000 are hereby rescinded.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 132. Of the unobligated balances made available in prior appropriation Acts for the fund established in section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) (other than appropriations designated by law as being for contingency operations directly related to the global war on terrorism or as an emergency requirement), $50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 133. Discretionary appropriations in this title are hereby reduced by $4,668,000.

SEC. 134. Notwithstanding section 116, the Secretary of Army may obligate from any available military construction funds such additional funds that the Secretary determines are necessary to complete the Explosive Research and Development Loading Facility, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey.

SEC. 135. For an additional amount for ''Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps'', $75,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, such funds may be obligated and expended to carry out planning and design and construction of projects that (1) are of critical importance to the Armed Forces, (2) will be conducted within the 50 States, and (3) were contained in the fiscal year 2014 portion of the future-years defense program submitted to Congress under section 221 of title 10, United States Code, for fiscal years 2013 through 2017 and are also contained in the fiscal year 2015 portion of the future-years defense program submitted under such section for fiscal years 2014 through 2018: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this heading.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, $71,248,171,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That not to exceed $9,232,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be reimbursed to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the ''Compensation and Pensions'' appropriation: *Provided further*, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to ''Medical Care Collections Fund'' to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, and for the payment of benefits under the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, $13,135,898,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21, title 38, United States Code, $77,567,000, to remain available until expended.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That during fiscal year 2014, within the resources available, not to exceed $500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $158,430,000.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, $5,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed $2,500,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, $354,000, which may be paid to the appropriation for ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, $1,109,000.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

As our veterans return home from Iraq and Afghanistan after 10 years of conflict, it's critical that they're able to get the care they need and deserve. Part of that care must be greater access to complementary and alternative medicine. Unfortunately, based on conversations I've had with veterans back in my district and with practitioners of alternative medicine, and letters I've received, it's too often difficult for the veterans to utilize complementary and alternative medicine through the VA system, even though research is showing that a holistic approach to treatment, including complementary and alternative medicine, can make a significant impact. A recent survey conducted by the Samueli Institute, which

shared its findings at a Senate Veterans' Affairs hearing 2 weeks ago, demonstrated how the effectiveness of drugless self-care and integrative practices for treatment of these conditions had immediate and long-lasting impacts.

Many VA practitioners have taken note and are doing their best to integrate these practices. Many veterans are seeking out these services. Both, sadly, are encountering institutional barriers and limited availability.

Given the steadfast commitment of this committee to do all it can to increase the quality of care for our veterans, I would sincerely request the chairman and ranking member to address this issue as the bill proceeds through the process.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman from Oregon, again, raises a very important issue that the subcommittee will look into, and we will do our best to address in some way as we move forward through this process.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CULBERSON. I agree with my colleague from Georgia, and we look forward to working closely with you to be sure that we continue to address these vital issues.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the hard work of the committee and the willingness to work with us, to be able to make sure our veterans have access to these services, and look forward to working with you to make it happen.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bioengineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of health care employees hired under title 38, United States Code, aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code, $45,015,527,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), $5,879,700,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services, $4,739,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2014, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, $585,664,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BLUMENAUER

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 31, line 18, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $35,000,000) (increased by $35,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I do appreciate the courtesy that the chair and ranking member have evidenced. I appreciate the fact that the gentleman from Texas—we've worked not only on these issues, but he's played a critical role on another issue near and dear to my heart dealing with international water, and it's a pleasure to work again.

Those efforts have saved countless lives abroad, and today, with this amendment, it's my hope that we can partner to improve and hopefully save lives right here at home.

I helped organize, found and chair the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus. It's clear from our work that we find America standing on the precipice of discovery in neuroscience research that will lead to a higher quality of life for the 50 million Americans affected by neurological illnesses every year.

□ 1620

Conditions in neuroscience have already dwarfed other areas of health care expenditures, and that's before the waves of baby boomers turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day for another 14 years are going to drive it even further. There are more people with brain disorders than all cancers and heart problems combined; and as society ages, this number will increase exponentially as will the cost to the health care system and the economy.

But the importance of neuroscience isn't just about the numbers. It's about improving the quality of life for those affected by neurological trauma, and no one is more deserving of these breakthroughs than the returning servicemembers affected by traumatic brain injuries or posttraumatic stress disorder.

As stated by General Peter Chiarelli, now the CEO of One Mind for Research and the 32nd chief of staff of the Army, TBI and PTSD have accounted for 36 percent of the disabling injuries suffered by soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is convinced, as I think most of us in Congress are, that we must do all we can to help our veterans because these invisible wounds have devastating and long-lasting impacts.

The amendment before the committee is identical to the one that I and Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS, who is my cochair of the Neuroscience Caucus, offered and had adopted in last year's MilCon-VA appropriations bill.

The amendment aims to ensure that the Veterans Administration continues to have the resources it needs to find innovative new medicines and enhanced diagnostics for what can truly be termed an ''epidemic.'' The amendment does not increase or decrease any accounts in the appropriations bill. It simply requires that no less than $35 million of the Medical and Prosthetic Research account goes towards posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury so that we can expedite the cure for Active Duty personnel and veterans suffering from the effects of brain and psychological trauma incurred during their service.

The amendment, I hope, symbolizes a commitment from this Congress that, even in the midst of sequestration and tight budgets, we will not yield on this critical issue and area of funding.

In meeting with neuroscientists, I am always amazed to hear how this one

area of research often leads to positive, but unexpected, breakthroughs. For example, in researching depression, scientists found out that Prozac can help stroke victims recover motor skills more quickly.

The account, the Military and Prosthetic Research, funds many critical areas of research with direct and indirect links to PTSD, and this complementary amendment ensures that these links are made and that research is shared to everyone's benefit. It's a commitment to using resources in a way that allows one scientific inquiry to seek out other areas of impact that will lead to breakthroughs in TBI and PTSD. These items demand our special attention because their effects can so easily harm a soldier's family and loved ones if not properly diagnosed. Early detection and prevention prevents chaos, hardship and, indeed, in some cases, a further loss of life.

We must remember our duty to the wounded warriors who face a long journey to recovery. These harms may not be as visible as a missing limb, but can be even more damaging to a veteran's future. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment—a commitment from Congress to our servicemembers. We will continue to do all we can in developing new medicines and technology to improve the lives for those in need. I appreciate the extraordinary courtesy of the subcommittee, and respectfully urge adoption of the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I have no objection to the amendment.

I want to acknowledge and thank the gentleman from Oregon for his long labors and support of this important work to identify and cure these invisible injuries that many of our soldiers have suffered as a result of concussion, as a result of the circumstances of battle in which they find themselves.

We appreciate your good work, sir, and I will continue to work with you. I thank you for the amendment. I have no objection.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. The gentleman's amendment would require that no less than $35 million goes towards traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress disorder research from the Medical and Prosthetic Research account. I want to bring to the attention of this House that $32 million was already included for this purpose.

I do have some concerns regarding the amendment. I understand what the gentleman is trying to do, and I agree that PTSD and traumatic brain injury are the two major problems that the VA needs to focus on. Tens of thousands of veterans have suffered traumatic brain injury. Most are mild concussions that get better within a few months, but serious ones and multiple concussions can raise the risk of dementia and other problems. The gentleman points that out rightly.

With the tight budgets that we are facing, I am concerned, however, where the reduction would come from. For example, this account also provides for the research for prosthetics, for women's health, and for gulf war veterans illness. So I just want to make sure that the gentleman is aware that his amendment could cause shortfalls in other areas of research that are vital to the health care needs of our veterans.

I do assure the gentleman that the subcommittee and the committee will work hard to try to make sure that traumatic brain injury and PTSD are adequately addressed with our resources available for funding research there.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, $250,000,000, of which not to exceed $25,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-Wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed $25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, $403,023,000, of which not to exceed $20,151,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided*, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration''.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, $2,455,490,000: *Provided*, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed $123,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GALLEGO

Mr. GALLEGO. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000) (increased by $5,000,000)''.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Madam Chair, I would like to thank my long-time friend, even from the Texas Legislature, Representative CULBERSON, the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, as well as Representative BISHOP, the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, for their work on these important issues.

I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 2216, the appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The amendment is for the brave men and women who have served our country—our veterans.

It's simple. It's common sense. It highlights job training for veterans, helping them to find employment. Within the general operating expenses for the Veterans Benefits Administration account, this would support funding for veterans to become employable and maintain their jobs to meet the workforce needs of the 21st century.

Over the next 4 years, 1 million veterans are expected to transition into the workforce from the armed services. This makes this specific account vital to the lifeblood of decreasing our unemployment rate for veterans once they return home. 1.6 million veterans call Texas home, and 64,000 of these men and women reside in the 23rd Congressional District. These men and women have obtained tremendous skill sets while serving our country, and yet many have difficulty finding employment after they've completed their service. Nearly 700,000 veterans are unemployed. The jobless rate among our veterans is at 6.2 percent. Among veterans who served after 9/11, that rate increases to 7.5 percent.

These men and women have served this country, and they have put their lives on the line. It is our turn to serve them. Let's make certain that Congress focuses on training our veterans to meet the workforce needs of the 21st century. We should make the transition from military service to the workforce as seamless as possible. Lastly, this amendment doesn't present any budgetary issues, and the Congressional Budget Office confirms that the amendment doesn't score. Additionally, it doesn't have a net change in funding levels.

I encourage my colleagues to stand up for veterans' employment and to support my commonsense amendment. I look forward to working with all of you to get veterans back to work.

□ 1630

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GALLEGO. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to the amendment. The gentleman is absolutely right. We're all committed to making sure that when our veterans return home, they are fully employed and well taken care of.

I thank my friend from the Texas Legislature, Mr. GALLEGO, for offering his amendment, and we have no objection.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. POE of Texas). The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

Mr. Chairman, after returning home from the war, veterans are now fighting for jobs back home. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, last year's unemployment rate for veterans was 12.1 percent, a significantly higher figure than the 8.7 percent unemployment rate for nonveterans. Even more staggering is that 19.1 percent of young veterans between the ages of 20 and 24 are unemployed.

All veterans, because of their service, have basic skills, and the only thing that they're missing is formal job training to match their abilities with the specific needs of an employer. This is another issue on Secretary Shinseki's plate. I believe that anything that we can do to help veterans gain employment we should do.

I thank the gentleman for raising this issue, and I support the amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GALLEGO).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Chairman, the sacrifices of the few, our military veterans, provide the freedom for the many.

We know that it is our military veterans, who only make up just 1 percent of our population, that provide 100 percent of our freedom. But far too many of our veterans seeking the disability assistance that they rightly earned are running into a severe backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nationwide, there are close to 800,000 pending disability claims at the VA, and almost 550,000 of these claims have been pending for over 125 days. At the Oakland VA in Oakland, California, which serves the 15th Congressional District, which I represent, the constituents in my district have been waiting, on average, a staggering 552 days. Over 81 percent of the constituents have been waiting over 125 days. This is the longest average wait time across the United States. These numbers are a national disgrace, and I'm ashamed that the veterans who have served our country and have fought so hard have to wait so long.

Our military spends $1.8 billion a year recruiting young Americans to join our military. We spend it on NASCAR, Super Bowl ads, and we send our recruiters out to our schools to have our young men and women join in the honorable profession of defending our country, but we are neglecting the needs of the veterans. We're failing to keep the promises we make after they serve.

This weekend I had the opportunity to go to a Salute to New Recruits who are going into the military. I looked at those young, bright faces of young men and women who are going to go off to serve their country, and I told them, You are doing something that is very brave and very noble, but I hope that your families and you stand up for the benefits that you are rightfully earning.

Right now what we're seeing at the VA is shameful, Mr. Chairman. It's shameful that we would treat our veterans like this and not give them the benefits that they've earned. We're failing to live up to that solemn pledge that we've made to our Nation's wounded warriors. That's why this bill is so important. It reaffirms our commitment to caring for the men and women who made sacrifices to serve in uniform.

It contains commonsense solutions to eliminate the disability claims backlog by mandating that the VA modernize the disability claims process, and it also ensures greater efficiency and accountability on the part of the VA.

It would fully fund the President's requested budget to allow for an increase of the staff levels at the Veterans Benefits Administration. These funds would support an additional 94 claims processors, all of whom will work solely on disability claims, helping to address the heart of the backlog.

Increasing staff levels, as we know, however, is not a silver bullet. Creating a more efficient and responsive VA is also necessary if the disability claims process is going to be fixed. Today, the VA spends, on average, 175 days waiting for the Department of Defense to send them a veteran's record, mostly because these records are still kept in the form of paper files. It's time we bring this process into the 21st century.

In addition to moving away from paper files, it's clear that it would be far better for servicemembers and veterans, as well as taxpayers, for the DOD and the VA to maintain one integrated system for electronic health records. This bill seeks to move the DOD away from paper and towards an integrated system that can be used both for DOD and the VA. It also fully funds the Veterans Claims Intake Program, which is working to convert all those paper records the VA receives into digital files.

Mr. Chairman, the constituents of the 15th Congressional District who served so honorably should not have to wait 552 days for their disability compensation cases to be processed.

Those parts of the bill that I outlined will help to improve veterans' access to the benefits that they have earned and enable us to better live up to President Lincoln's promise in his second inaugural address:

> To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.

President Lincoln's words happen to be at the core of the VA's mission statement. Words, however, are not enough. Congress must act swiftly to fix the VA backlog with practical solutions and fulfill our pledge to veterans. We must leave no veteran behind when they come back. We must make sure that when we say ''thank you for your service'' to a veteran, that we mean it and we follow up with a meaningful and responsive claims process. The funding in this bill helps move us in that direction.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY AMODEI

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

> Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $44,000,000)(increased by $44,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Nevada is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank Chairman CULBERSON and Ranking Member BISHOP for their effort on bringing forth a good bill that addresses the needs of our veterans and maintains our commitment to providing them with the benefits that they earned and deserve.

I rise with this amendment for the first time since I've been in this body because of the existing claims backlog, which is over 600,000 claims nationwide.

As a member of the primary committee of jurisdiction and the primary subcommittee of jurisdiction on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I can tell you that, in dealing with this number of claims, we are not making mission in the Department of Veterans Affairs. I can also tell you that the proposal to spend $44 million, according to the Veterans Affairs testimony in front of our committees, to clear 50,000 of

those claims in the backlog is, quite simply, more of the same. That's about $900 a claim and will leave you with 550,000 claims when it's done this year.

I appreciate the opportunity of coming technology, but I can tell you this: if you represent a district that's in California, New York, Arizona, Indiana, Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Ohio, Maryland, another Texas hit, Boston or Mississippi, which is the majority of Members in this House, then guess what; you've got a majority of those claims in your district offices.

I say it's time for this House to take action and say this: don't cut a single regional office's budget. This amendment does not attempt to do that. This amendment says take that $44 million and allocate it for personnel in those 15 offices that all have over a year of processing time.

By the way, while we're mentioning that, I want to give you a quote that is from Under Secretary Hickey that basically says:

> Quite frankly, we have a resource allocation model that doesn't make any sense.

That's before the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Let's try something new. Let's put the staffing where those offices are that are in need of it most. Two of them are in California and two of them are in the Lone Star State. Chicago also needs help. You name it. Let's try that instead of just doing what we have been doing. It adds no money to the bill, and it also does not take any money away from existing offices.

□ 1640

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say this. Even though staffing at the VA's 58 regional offices has increased by almost 300 people since September 2010, because of turnover and loss of more than 2,000 workers temporarily paid through stimulus funds, the VA regional offices are severely understaffed. Overtime will not be the answer. At a majority of the regional offices, including those in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Waco, and Oakland, the VA presently employs fewer people than it did 2 years ago, according to their own internal documents.

Let's take the leadership on this issue and do something that's a little different than, quite frankly, a resource allocation model which the determined Under Secretary says makes no sense.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have no opposition to the gentleman's amendment and share his frustration and concern, as Mr. BISHOP and I and the subcommittee have done in this bill repeatedly throughout the series of our hearings to literally pound on the VA to get them to move more rapidly on this backlog.

We have included, Mr. BISHOP and I, in this bill, very powerful and strong reporting language that we're going to get detailed information on a level that we've never seen before from the VA. In fact, later today we're going to have an amendment from Mr. KINGston of Georgia that I will support that will hold the VA to the same standard as the private sector in that either they meet their performance levels that they have set for themselves or they will not be paid, as they are in the private sector. You miss your goal, you don't get your full compensation.

We are addressing this in a number of different ways. I think the gentleman's amendment is helpful and constructive in driving home the point to the VA that it's absolutely vital that we get this backlog disposed of and that we expect the VA to live up to the time line that they've promised us, and that's to eliminate the backlog within the next 24 months by the year of 2015.

And so we have no opposition to the gentleman's amendment, and we appreciate his concern for ensuring that our men and women in uniform receive the disability benefits that they have so rightly earned.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a subject on which we need to tread very, very, very carefully. As we all know, the VA announced that it's mandating the use of overtime for claims processors at the 56 regional offices as part of a ''surge'' aimed at eliminating the disabilities claims backlog.

This effort is the latest in a series of measures that the VA has adopted in recent months in response to sharp criticism and to the cajoling by Members of this Congress and the public over the number of claims pending from veterans seeking disability compensation. That number, which was over 900,000 earlier this year, had fallen to 843,000 as May 13, with more than two-thirds of those having been pending for over 125 days. I believe that Secretary Shinseki should and I believe that Secretary Shinseki is using every option available to him to make progress in eliminating this backlog.

Furthermore, the overtime measure is on top of the VA's recent announcement that it's giving priority to claims that have been pending for longer than a year. I believe that the increased overtime initiative coupled with the expedited claims initiative will provide more veterans with more expedited decisions on their claims and will help us to achieve our goal of eliminating the claims backlog. I believe that this overtime initiative correctly shows that the Secretary's commitment is there to end the problem of the backlog. And so I think we should tread very carefully in this regard.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada will be postponed.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, this bill is one of the most important that the House will consider all year. It provides critical funds for military training facilities, improves living conditions for our troops and their families, and addresses the needs of our Nation's veterans.

As ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, however, I wanted to bring your attention to a serious issue.

As you know, the advance appropriations process ensures that the VA health care funding is not delayed by Congress' failure to pass the appropriations bills on time. For the past 3 years, the GAO has been required to review the accuracy of the administration's projections for advance funding for veterans' health care programs. The report helps Congress evaluate VA projections for advance appropriations and ensures the VA receives the funding needed for veterans' health care.

Unfortunately, this GAO reporting requirement is scheduled to sunset on September 30. I believe this requirement should be extended, and a number of veterans service organizations have expressed concerns about this issue as well.

As the bill moves forward, I ask the committee to review this issue and continue the reporting requirement.

On another note, one of our most important obligations is to ensure adequate training and support of our troops. That is why one of my first stops as a Member of Congress was to Naval Base Ventura County. For fiscal year 2014, the Navy has requested funding for several important projects at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme, including military housing, training, and maintenance facilities. This bill provides funding for base infrastructure improvements, but it is a decrease from last year and also below the DOD request.

On behalf of my constituents serving at Naval Base Ventura County, I would like to express my hope that these reductions do not come at the expense of the much-needed infrastructure improvements at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme.

As a VA committee member, I am also pleased that H.R. 2216 funds veterans' benefits and programs. It provides $43.6 billion for VA medical services to serve about 6.5 million veterans.

It supports mental health care services, suicide prevention activities, traumatic brain injury treatment, homeless veterans' programs, and rural health initiatives. It continues work on an integrated DOD-VA electronic health record system, the paperless claims process system, digital scanning of health records, and transparent reporting on our progress with the claims backlog for VA benefits.

Finally, it funds construction and renovation of hundreds of VA health clinics, medical residences, and nursing homes. Support of our servicemembers, veterans, and their families is of the highest importance. However, we must be mindful of the entire budget picture.

Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned that we are operating under inadequate discretionary budget caps that will not allow us to provide sufficient funding later in the appropriations process for programs that are important to middle class families and seniors, such as education and health care programs.

While this bill is not perfect, it does provide critical funding for our Nation's military construction projects and for our Nation's veterans, and I intend to support the final passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, $3,683,344,000, plus reimbursements: *Provided*, That $1,026,400,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed $30,792,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That $2,161,653,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed $151,316,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That $495,291,000 shall be for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, and shall remain available until September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may not be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a certification of the amounts, in parts or in full, to be obligated and expended for each development project: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among the three sub-accounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for the ''Information Technology Systems'' account for development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: *Provided further*, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than $1,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available under this Act may be obligated or expended for the development or procurement of an electronic health record unless the health record will be a single, joint, common, integrated health record with an open architecture that will be used by both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense: *Provided further*, That funds made available for such an integrated electronic health record may not be obligated or expended until the Secretaries of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs jointly certify in writing to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress that the proposed integrated electronic health record will be the sole electronic health record system used by each Department and that it meets the requirements established in the previous proviso: *Provided further*, That not more than 25 percent of the funds made available for the integrated electronic health record may be obligated or expended until: (1) the Government Accountability Office confirms to the Committees, after reviewing the Secretaries' certification, that the proposed integrated electronic health record system does in fact meet the requirements established in this paragraph; and (2) the Secretaries of the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs submit to the Committees, and such Committees approve, a plan for expenditure that: (A) defines the budget and cost baseline for development and procurement of the integrated electronic health record; (B) identifies the deployment timeline for the system for both Departments and the performance benchmarks for deployment; and (C) identifies annual and total spending on such efforts for each Department: *Provided further*, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. CULBERSON

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 35, line 11, strike ''Act''and insert ''heading''.

Page 35, line 13, strike ''unless'' and all that follows through ''Department:'' on page 36, line 16, and insert the following: ''except for a health record as set forth in the Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2013-2015 of the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense, Joint Executive Council:''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1650

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with an amendment to clarify the House Appropriations Subcommittee's intent with regard to the integrated electronic health records system that we want the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to adopt.

This issue necessarily involves two appropriation subcommittees and two authorizing committees, Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs. We have talked with our friends on the authorizing committees and agree that the best way forward is for language to be included in each one of these bills that conveys a unified position.

I am confident that all parties in Congress and in the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs share the same goal of having an integrated, unified health record.

My amendment removes some of the specificity of the original House language, but retains the reference point of an integrated record. This allows all sides to continue to spend more time to develop mutually acceptable language that we can carry in the National Defense Authorization Act and other legislation as we move forward with this bill as well, which clearly defines the intent of Congress that we will have an integrated record with its capability of helping our men and women in uniform when they move out of active service into the VA.

We are unshakeable in our commitment, as a Congress, to make certain that we solve this problem as quickly as humanly possible. I can tell you that the subcommittee, the committees of jurisdiction, the entire Congress is tired of the delays. We're tired of postponement. We're tired of disputes. This has to be solved immediately.

And I'm going to continue to work aggressively with our colleagues on the authorizing committee and with our good friends on the Defense Appropriation Subcommittee, all of us together, arm-in-arm, regardless of party, from all parts of the country, to make sure that we get one single, unified, integrated electronic medical record as fast as humanly possible.

So that's the reason I offer this amendment today, and I urge its support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I believe that this amendment reflects the apparent obstruction of the Department of Defense on the electronic health record issue; and let me explain to you how we got here.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act directed the two Departments to develop a single electronic health

record system that will follow a servicemember from the time he or she enlisted in the military to the time they exited the VA care, by 2009.

However, after a number of management, oversight, and planning snags and snafus, and the cost estimates that grew from $4 billion to now nearly $12 billion, former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki decided to alter their plans to focus on making that current electronic health record system more interoperable.

Just recently, Secretary Hagel, the Department of Defense, made the decision to modernize the Defense Department's electronic health record through purchase of commercial software. A recent memo released by the Department of Defense makes no reference to the integrated electronic health records; and it seems more of the same go-it-alone, stovepipe approach that has been favored by the Pentagon in the past.

In addition to the Department of Defense's memo, it also made no mention of the congressionally mandated role of the Interagency Program Office set up to run the integrated electronic health records project and staffed by more than 300 personnel from both Departments.

Finally, by going the commercial route, I believe the Department of Defense has opened up its latest electronic health records scheme to protest and subsequent delays.

With all these issues I laid out, some still want to think that the Department of Defense should be free to do whatever it pleases.

Mr. Chairman, paper is a problem, and we cannot keep letting servicemembers leave the Department of Defense with paper records. Please know that this situation will be addressed further as we move through the process.

And we support the gentleman's amendment. I think it is timely. I think it is necessary.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk that would strike section 413 of this bill.

First of all, I have great respect, even affection, for the chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking member, and their exemplary staff, Mr. Washington. But section 413 of this bill, Mr. Chairman, would prohibit funds to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the U.S. for the purposes of housing Guantanamo detainees.

According to a recent GAO report, there are prisons in the U.S. that could hold the Guantanamo detainees as safely and securely as the security conditions at the Guantanamo facility. The Department of Defense and the Department of Justice both operate detention facilities comparable to Guantanamo Bay and currently hold convicted terrorists and other felons connected to terrorism.

The GAO report, however, noted that existing facilities would need to be slightly modified, and current inmates would need to be relocated perhaps. But this would prohibit that.

I can't imagine that there are Members of this Chamber that believe that indefinitely detaining individuals at Guantanamo Bay for the rest of their lives, without access to a fair trial, comports with American standards of justice.

Now, first of all, a few words about Gitmo itself. Eighty-six percent of the Guantanamo detainees were captured in exchange for a bounty. A majority of these young men never actually committed an act of violence against the United States or its allies. Five percent were perhaps members of al Qaeda. So let's assume that 5 percent were, because there seems to be some indication that they were; but 95 percent were not.

From a national security standpoint, Gitmo has been too easily used as a rallying cry and a recruitment tool for our enemies. For that reason, its continued existence really is a direct threat to our national security.

Language such as is in this bill has constrained the President's options for closing this detention facility. President Obama still retains the authority to significantly decrease the prison's population, though, should he choose to do so. He could waive the certification requirements if receiving countries take actions to substantially mitigate the risk that a detainee were to re-engage in terrorism. That would clear the release of at least 86 detainees, about half of the entire prison's population.

Since Guantanamo was opened, the statistics indicate that about 13 percent may have become recidivists. But less than 5 percent of President Obama's transfers have.

Military strategy often dictates that by releasing lower-threat detainees, you mitigate the risk of radicalizing more. We released many foot soldiers in Afghanistan who are far worse than the Guantanamo detainees.

But what is most relevant to this bill's language is that 46 detainees have been designated for indefinite detention, either because they are too dangerous to release, or they can't be charged in a court due to evidentiary standards.

The President did establish a Periodic Review Board, but the panel has never been formed. Frankly, the President should do that.

But those detainees that cannot be transferred, I think, should be tried in courts here in the United States. The problem is, given the limitation that Congress has wrongly placed on such transfers, that can't be done today, notwithstanding the fact that our Federal courts have tried more than 1,000 terrorists.

The United States already holds 373 individuals convicted of terrorism in 98 facilities across the country. There are six Department of Defense facilities where Guantanamo detainees could be held in the United States that are currently at a combined 48 percent capacity. In other words, less than half the capacity is being used.

Believing that they will never leave Cuba, more than 100 are protesting their indefinite detention the only way that they can, with a hunger strike. Thirty-seven detainees are currently being tube-fed. It's a procedure that requires a lubricated plastic tube to be inserted down a detainee's nose and into their stomach while they're being restrained. They are then held in a chair for about 2 hours to force them to digest the liquid.

The fact is that the President can't do what he needs to do as long as section 413 remains in this bill, and that's why my amendment would remove this restriction.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. VARGAS. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VARGAS. Today, I rise in support of the efforts to address the increasing backlog of veterans disability claims in the FY 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. We must do everything in our power to ensure that the men and women who have served honorably in the armed services receive the full benefits they have earned protecting our Nation and our freedoms abroad. It is a shame that our veterans have to wait an average of 321 days to receive a response from the Department of Veterans Affairs after filing a claim.

In my district, I have the privilege of representing the southern portion of San Diego County and all of Imperial County in California. San Diego is the home to the third-largest veteran resident population in the Nation. Current processing times have tripled in the area since 2009, with over 28,500 pending disability claims being processed and an average wait time of 334 days.

As we continue to wind down our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, more and more men and women will be seeking the benefits they are owed. We must continue to find workable solutions for these heroes and their families. This bill presented today provides more than $290 million to help the VA meet its goal of ending its disability claim backlog by 2015. In order to meet this deadline, funds will be provided for the digital scanning of health and benefit files and for the development of a

paperless process claim system. Additionally, $344 million will be appropriated to the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to implement a single, integrated health record system used by both Departments. Both of these measures are needed to speed up the processing and to modernize our record-keeping system.

We must also hold the VA accountable for its results, and I am glad to see that the monthly reporting requirements on the process of the expedited claims initiative for veterans is included in this bill.

During the final throes of the Civil War, President Lincoln affirmed the government's obligation to care for those injured during the war and to provide for the families of those who perished on the battlefield. With the commitment ''to care for him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan,'' President Lincoln laid the foundation for our moral responsibility to our Nation's veterans. Let's continue to work in this tradition by reducing the backlog and the wait times of disability claims for the veterans and their families across our Nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of the bill through page 59, line 18, be considered as read, printed in the RECORD, and open to amendment at any point.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The text of that portion of the bill is as follows:

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), $116,411,000, of which $6,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, $342,130,000, of which $322,130,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018, and of which $20,000,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and salaries and associated costs of the resident engineers who oversee those capital investments funded through this account, and funds provided for the purchase of land for the National Cemetery Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2014, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2014; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2015: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406, and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, $714,870,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, along with unobligated balances of previous ''Construction, Minor Projects'' appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: *Provided*, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, $82,650,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, $44,650,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2014 for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: *Provided*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, in this Act or any other Act, under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'' accounts may be transferred among the accounts: *Provided*, That any transfers between the ''Medical Services'' and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: *Provided further*, That any transfers between the ''Medical Services'' and ''Medical Support and Compliance'' accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That any transfers to or from the ''Medical Facilities'' account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'') shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the ''Medical Services'' account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for ''Compensation and Pensions'', ''Readjustment Benefits'', and ''Veterans Insurance and Indemnities'' shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2013.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from ''Compensation and Pensions''.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2014, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: *Provided*, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2014 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: *Provided further*, That if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2014 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication under section 319 of title 38, United States Code, for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not exceed $42,904,000 for the Office of Resolution Management and $3,360,000 for the Office of Employment and Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: *Provided*, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: *Provided further*, That amounts received shall be credited to the ''General Administration'' and ''Information Technology Systems'' accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

SEC. 211. No appropriations in this title shall be available to enter into any new lease of real property if the estimated annual rental cost is more than $1,000,000, unless the Secretary submits a report which the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress approve within 30 days following the date on which the report is received.

SEC. 212. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: *Provided*, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: *Provided further*, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 213. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects''.

SEC. 214. Amounts made available under ''Medical Services'' are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 215. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to ''Medical Services'', to remain available until expended for the purposes of that account.

SEC. 216. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Indian tribes and tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations serving rural Alaska which have entered into contracts with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term ''rural Alaska'' shall mean those lands sited within the external boundaries of the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(1)–(4) and (7)–(12) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), and those lands within the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(5) and 7(a)(6) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), which are not within the boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the Matanuska Susitna Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 217. Such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the ''Construction, Major Projects'' and ''Construction, Minor Projects'' accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 218. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to implement any policy prohibiting the Directors of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks from conducting outreach or marketing to enroll new veterans within their respective Networks.

SEC. 219. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the financial status of the Veterans Health Administration.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Amounts made available under the ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration'', ''General Administration'', and ''National Cemetery Administration'' accounts for fiscal year 2014 may be transferred to or from the ''Information Technology Systems'' account: *Provided*, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 221. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, in this Act or any other Act, under the ''Medical Facilities'' account for nonrecurring maintenance, not more than 20 percent of the funds made available shall be obligated during the last 2 months of that fiscal year: *Provided*, That the Secretary may waive this requirement after providing written notice to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 222. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', ''Medical Facilities'', ''Construction, Minor Projects'', and ''Information Technology Systems'', up to $254,257,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 223. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for health care provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500).

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 224. Of the amounts available in this title for ''Medical Services'', ''Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Medical Facilities'', a minimum of $15,000,000, shall be transferred to the DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 225. (a) Of the discretionary funds made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, the following amounts which became available on

October 1, 2013, are hereby rescinded from the following accounts in the amounts specified:

(1) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', $1,400,000,000.

(2) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', $100,000,000.

(3) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'', $250,000,000.

(b) In addition to amounts provided elsewhere in this Act, an additional amount is appropriated to the following accounts in the amounts specified to remain available until September 30, 2015:

(1) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', $1,400,000,000.

(2) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', $100,000,000.

(3) ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'', $250,000,000.

SEC. 226. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in major construction projects that total at least $5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: *Provided*, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 227. The scope of work for a project included in ''Construction, Major Projects'' may not be increased above the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations.

SEC. 228. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed $2,000,000.

SEC. 229. The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a reprogramming request if at any point during fiscal year 2014, the funding allocated for a medical care initiative identified in the fiscal year 2014 expenditure plan is adjusted by more than $25,000,000 from the allocation shown in the corresponding congressional budget justification. Such a reprogramming request may go forward only if the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress approve the request or if a period of 14 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 230. Discretionary fiscal year 2014 appropriations in this title are hereby reduced by $24,000,000: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall allocate this reduction within the accounts to which the reduction is applied: *Provided further*, That $156,000,000 are hereby rescinded from the fiscal year 2014 funds appropriated in title II of division E of Public Law 113-6 for ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services'', ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance'', and ''Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities'': *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall allocate this rescission among the three accounts.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed $7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, $57,980,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, $35,272,000: *Provided*, That $2,500,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102–229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, as authorized by law, for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed $1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, $70,685,000. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the ''Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies'' account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, $67,400,000, of which $1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

SEC. 301. Funds appropriated in this Act under the heading ''Department of Defense—Civil, Cemeterial Expenses, Army'', may be provided to Arlington County, Virginia, for the relocation of the federally owned water main at Arlington National Cemetery, making additional land available for ground burials.

TITLE IV

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. No part of any funds appropriated in this Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, and for the preparation, distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress, except in presentation to Congress itself.

SEC. 404. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of ''E-Commerce'' technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 405. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 406. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 407. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 408. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public website of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 45 days.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 409. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 410. None of the funds made available in this Act may be distributed to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) or its subsidiaries or successors.

SEC. 411. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the

executive branch to exercise the power of eminent domain (to take the private property for public use) without the payment of just compensation.

SEC. 412. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the executive branch to pay for first-class travel by an employee of the agency in contravention of sections 301–10.122 through 301–10.124 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 413. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MORAN

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike section 413.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, section 413 prohibits any funds, no matter how small they might be, to renovate or expand any facility in the U.S. for the purposes of housing Guantanamo detainees. The fact is that the Department of Defense does have six facilities where Guantanamo Bay detainees could be held in the United States. Those facilities are currently operating at only 48 percent capacity.

Mr. Chairman, if we were to look deeply into this issue of detention at Guantanamo Bay, we would conclude: number one, that this detention facility doesn't meet the standards of justice that our American jurisprudence system demands; number two, the vast majority of people at Guantanamo Bay should have been released. Even the Bush Administration recognized by their actions, that the vast majority of the 779 people that were put there should never have been detained, because they released most of them; number three, the best place for them to be detained and then tried is in the United States; and number four, the continuance of the Guantanamo Bay facility represents an immediate security threat to the United States because it is a rallying cry and a recruitment tool for our enemies.

Right now, there are more than a hundred detainees that are protesting what appears to be an indefinite detention the only way they can—through hunger strikes. Thirty-seven of them are being tube-fed through their noses into their stomach. They're held for about 2 hours to make sure that this liquid stuff is digested.

Guantanamo has become an immediate humanitarian crisis. It needs to be addressed urgently because the rest of the world can't understand why we don't do the right thing by those detainees who still are at Guantanamo Bay, whom we have cleared. In fact, the Bush administration cleared them for release because they had no evidence on them. President Obama has asked the Congress to lift restrictions on detainee transfers. He's asked DOD to identify a site in the United States for military commissions.

□ 1710

They will appoint a senior envoy charged with transferring detainees to third countries and he's got to lift the restriction on transfers to Yemen. He's going to staff the periodic review board for those that cannot be transferred. I think he should use the certification and waiver provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act to transfer detainees from Guantanamo beginning with the reported 86 detainees already cleared for transfer.

But he can't do what he needs to do for our national security as long as the language of section 413 is in this bill. That's why my amendment would remove this restriction. What we're doing does not comport with America's system of justice or with fairness. And as I say, I believe it's a direct threat to our national security.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would urge that we remove this language by voting for my amendment. We have Department of Defense facilities, they're being underused in the United States, and that's the way that we could clear up a situation that we never should have created in the first place.

At this point—well, can I reserve time in order to respond to Mr. CULBERSON?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman may not reserve time. Does the gentleman yield back?

Mr. MORAN. I suspected not. So at this point I will yield back, and I'm anxious to hear from the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, this language is in the bill because it has strong, bipartisan support. The American people do not want these terrorists, these criminals, captured either on battlefields overseas or who have sworn to kill innocent American men, women and children housed in American prisons.

In the Second World War, Nazi soldiers—saboteurs—landed on Long Island and on the beaches of Florida carrying explosives with the intent of killing innocent Americans. Franklin Roosevelt, as President, when they were captured, they were held and tried in the military, and within 90 days they were executed. The prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, quite frankly, are being treated much more leniently than I think they should be, than most Americans think they should be.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strenuous opposition to the gentleman's amendment. I'd like to, if I could, yield the remainder of my initial time in opposition to my good friend, the chairman of the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

Mr. WOLF. I rise in opposition to my good friend's—and we are good friends—amendment. Let me tell you why. One, at the outset, in the President's first term, an executive order declared the intention to close Guantanamo Bay and bring the detainees to the United States. That proposal was rejected by the Congress overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis.

Similar language is carried in a Commerce, State, Justice bill on the subcommittee on which I serve. These provisions reflect a consensus of this and previous Congresses.

But let me tell you some of the real reasons why this is a bad and even, I would say, a dangerous amendment.

Several of these men who have been released from Guantanamo have gone back into the battlefield and have killed Americans. Secondly, Director Mueller, and I don't have the letter here, but I will give it to my friend, said this could have an impact on local jails, the locality of the jails. Do you remember the Blind Sheikh Rahman when Officer Pepe was stabbed in the eye with regard to an escape? To bring people like this into the United States could have an impact not only on the jail but also on the community.

To bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to the United States would cost roughly, if you recall, $250 million a year. Moussaoui, who was tried in the gentleman's district in Alexandria, it literally upset Alexandria, and if you take the same timeframe that Moussaoui was tried in, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's trial would go on for 4 years, would cost $1 billion—$250 million a year.

Do you remember when this idea first came out, Mayor Bloomberg said nothing, and CHUCK SCHUMER said nothing, and then all of a sudden everything broke loose and Mayor Bloomberg came out against it and Senator SCHUMER came out against it.

Lastly, the Bureau of Prisons, we had to give Holder the ability to reprogram money because they were going to furlough prison guards. They were going to furlough prison guards. So to bring people like this in to put this stress on the Bureau of Prisons would be absolutely crazy.

Let me just debunk another thing. For people who say, and I heard the

President say it, that Guantanamo causes terrorism, Guantanamo Bay Prison was not there when 9/11 took place. The Blind Sheikh who was involved in trying to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993, there was no Guantanamo. It's a hoax to say that. What you say is not true. It's false. To say that Bin Laden and people like that, we're going to say, oh, well, the Congress and the administration they're going to close down Guantanamo, we're going to close down al Qaeda, we're going to close down all the terrorism, it just doesn't make any sense.

This is a bad amendment. The gentleman is a good friend, but it's a bad amendment, and it's a very dangerous amendment and it would cost a lot of money and, quite frankly, I think would endanger the locality.

If you vote for this amendment, you'd better be prepared. What locality wants to bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to their local neighborhood. What locality wants to bring Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to their county, to their State? I say none. I urge a ''no'' vote on the amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I would just also say that bringing these terrorists in to the United States we would be giving them American constitutional rights, a very precious, very special privilege that is reserved for the people of the United States. These people should be tried in military court and treated as prisoners of war and the criminals and the cowards that they are. And I urge a ''no'' vote against the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I stand today also concerned about the policy on Guantanamo Bay detention facility. And as I listened to my colleague and as I consider the speech from the President last week, it is very, very clear that there needs to be additional debate on this subject. Also I understand that the House Armed Services Committee will be holding discussions on this very important issue in the coming days as they begin marking up the National Defense Authorization Act.

And so I say to my colleagues that this issue deserves a more vigorous debate but that this is not the proper venue to hold that debate. As I stated in my opening remarks today, this bill was crafted and brought to the floor as a result of bipartisan work and compromise due to the committee's commitment to our servicemembers, their families and to all of our veterans.

This is a deeply, deeply controversial issue that I believe requires much more in-depth discussion than we can have here today. And I respectfully submit that this appropriations bill is not the appropriate venue for discussion and action on this very, very controversial policy. Today is not the time, and this bill, I submit, is not the place.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

SEC. 414. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to execute a contract for goods or services, including construction services, where the contractor has not complied with Executive Order No. 12989.

SEC. 415. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

SEC. 416. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

SEC. 417. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to wind down or otherwise alter the implementation of a program, project, or activity in anticipation of any change (including any elimination or reduction of funding) proposed in a budget request, until such proposed change is subsequently enacted in an appropriation Act.

SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT

SEC. 418. The amount by which the applicable allocation of new budget authority made by the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under section 302(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 exceeds the amount of proposed new budget authority is $0.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FARR

Mr. FARR. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement Veterans Health Administration directive 2011-004 regarding ''Access to clinical programs for veterans participating in State-approved marijuana programs''.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1720

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a very simple amendment. As most Members know, 19 States and the District of Colombia have enacted laws that provide for the legal access to medical marijuana. Two of those States provide access to marijuana for more than medicinal purposes.

In checking out the rules within the VA on the matter of medical marijuana, it turns out that there is a policy in force, which is called Directive 2011–004, that specifically ''prohibits VA providers from completing forms seeking recommendations or opinions regarding a veteran's participation in a State marijuana program.''

My amendment denies the VA any funds to implement that prohibition, thus freeing up the VA doctors to assist VA patients in accessing medical marijuana outside of the VA system. All this amendment does is make it possible for the VA doctors to provide medical advice to the VA patients on the relative pros and cons of medical marijuana if they want to have that discussion. For those doctors who wish to offer recommendations to VA patients on accessing medical marijuana, they are no longer prohibited from doing so.

Essentially, the VA order is a censorship in those 19 States and the District of Columbia saying that doctors can't even have this discussion, yet the civilians going to a civilian doctor can have that discussion. So what we're doing is removing the ability for the VA to enforce that provision thinking that that's fair.

This is a very controversial, I know, issue of medical marijuana, but in those States that have made it the law of that State, then veterans ought to be treated equally with civilian patients in being able to have access to the total array of applicable medical devices, including the use of medical marijuana.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oregon is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate my colleague, Mr. FARR, bringing this forward. I agree with what he said, except for one item. And that is that somehow medical marijuana is intensely controversial. What we're finding is that with the American public it's no longer really that controversial. As he said, 20 jurisdictions, 19 States and the District of Columbia, have approved medical marijuana to be available to their citizens. Over 1 million Americans are people who are legally entitled to have the qualities of medical marijuana.

It has long been recognized that it has therapeutic values. They use it to deal with chronic paralyzing pain, the nausea associated with chemotherapy, symptoms of multiple sclerosis. There are many applications that are going to make a difference to our veterans dealing with traumatic brain injury or PTSD.

Now, it is ironic that when we are trying to have a veterans health system that deals with the total patient—and the committee just supported an amendment that I had earlier to help give them alternative therapies—that we would prohibit a VA doctor from even discussing a therapy that is perfectly legal in 20 jurisdictions.

What is the rationale here to prohibit the doctor from being able to have that conversation, forcing our veterans to go outside the system and incur additional costs? I think it is a misguided policy in the extreme.

We are in the process now where the majority of Americans think that marijuana should be legalized; and if you ask the question, ''Should we respect the decisions of States?'' that majority gets even bigger. Over 60 percent say the Federal Government ought not to interfere.

But here, the Veterans Administration is prohibited from giving candid advice to people in our system, people who could benefit, like the over 1 million legal medical marijuana patients. I think that's inappropriate. I think it's unfortunate. I think we should do everything we can to try and relieve the pain and suffering that our veterans are incurring; and if it means having a conversation with a VA doctor about something perfectly legal in their community, I think that's the least we could do.

I commend the gentleman for bringing the amendment forward, and I hope that the day will come when we provide this service to veterans who would like information about it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there further debate on the amendment?

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the amendment is withdrawn.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KINGSTON

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to pay more than 75 percent of the salary of any senior Department of Veterans Affairs official during the period beginning on July 1, 2014, and ending on September 30, 2014, unless as of July 1, 2014, the percentage of disability compensation claims that are more than 125 days old is less than or equal to 40 percent.

(b) In this section, the term ''senior Department of Veterans Affairs official'' means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and any Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill provides $43.6 billion for medical treatment for the 6.5 million veterans today who use the VA. It increases funding for processes, such as the electronic health record system and the disability claims process, the paperless environment, and yet that's what we did last year and the year before.

Nonetheless, today, as we sit here, the VA has 865,265 claims in their backlog; 66½ percent of these claims have been pending for more than 125 days. The current claim to be processed, the current amount of time is 292 days, and some offices report some claims that have been pending for 450 days.

This is not acceptable. But every year we provide more money for the VA to process claims, and every year the backlog gets more.

So what this amendment does is it takes a different approach. It takes an approach that's used in the private sector on a regular basis for compensation. It says to the senior members of the VA that if they don't have the claims backlog reduced by 40 percent by next July, the senior leadership will have a pay cut of 25 percent. Mr. Chairman, this follows their own goal. All it says is that if you don't make your own goal, there will be a 25 percent pay reduction for the senior management of the VA.

I think everyone in Congress has a VA office with problems in their own district. In Decatur, Georgia, a VA hospital that serves 86,000 patients in the State of Georgia has a backlog of over 4,000—or 4,000 patients have fallen through the cracks. Three deaths occurred over the past 2 years when the VA lost track of mental health patients and referred it to a contractor while not keeping a close eye on them while they were supposed to be monitored.

□ 1730

One may have committed suicide because he could not see a doctor and had an overdose of his treatment. There are other atrocities that have happened in that one VA clinic. Again, Mr. Chairman, this is not adequate. This is not acceptable. For our veterans, we need to treat them better.

I am a member of the Armed Services Committee and often say that the American soldier needs to have the best equipment and the best training that's out there because we want them to fight and win wars; but we also want them to come home and live normal lives, so we need to make sure that our treatment of the American military does not end in a theater of war but continues throughout the rest of their lives. As the claims or as the injuries that they incurred while rendering service to the Nation haunt them for the rest of their lives, we need to be there for them for their medical treatment.

This amendment sends a very strong signal to the VA that we are serious that this backlog will be cleaned up and that, if not, there will be a price to pay.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I believe Mr. KINGSTON has correctly identified the problem in the private sector. If you don't meet a performance goal, you're going to suffer a cut in pay. You can be discharged from your job. Mr. KINGSTON correctly points out that the VA set their own standard. They have set this goal of eliminating the backlog by the year 2015. Mr. KINGSTON's amendment simply says that, if they don't meet their own standard—their own yardstick, a measurement of success in reducing the backlog—that there will be a pay cut of 25 percent to the senior leadership that is responsible for setting this goal, that's responsible for leading the VA and executing this goal.

Congress is, frankly, tired of the delays, tired of the excuses, and we want our veterans to receive what they have earned. We want to be sure that they are given compensation for the injuries they suffered in the course of service to the United States of America, so I urge the adoption of Mr. KINGSTON's amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I could not agree more with the gentleman from Georgia that the claims backlog is absolutely unacceptable.

I think the chairman of the full Appropriations Committee, the ranking member of the full Appropriations Committee, the chairman of our subcommittee, and yours truly as the ranking member of the subcommittee have met with and have criticized and have done everything that we could possibly do to try to bring to the attention of the Veterans Administration and the Secretary of the need to have this backlog addressed, and I do think we address that in this bill; but I must rise in opposition to this amendment.

When I talk to veterans, the number one issue that they always have is the claims and claims backlog. The number one issue being worked on by my staff in southwest Georgia is VA claims and the claims backlog. I believe that what we have done in this bill will finally do something about the backlog.

Now let me just put a pin right there for a moment. The backlog, while inexcusable, does have some basis.

Just a couple of years ago, this Congress, in an effort to support our Vietnam era veterans, made it possible for the Agent Orange claims to be covered by the VA even though that had been an ongoing issue for the two decades that I've been a Member of Congress. As a result of that, there was a great surge of VA claims by Vietnam veterans, which added to the backlog. Add to that the returning veterans from Iraq and now from Afghanistan, which has added even more to that backlog, resulting in the now almost 850,000 claims when, 2 years ago, before the Agent Orange claims, we had just about eliminated that backlog.

I think that, even though there is some justification, the backlog is inexcusable, but in this bill that we are debating right now, we've done something about the backlog:

First, the bill fully funds the general operating expenses by the VBA, which will support 20,851 claims processors, which is 94 more than in last year's bill, and all 94 of these new claims processors will work disability claims. The bill fully funds the Veterans Benefits Management System at $155 million and the Veterans Claims Intake Program at $136.4 million. These two efforts should speed up the VA's efforts to take old claims that are filed on paper and convert them into digital files that are easily searchable by the claims processors, thus speeding up the claims process;

Second, we include a monthly reporting requirement for the VA to provide Congress with several statistics, such as the average wait time at each regional office, the rating inventory that has been pending for 125 days, rating claims accuracy, and month-to-month updates of any changes in those statistics;

Third, we require a report on the VA's expedited claims initiative that was announced just a few weeks ago. This report should give the committee insight into whether or not the Secretary's new initiative is having a positive result.

I believe that we should let the measures in this bill take effect before we turn to these more drastic measures. I understand the frustration that the gentleman feels and that is felt by most of the Members of this Congress, and I understand the frustration that is felt by our veterans and even by the Secretary, who is quite frustrated. I am open to all reasonable methods to solve the problem, but I believe that we should avoid measures like this as it is unnecessarily punitive, and I believe that the measures that we have put forth in this bill will adequately get results, accountability, and ultimately meet our objective of eliminating the claims backlog by 2015.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I ask unanimous consent to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. I yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank the gentleman from Texas for the time.

To my friend from Georgia, who I know is just as fervent as we are in terms of cleaning up the backlog, I would say the only part with which we are in disagreement is this approach, again emphasizing that this committee has provided the adequate funding to reduce the backlog. We did it last year, and we did it the year before, and we did it the year before that.

What we are doing with this amendment is what the private sector does every single day—it bases compensation on performance. We are saying, if you don't perform to your own guidelines, there will be a compensation penalty for it.

Congress has reduced its expenses, depending on the committee, anywhere from 8 to 14 percent. We have not had a COLA in several years now. In fact, the only way the United States Senate passed a budget this year was because of an amendment that was offered, called ''no budget, no pay,'' and the House passed a budget, too, under that threat. One way you do get people's attention is to say, You have got to perform in your job or there will be a salary cut. That's all we're doing.

For the men and women who put their lives on the line for our country that we could have this debate today and that we can go about our lives tomorrow and the next day and raise families in a free and independent country, we owe it to them. A backlog of 800,000 claims is not acceptable, and we are tired of talking about it. This amendment takes the final step. We are going to make a change. We are going to get that backlog cleaned up.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, it's common sense that your performance should be tied to your pay, so I urge the adoption of the gentleman from Georgia's amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1740

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. KUSTER

Ms. KUSTER. I have an amendment at the desk and offer that amendment at this time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any conference (as described in the Office of Management and Budget memorandum M-12-12, ''Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations'', dated May 11, 2012) for which the cost to the agency exceeds $500,000.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from New Hampshire is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is straightforward. It would prohibit the Federal Government from spending more than $500,000 of the funds appropriated by this bill on any single conference. This amendment would simply enforce the Obama administration's May 11, 2012, Office of Management and Budget memorandum promoting efficient spending.

I understand the need for the VA and other agencies to invest in workforce development, and I recognize the role that conferences can play in improving services for our constituents. But from the GSA to the IRS, time and again we have seen Federal agencies misuse public funds at conferences and make expenditures of questionable value. In recent years, this problem has extended to the VA.

In 2011, the VA spent over $6 million on just two conferences. This prompted an investigation by the Department's Inspector General, who documented numerous examples of excessive cost and unnecessary and unsupported expenditures, including over $49,000 for a parody video, over $97,000 for unnecessary promotional items, and over $43,000 in awards paid to the staff managing these conferences.

We can all agree that the VA should focus its limited resources on its core mission: serving those brave men and women who have worn the uniform and served our country.

There are so many worthwhile uses for VA funding, from eliminating the egregious claims backlog, to improving support for survivors of military sexual trauma, to expanding access to health care services in rural communities such as in my district in the northern town of Colebrook, New Hampshire, on the Canadian border.

I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support for America's veterans.

Out of respect for our constituents during these times of enhanced fiscal responsibility and in service to our veterans, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. ROTHFUS

Mr. ROTHFUS. I have an amendment at the desk printed as No. 3 in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to stand with our Nation's veterans and their families.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. As public servants, we have a solemn obligation to make sure that our veterans receive the respect, support, and care that they have earned and rightly expect.

That responsibility extends to employees and executives of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately, the VA has failed veterans in western Pennsylvania and around the Nation.

This failure has resulted in the outrageous disability claims backlog and the unconscionable death of five veterans at the VA Pittsburgh Health Care System. In light of these unresolved problems, no one in the senior leadership of the VA should be paid a performance bonus.

Today, over 865,000 veterans around the Nation are waiting to receive disability benefits from the VA. Of those veterans, almost 576,000 are considered part of the VA backlog, meaning their claims have been pending for more than 125 days.

On average, our Nation's veterans must wait between 316 and 327 days for their first-time disability claims to be processed. Wait times in major population centers and in my district are often longer. For example, veterans must wait 642 days in New York, 619 days in Los Angeles, 542 days in Chicago, 517 days in Philadelphia, and 625 days in Pittsburgh.

The number of veterans who have been forced to wait more than a year to receive their benefits has grown by more than 2,000 percent over the last 4 years, despite significant increases in the VA's budget during the same time period.

In addition, a study conducted by the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review found that veterans who disagree with the VA's initial decision must wait even longer. That study found that it takes an average of 1,040 days for the agency to make decisions in appeals cases. That's almost 3 years.

In fact, some veterans wait so long that they die before their claims are processed. The Trib-Review study found almost 3,000 cases between 2009 and 2013 in which veterans or their surviving spouses died before getting decisions on their disputed claims.

Western Pennsylvania veterans have recently seen even more egregious failures of the VA firsthand in the death of five veterans due to an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease. The VA Inspector General found that the systemic failure of the Pittsburgh VA to follow its own safety protocols and a breakdown in communication resulted in these unconscionable deaths.

Four days after the Inspector General's report was released, the regional director of the Pittsburgh VA was awarded an almost $63,000 bonus and presented with the Presidential Distinguished Rank award.

In total, the VA gave its senior executives bonuses totaling $2.8 million in 2011 and $2.3 million in 2012. Paying bonuses to executives of an organization with this kind of abysmal performance record is ridiculous. In the private sector, this level of performance achievement is rewarded with a pink slip, not a bonus check.

Rather, this hard-earned taxpayer money should be properly directed towards fixing the problems at the VA and ensuring that our veterans receive the first-rate service and care they rightfully deserve. VA executives need to take responsibility, fix these problems, and do their jobs.

I urge my colleagues to stand with our veterans and their families and support the Rothfus-Roby-Tipton-Kelly-Huelskamp amendment.

Mrs. ROBY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROTHFUS. I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to rise in support of the gentleman's amendment and I just want to add—and you've heard the statistics—that the number of backlogged cases—each case represents a veteran who may have earned a benefit but is currently being denied because of bureaucratic delay.

In the last 4 years, the number of VA claims pending for longer than a year has grown by 2,000 percent.

An award of a bonus should be a special recognition of success and accomplishment, not a right or a routine payment.

Mr. Chairman, I don't consider a backlog of over 1.2 million cases to be cause for celebration or reward. I consider it a catastrophe that must be fixed. Restricting the ability to award bonuses until that backlog is cleared is a commonsense good-government policy. I'm pleased to support my colleague's amendment. It is a strong step in that direction.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Reclaiming my time, I urge my colleagues to stand with our veterans and their families by supporting this amendment and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting Chair. The gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to lend my support for the underlying bill we are debating today that addresses critical health care, housing, education, and unemployment needs for our soldiers who are deploying and our veterans who are returning from the battlefield.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations measure is one of the most important pieces of legislation Congress considers annually. It provides the necessary funding to house, train, and equip our brave men and women in uniform, support our military families, and maintain our military base infrastructure. Put simply, no one should stand ahead of our men and women in uniform or our Nation's veterans when it comes to making Federal funding decisions.

Critical to this discussion is the priority placed on investments in medical care for our Active Duty servicemembers and veterans.

I appreciate that the committee continues the precedence set in past years of providing advanced appropriations for the VA.

□ 1750

Allowing for advanced appropriations provides a platform for long-term planning and investment in critical programs that meet the emerging needs of our servicemembers and military families.

I want to personally thank the committee for providing these resources that will allow our VA hospitals, including those in my district, to prepare adequately for the number of veterans returning home from deployment. This approach will provide flexibility to capitalize on emerging technology and treatments that will ensure our warriors here at home are receiving the very best health care possible.

As well, I would like to thank the committee for its important work to ensure that we are maintaining investment in our military installations. I applaud the inclusion of $35.8 million for the construction of housing units at Naval Station Great Lakes, located in my district. This funding will allow more servicemembers to receive the training they need, while not overburdening them with complicated, temporary housing conditions.

This forward-looking investment is one that illustrates how we can further utilize existing military infrastructure to achieve efficiencies in training and services. I want to again thank the committee for its work on this important bipartisan bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, we are all outraged in regards to the claims backlog and the incidences of poor quality health services and safety. The current claims backlog is, as we have said over and over today, unacceptable. There is no question that the VA has failed to successfully deliver one of its key missions—to provide timely ratings of disability.

Given this failure, it is hard to imagine how VA leaders responsible for disability claims rating and the claims processing transformation could warrant high performance ratings and substantial bonuses. It is also clear that some VA health facilities have had serious issues that put the health, safety, and well-being of veterans at risk. This, too, is unacceptable. Where these failures have occurred, it is hard to

imagine how the VA leaders of these facilities could have received high performance ratings and substantial bonuses.

However, this amendment will not provide any solution in the short term, and in the long term it may have adverse consequences and compound the very problem that it attempts to address.

Many VA workers are compassionate and hard workers. The previous amendment that was adopted, which was adopted by this body by voice vote, referenced models from the private sector by cutting pay, reducing the pay by 25 percent until the backlog is reduced. However, if you follow that same model from the private sector, bonuses are the converse of that so that when those backlogs are reduced, and if there is exceptional work that goes in to reducing that backlog by those responsible at the VA, then appropriate bonuses could be granted.

This amendment, I submit, would make the VA a less attractive option than other agencies when it comes to recruiting and retaining quality executive leaders, and it will not have the very talent it needs to solve the problems that it faces today, like the claims backlog and the health care deficiencies.

Furthermore, the SES pay and bonuses are governed by title 5 of the United States Code and administered by the Office of Personnel Management. Any change to title 5 to address VA would then also apply to all other Federal agencies. Attempting an across-the-board, one-size-fits-all fix will penalize those dedicated VA executives who are working hard, and well, to find solutions to the VA's problems.

So I urge our colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment, that's the Rothfus amendment, not because we don't have the challenges and the obligation to eliminate this backlog and to do it forthwith, but because I think we are going a little bit too far in attempting to create a disincentive for people, not solving this backlog.

I think that recruitment and retention of people in the VA, talented people, talented executives who can effectively solve the challenges that we face, like eliminating the backlog, will be undermined if this amendment should become law.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. I move to strike the last word, Mr. Chairman.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Kansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Chairman, I won't take quite that long, but I appreciate the opportunity to visit about this amendment. I have always thought bonuses and performance awards to employees should only be given out to those who go above and beyond the expectations laid out in their job description. An end-of-the-year bonus should never be an assumed addition to an employee's paycheck, but the Department of Veterans Affairs apparently takes a very different approach to performance awards for many of their employees, particularly top-level administrators and supervisors.

As a member of the VA Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, we've held multiple hearings on the mismanagement and negligence of Federal employees at the VA. What's worse, many of these individuals have been rewarded for their behavior.

We're all aware of the situation at the VA Pittsburgh health care system and the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, but how many of us know that the individual in charge received a bonus for the very year that we potentially had five deaths from that outbreak that could have been prevented?

At another hearing conducted by our Oversight Investigations Committee, I recently asked a VA bureaucrat who had missed deadlines and overspent on VA construction projects of over a billion dollars to explain why he deserved $55,000 in bonuses. In our exchange, he had no idea—claimed to have no idea why he received this bonus; and, actually, neither did I, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier this afternoon, much more troubling, we had another VA Oversight hearing where it was revealed that potentially up to 20 million veterans' records have been hacked and perhaps accessed by foreign state actors, and the individual in charge of the security during these last 4 years when this apparently occurred has received over $87,000 in bonuses. This has become a trend within the VA departments, and I believe taxpayer dollars would be better directed towards protecting the sensitive records of our veterans and their dependents and improving veterans' health care options.

I support this amendment. I am glad my colleague from Pennsylvania has offered it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I want to express my support for this amendment. I share the gentleman's intense frustration with the VA for their failure to meet their own guidelines and their own deadlines for eliminating the backlog, and I urge adoption of the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC._____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicated for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this officer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

Mr. GRAYSON (during the reading). Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to waive the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, this amendment strengthens existing provisions in the bill by preventing the award of contracts of money allocated under this bill to offerers or principals of offerers who, within the 3-year period preceding the offer, have been convicted or had a civil judgment rendered against them for such action as fraud, theft, bribery, making false statements, tax evasion, and so on.

□ 1800

It would be unconscionable, Mr. Chairman, if we allowed taxpayer money to be given to contractors who have been convicted of such things as bribery; and, therefore, I offer this amendment to prevent that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. RUNYAN

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Chairman, my amendment states that none of the funds made available by this act may

be used to propose, plan, or execute a new or an additional round of base realignment and closure, otherwise known as BRAC.

We all recognize the budget pressures we face. A round of BRAC closures now will entail a large up-front cost. We should direct these limited dollars to addressing the current mission and readiness needs supporting our warfighters.

For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, which helps ensure these funds address current needs. I know that many Members of this Chamber want Congress to continue to have oversight of our base and force structure, and my amendment ensures that we do so.

I thank the chairman and members of the subcommittee for working with me on this important amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I just want to express my support for the gentleman's amendment and urge its adoption by the House.

I yield back the balance of my time

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to award any contract in an amount greater than $1,000,000 for which the Department of Defense did not receive at least two offers.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that would boost competitive bidding across defense construction projects.

The Department of Defense manages hundreds of billions of dollars in contracts each year, 43 percent of which are noncompetitively awarded. The Government Accountability Office has reported that the Department of Defense does not keep accurate records of which contracts received multiple bids or why sole-sourced contracts are awarded. This is not good government.

Competition works because it drives down cost while giving consumers greater choice. It is the cornerstone of our free-market economy and needs to be integrated throughout the government.

I recently introduced the SAVE Act with my colleague, Representative DAVID JOYCE from Ohio, to root out wasteful and duplicative government spending. The bipartisan legislation would implement several commonsense solutions outlined by the GAO to reduce up to $200 billion in spending over the next 10 years.

One of the 11 measures in my bill encourages the robust use of competitive bidding to reduce contract costs across all agencies.

Today's amendment is an extension of the SAVE Act. It would prevent the Department of Defense from spending the taxpayers' money on contracts over $1 million that have not received at least two competitive bids.

With the national deficit currently at almost $17 trillion, and the current deficit over $600 billion annually, it is clear that we must rein in government spending, but we must do it in a strategic way, cutting programs that are wasteful, duplicative, or ineffective; and this amendment would do just that.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this commonsense and cost-saving amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TERRY

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act, including the funds made available for ''Construction, Major Projects'', may be used to increase the funding for any major medical facility project (as defined in subsection (a)(3)(A) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code), which is under construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act, above the amount specified in the prospectus described in subsection (b) of such section 8104 and the detailed estimate of cost described in paragraph (1) of such subsection.

Mr. TERRY (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to waive the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Chairman, the Terry amendment requests that none of the funds made available by this act, including the funds made available for the Construction and Major Projects account, be used to increase funding for any major medical facility project that is under construction as of the date of enactment of this act.

A major medical facility project, as defined by section 8104 of Title 38 in the U.S. Code, is a project that involves a total expenditure of more than $10 million. This includes the cost overruns of new VA hospitals.

Take the new VA Hospital in New Orleans that was originally supposed to cost $625 million, but a new GAO report shows that the cost overruns at this particular facility is $370 million, pushing that to a near-billion-dollar hospital.

The Navy Times recently reported about a GAO report that clearly illustrates this problem and should greatly disturb everyone. The Government Accountability Office found that the VA Hospital construction projects in Denver, Las Vegas, New Orleans, and Orlando are, on average, experiencing delays of 35 months and cost overruns of around $366 million. This comes out to about, with the expected costs and the overruns, almost a billion dollars per hospital.

My amendment is designed to stop these cost overruns. In the Omaha metropolitan area, eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, there's about 112,000 underserved veterans in Omaha that are all too familiar with the cost overruns and delays associated with the building of VA hospitals.

We have an almost 70-year-old facility in Omaha that is in dire need of replacement. The infrastructure's decrepit; it's rusting away. The HVAC system is so poor that we can't use many of the rooms. And then on top of that, our seven operating rooms have been shut down recently.

Unfortunately, there's no telling when the VA is going to get to it. The veterans in Omaha are being told that there's no money left.

This isn't just Omaha; this is occurring in California, Texas, and all over the world. This is unfair to the seniors to have this level of cost overruns and mismanagement.

So that's the purpose and reason behind this amendment, to start making them focus on the bidding process, do it right, and not simply just have a bid and then make all the additions and changes afterwards that drive up the costs. And so I urge support for this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I would rise in support of the gentleman's amendment. I share his concerns; and that's why, in section 227 of our bill, we included language that's very similar. And I look forward to supporting the gentleman's amendment and working with him in conference to make sure there's no duplication.

The committee is also concerned about increases in costs beyond that originally specified on the project, and that's why we included the section and why I welcome the gentleman's amendment and urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ENGEL

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1810

Mr. ENGEL. On May 24, 2011, President Obama issued a Memorandum on Federal Fleet Performance that requires all new light-duty vehicles in the Federal fleet to be alternate fuel vehicles, such as hybrid, electric, natural gas, or biofuel, by December 31, 2015. My amendment echoes the Presidential Memorandum by prohibiting funds in the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act from being used to lease or purchase new light-duty vehicles, except in accord with the President's Memorandum.

Our transportation sector is by far the biggest reason we send $600 billion per year to hostile nations to pay for oil at ever-increasing costs. But America does not need to be dependent on foreign sources of oil for transportation fuel. Alternative technologies exist today that, when implemented broadly, will allow any alternative fuel to be used in America's automotive fleet. The Federal Government operates the largest fleet of light-duty vehicles in America. According to GSA, there are over 660,000 vehicles in the Federal fleet, with over 14,000 being used by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

By supporting a diverse array of vehicle technologies in our Federal fleet, we will encourage development of domestic energy resources, including biomass, natural gas, agricultural waste, hydrogen, renewable electricity, methanol, and ethanol. Expanding the role these energy sources play in our transportation economy will help break the leverage over Americans held by foreign government-controlled oil companies and will increase our Nation's domestic security and protect consumers from price spikes and shortages in the world oil markets.

Let me say that the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, and I have a bill that would mandate that by a certain date all vehicles made in America would be flex-fuel vehicles. It would cost $100 or even less to make each vehicle flex-fuel. Other countries have it. America should not be behind other countries. We will be introducing this legislation shortly.

So I ask that my colleagues support the Engel amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TIPTON

Mr. TIPTON. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. The amounts otherwise provided by this Act are revised by reducing the amount made available for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Administration'', and increasing the amount made available for ''Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—Information Technology Systems'', by $10,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with an amendment to reduce wasteful spending by the Department of Veterans Affairs on conferences and use the money to be able to assist the VA backlog of processing disability claims for veterans. Two-thirds of all veterans who file disability claims with the VA must wait longer than 125 days to be able to receive their benefits. I have seen this firsthand from constituents in my district. People have contacted my office in sheer exasperation by the lack of response and endless delays by the VA in processing their claims.

This isn't a statistic we're talking about. This is literally peoples' lives. Many of the veterans on the backlog are in desperate need of care, care that has been delayed by needless lag of bureaucratic backlogs in the Department of Veterans Affairs. This is deplorable, Mr. Chairman. The VA backlog has grown by over 2,000 percent over the last 4 years, despite an increase in the budget of more than the 20 percent. As of March 28 of this year, the VA reported that there are over 606,007 backlogged claims and 865,989 total claims. Nearly 900,000 veterans who have sacrificed for our country are not getting their benefits. They're not getting the care that they need. Our veterans deserve better.

Despite the inability of the VA to be able to process claims in a timely manner, the agency continues to waste money on unnecessary conferences. In September of 2012, the VA Office of the Inspector General released a report highlighting abuses by the VA at conferences. That report included numerous troubling findings. According to the report, the VA spent more than $6.1 million on two human resource conferences in Orlando, and nearly $100,000 on unnecessary promotional items like bags, pins, and water bottles. In addition to these, the report included information on many more instances of waste, fraud, and abuse at the VA.

Following the release of the OIG report, Congressman JEFF MILLER, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, stated ''it can be reasonably concluded that 10 to 15 percent of VA's conference spending is wasteful, amounting to $10 to $15 million a year, at the least.'' I wholeheartedly agree with Chairman MILLER. That is why today I'm proposing this amendment to target $10 million in wasteful spending on conferences from the Secretary's $403 million budget and reprioritize these funds to be able to assist with addressing the VA backlog.

It's time that the VA focus their efforts on serving our veterans and processing their claims in a reasonable amount of time—not in 125 days or more. The VA must reduce the backlog, and it won't get it done by wasting time and taxpayer dollars at conferences. It's time that the benefits work for our veterans rather than our veterans having to be able to work for their benefits.

I urge my colleagues to be able to support this commonsense amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to maintain or improve Department of Defense real property with a zero percent utilization rate according to the Department's real property inventory database, except in the case of maintenance of an historic property as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) or maintenance to prevent a negative environmental impact as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. I rise today to offer an amendment to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that would eliminate wasteful spending on unused facilities, which could save tens of millions of dollars in fiscal year 2014 alone.

The Department of Defense has hundreds, possibly thousands of buildings and structures that it has rated at zero percent utilization. This is an incredible number of useless facilities the Department of Defense is paying to maintain. Federal agencies, as a whole, must do a better job at managing their facilities. Taxpayers cannot continue paying for unused and underused buildings while the Nation is at record debt levels. That is not good government and that is not smart spending.

That is why I joined with Representative DAVID JOYCE of Ohio to introduce the SAVE Act to root out the up to $200 billion in wasteful and duplicative government spending over the next

years. This amendment is an extension of one of the 11 commonsense solutions included in the bipartisan SAVE Act, preventing the Department of Defense from spending money on facilities that the Department itself has rated at zero percent utilization.

Mr. Chairman, we all agree that we must rein in government spending. The best place to start is by rooting out waste. My amendment is a commonsense solution to do just that, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1820

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word and enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Georgia, the ranking member of the committee.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. The President's budget request included $3.6 million for the Special Operations Boat Docks in Key West, Florida. These improvements will help ensure that the Special Forces Underwater Operations School, which trains more than 300 servicemembers and conducts support training for troops preparing for deployments, can continue to meet its critical role in our Nation's defense.

The Appropriations Committee recommended no funds for the project. As I understand it, the subcommittee made that recommendation with no prejudice against the boat dock project. Having determined that the Army had sufficient military construction funds available to complete the project without additional appropriations, the committee recommended no additional funds to undertake the project.

I yield to my friend from Georgia to ask if it is a fair characterization of the committee's recommendation.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I would agree with the gentleman from Florida. The Army does have sufficient funds in bid savings and in unobligated balances from prior military construction appropriations to undertake a $3.6 million project. I would be happy to work with the gentleman to see if the Army would use those existing funds on this project.

Mr. GARCIA. I thank the gentleman, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

Mr. KING of Iowa. I have an amendment at the desk, Mr. Chairman.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Iowa is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate being recognized. I bring this amendment to the floor out of a sense of fiscal responsibility and a sense of duty to the people that go out and work hard every day and return a value for every dollar, for every hour they invest, a value returned on production.

I have spent my life in the construction industry. We have paid Davis-Bacon wage scales, I believe, in each year that I have been in business, and we were a merit shop operation. So I have both sides of experience to this. I have worked underneath Davis-Bacon wage scales, and I have worked in competition with them.

Davis-Bacon is rooted back in the early 1930s. There was a decision made by a couple of people from New York, both Republicans I might add. They let me down then before I was born. They wanted to provide protectionism for their people in New York and lock out minorities that would be coming from the South to build Federal buildings during that era of the Great Depression in New York. It remains the last vestige of Jim Crow laws that's designed to protect and lock out minorities from the construction industry as far as labor is concerned.

My records on this is it costs a lot of money to have Davis-Bacon wage scales imposed. And our King Construction records show over the years that there is somewhere between 8 and 38 percent increase in the costs that we have to bid a project when we make the adjustment for Davis-Bacon. According to Beacon Hill, there's a 9 to 37 percent increase. I just simply use a 20 percent increase as a rule of thumb to discuss the amount of cost that is extra.

So it's this: if we're going to have federally mandated union scale that turns out to be the increase in price for every Federal construction project that has $2,000 or more in it, the result of that is then that if we're going to build only 4 miles of road instead of 5; only four bridges instead of five; only four military facilities instead of five; only four sets of barracks instead of five; only four training facilities instead of five, we can get 20 percent more production out of the dollars that we have and maintain the quality and maintain that sense of responsibility and have a trained workforce, and we can bring more trainees into the process and we'll employ, according to the study I have in front of me here, an average of about 25,000 more minorities each year within the construction business that's there.

What we have instead is we have some people that are in the industry that sit down once a year and they take a look at the records and they decide, well, let's see, let's pay a little bit more to the people here in labor because we don't want to compete outside of our particular industry. We'll raise these wages and we'll transfer that to the taxpayers. It is not a prevailing wage; it is a mandated union scale. That is the effect of it, Mr. Chairman.

I have lived under this for at least 28 years that I operated King Construction. We're now in about our 38th or 39th year of business. We have deep experience with it; and the quality of the work does not suffer, neither does the finishing, neither does the completion, neither does the bonding. All of this construction industry works better when you have real competition instead of some kind of mandated wage scale. Plus, eliminating the enforcement of Davis-Bacon wage scale brings efficiency in and it brings competition in. It's an impossible and onerous Federal regulation to seek to try to regulate. No one can sit in government and determine what a prevailing wage is.

It upsets the relationship between management and workers. And I've been on both sides of that, on all four sides of it, as a matter of fact. It reduces the efficiency of the crews that are there because it reduces your ability to be flexible with the assignment of workforce and their flexibility to self-assign.

For every possible financial reason, you cannot be fiscally responsible or a fiscal conservative and oppose this amendment, Mr. Chairman. It must be supported by a country that's going deeply in debt. We're borrowing over 40 cents out of every dollar that we spend. Meanwhile, we can save 20 cents out of every dollar in this MilCon appropriation bill simply by eliminating the enforcement of the Davis-Bacon wage scale on it.

So I urge in the strongest terms possible the adoption of this amendment which would eliminate the effect of the last vestige of Jim Crow law with regard to where military construction is concerned, save 20 percent, someplace between 9 and 37 according to Beacon Hill. And we can build five facilities instead of four. This is the right way to go to support my amendment.

I urge its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

I respect my good friend, but I am totally baffled by the comparison of Davis-Bacon to Jim Crow laws. I think it's totally inapplicable. Davis-Bacon is a pretty simple concept, and it's a fair one. What the Davis-Bacon Act does is protect the government as well as the workers in carrying out the policy of paying decent wages on government contracts.

The act requires that workers on federally funded construction projects be paid no less than the wages paid in the community for some of the work. It requires that every contract for construction to which the Federal Government is a party in excess of $2,000 contain a provision defining the minimum wages paid to various classes of laborers and mechanics.

Mr. Chairman, the House has taken numerous votes on this issue, and on every vote this body has voted to maintain Davis-Bacon requirements. Last year, we avoided including divisive language like this, and it's my hope that we stop attacking the working class and defeat the amendment before us today and move on to more important matters.

Davis-Bacon wages actually save construction costs. A study of more than 4,000 new schools, some built with prevailing wage and others not, found that there were no significant differences in construction costs associated with prevailing wage requirements. A repeal in Davis-Bacon wages has consistently been shown to increase costs because of the poor construction resulting in repairs, revisions, and project delays and consequently substantial cost overruns all as a result of the increase in employing unskilled, unqualified workers on projects.

For example, when President Bush suspended Davis-Bacon wages during the Hurricane Katrina building efforts, construction costs went up due to the dramatic increase in the employment of unqualified workers.

Opponents of the prevailing wage claim that the government can save billions by eliminating them. But they ignore how the Davis-Bacon Act has proven to increase workforce productivity and result in cost-effective projects. For example, a study of 10 States when nearly half of all highway and bridgework in America is done showed that when high-wage workers were paid double the wage of low-wage workers, they built 74.4 more miles of roadbed and 32.8 more miles of bridges for $557 million less.

Repealing Davis-Bacon wages dramatically decreases the economic benefits to the local community. For example, studies have shown that Davis-Bacon wages generate more than two times the amount spent on the construction project itself in the local community since the workers spend part of their income in local businesses and pay local taxes, all of which recirculates throughout the economy.

Driving wages down will not help to balance the Federal budget. A Florida analysis such as the Bluegrass Institute study fails to take into account the spin-off economic benefits of maintaining prevailing wages. Davis-Bacon improves the skill level and the training of all of the workers. Opponents of prevailing wage regulations assume that repealing the law and lowering wages will not erode training nor lead to an exodus of skilled workers.

□ 1830

They are wrong, because it has that exact effect. Davis-Bacon increases training opportunities for all workers, both union and nonunion.

Finally, a Davis-Bacon wage is usually not a union wage. The Davis-Bacon prevailing wage is based on surveys of wages and benefits paid to various job classifications of construction workers in the community without regard to union membership. According to the Department of Labor, a whopping 72 percent of the prevailing wage rates issued in 2000 were based upon nonunion wage rates. A union wage prevails only if the Department of Labor survey determines that the local union wage is paid to more than 50 percent of the workers in the job classifications.

Let me just say that we have in the past avoided including divisive language in our bill, and it is my hope that we can stop attacking the working class and we can defeat this amendment.

I urge all of the Members in this House to vote ''no.'' Davis-Bacon is good law, it produces good results, and it is cost effective for the taxpayers of the United States.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, the MilCon-VA bill should be one of the least controversial measures this committee considers. I am deeply disappointed that instead of seeking to pass the most bipartisan bill possible, some would prefer to weigh down the bill that funds veterans and military construction with divisive riders.

Not only is this procedurally problematic, but it's completely wrong on substance. Repealing Davis-Bacon has consistently, as my colleague has shown, been shown to increase costs. Poor construction results in repairs, revisions, project delays, and cost overruns. Let's not add an unnecessary policy rider that will not be included in the final version.

Again, this is probably one of the most bipartisan bills that we have considered. I have applauded the chair and the ranking member for working so closely together to produce a really important bill that helps our veterans. Why weigh this down with this divisive rider? Let's vote against this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of my colleague, Mr. KING's amendment, to H.R. 2216, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act. This amendment would ensure that no funds made available by H.R. 2216 could be used to implement, administer, or enforce the Davis-Bacon Act requirements for government contracts.

Mr. Chairman, the Davis-Bacon Act is an anachronistic law that was enacted during the Great Depression to prevent wayfaring contractors from lowballing local construction bids. In defense of my colleague, Mr. KING's characterization, the sponsors of the Davis-Bacon Act originally intended for it to actually discriminate against nonunionized Black workers in favor of White workers belonging to White-only unions. Mr. KING is correct—and that's in all deference to everyone in this debate—but this is indeed a vestigial remnant of the Jim Crow era and has no place in our military construction contracts and should be abandoned.

Furthermore, the Davis-Bacon Act results in billions of wasted taxpayer dollars every year. This act requires Federal construction contractors to pay their workers ''prevailing wages,'' which could be as much as 1½ times greater than their basic pay rate. This results in artificially high costs of construction, which are ultimately shouldered by American taxpayers.

Contractors wishing to offer a lower bid would still be required by law to pay their employees the prevailing wage and file a weekly report of the wages paid to each worker. This has a particularly negative effect on small businesses, as they are often unable to compete due to Davis-Bacon wage and benefit requirements, which reduces competition and further inflates contract rates.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, Davis-Bacon was enacted before the Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act. According to the GAO, these acts have rendered Davis-Bacon obsolete and unnecessary. There are a number of laws passed by this body that protect construction workers without the discriminatory intent and effect of Davis-Bacon.

During this time of fiscal austerity and responsibility, Congress must do all it can to lower Federal contract costs and decrease the burden on American taxpayers. This amendment is intended to stop the hemorrhage of wasteful spending and rein in our debt.

I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment by Mr. KING that would, again, ensure no funds made available by H.R. 2216 could be used to implement, administer, or enforce the wasteful Davis-Bacon Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Georgia and the gentlelady from New York who spoke previously on this, and I rise in strong opposition to the gentleman from Iowa's

amendment that would prevent Davis-Bacon from being enforced on projects under this act.

It is a shame, I believe, that this funding bill—which provides needed facilities for our servicemembers and benefits to our veterans—is being exploited to undermine hardworking Americans, but here we have it.

Ironically, however, in contravention with some of the things that have been said here on the floor under this amendment, Davis-Bacon requires that workers of every color and every gender be paid based on their work, not on the color of their skin, not on their gender. That flies in the face of some of the accusations that have been put out for the original purpose of this.

I do agree with the gentleman from Iowa that there were two Republicans who did originally sponsor this back in 1931, but I disagree that the danger, that the evil that it was trying to fight against back then, has gone away. As a matter of fact, it is just a race to the bottom that would ensue if we got rid of Davis-Bacon.

Like the gentleman from Iowa, I have worked on Davis-Bacon jobs. I was an ironworker for 18 years—very proud to work with the men and women of the building trades—and I've worked on jobs where some of the workers were union and some of the workers were nonunion; but the important thing was that we were not exploited by trying to pit us against each other in a race to the bottom based on the wages that we earned.

Since 1931, the Davis-Bacon Act has required Federal contractors to provide workers the local ''prevailing local wage.'' What happens is that's not the union wage, and in many cases, as the gentleman from Georgia has pointed out, it's the nonunion wage, but it is determined by a survey of the Department of Labor of the wages in that area.

The danger that it's meant to deal with is that, in some areas of the country where there's no work and folks are dealing with the recession or depression-like conditions in the construction industry, unscrupulous contractors can go down there where workers don't have any shot of going to work and they can take them at very low wages and transport them to another area of the country that has work and then depress the wage base in that area. That's what Davis-Bacon is meant to deal with, and that's still the situation that we have today and the danger that we guard against.

On these federally funded construction projects, Davis-Bacon protects these workers by preventing wage exploitation while still ensuring that the value for the taxpayer dollar and work quality are not compromised. This amount would bar funding to administer these wage requirements. Without Davis-Bacon protection, unscrupulous contractors will be free to exploit those tradesmen and -women who, despite a slight recovery in their jobs numbers, still today face high levels of unemployment.

□ 1840

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak for a moment about my time as an ironworker and about my involvement with the men and women of the building trades. These people are incredibly hardworking, they are immensely skilled, and they work in a dangerous industry. They truly care about the craftsmanship, and they are dedicated to getting the job done and doing it right, and working side by side with them was a true honor for me.

Generations of trades workers, by the sweat of their brows and the toil of their hands, built our great Nation. They deserve our respect, as does the work that they do. Protecting Davis-Bacon does just that.

The amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa will not create jobs, it will not house our military, and it certainly will not result in better care and services for our veterans. All it will do is take away critical wage protections and open our workers to exploitation in a race to the bottom.

I urge my colleagues to stand behind our American workers and to stand behind our veterans and oppose this amendment. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CULBERSON. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. FOXX). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I rise in strong support of the gentleman's amendment.

It is just common sense that the free market and competitive open bidding process is going to result in a savings to taxpayers. Davis-Bacon artificially drives up the cost to taxpayers at a time when we simply cannot afford it. With record debt, record deficit and at a time when all of us as stewards of the Treasury need to do everything we can to protect our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars, I strongly support the gentleman from Iowa's amendment, which is to make sure that we have a competitive bidding process in which the lowest price and, obviously, free market wages in this environment in the 21st century are going to be fair wages with good compensation and good benefits. We truly don't need to pay higher wages in an era of record debt and deficit.

I would, Madam Chairman, like to yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

First, in response to some of the remarks that were made that Davis-Bacon wages are based on surveys, well, technically they are based on surveys, but merit shop employers often do not answer those surveys because union organizers show up to organize their employees very shortly after that. It's not always a wise decision to turn your wage records in to the Department of Labor, because in many environments that just about guarantees union organizers coming in to try to drive the wages up more.

The statement about the cost of Davis-Bacon wages actually saving money in Katrina reconstruction, that's a new one for me. My recollection is that George Bush initially after Katrina suspended Davis-Bacon wages so that the money could be best applied to get the cleanup and then the reconstruction done down in New Orleans, in that area, under Katrina. He shortly thereafter lifted that order, so I don't know how a study could show how much money was actually saved. If my memory is correct, it never really was implemented for any length of time that would be appreciable. I don't know of a study that shows that imposed union scale Davis-Bacon wages actually saves the taxpayers money unless that study might be funded by the unions themselves.

There is no argument that this is the last remaining Jim Crow law, the law that was designed to lock Black Americans out of the union trades in New York, particularly in New York City. The vestiges of that remain today, and I think it's worthy to go back and look at a study and see what representation of the ethnic population is represented within these construction trades in places like New York City. It would be very constructive, I think, to look at that.

Also, labor is a commodity. The value of it needs to be determined by supply and demand in the marketplace, Madam Chair. And just like gold or oil or corn or beans, where I come from, you're not going to get the real wages out of that unless you let competition determine that.

And I, as an employer for all of these years, want to pay the best wages I can, I want to provide the best benefits that I can, I want to hire the best people that I can, and in doing so, your people are your company, and when you hire good people and you pay them a good wage, you get to keep them. What I set up a business model on was hiring people in a seasonal business to work 12 months out of the year, not seasonally, not going into the union hall and pulling somebody out and putting him to work for a few days and putting him back again, but saying to him, You can have a career here, and I'll give you 12-months' work for 12-months' pay, and I'll give you a benefits package.

I want to compete with that, but when the Federal Government comes in and tells you that somebody on a shovel has to be paid this and that somebody on a backhoe has to be paid this and that somebody on a motor grader has to be paid this, you will see them machine hopping during the day because they'll always be maneuvering to get on the machine that pays the highest wages, not the one that does the best for efficiency to get the job done.

I've had to go in and police that, and I've had to go in and build a spreadsheet that calculates the movement of everybody on our jobs going on in order to determine that I can comply with the Federal Government's requirement that I pay the wages that they demand and insist, instead of the simplicity of saying, Here is what I'll offer you for pay and benefits.

They've sometimes come to me and have said, What's my job?

I'll define your job for you. Help me make money, and I'll pay you for that, and I want to reward you by trying to give you enough money in benefits to keep you.

That's how free markets work. We cannot be out here setting up a union scale imposed by some people who are sitting in a backroom, which is what happens, by the way. We can't be supporting the last vestige of Jim Crow laws. We can't be letting the Federal Government decide what job categories are going to be paid what wages when we just want to put people to work and let them develop a skill and develop their trades.

So the machine hopping is something that gives me a lot of heartburn. Even if we have an actual representation of prevailing wage, it's still not representative of supply and demand because many States have passed their many Davis-Bacon laws, and the market has been so distorted that we don't today have a concept of what that cost is, Madam Chair. So I urge the adoption of my amendment.

Mr. CULBERSON. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. I come from Flint, Michigan, a working class community. I represent Flint-Saginaw-Bay City, and it's a community that's proud of the fact that in this area—and it's true across the country—the notion has been that, if you work hard, if you train yourself, if you focus on a trade or go to school, you'll be paid a wage or a salary commensurate with the contribution that you make to the work that you're doing.

We live in a time when we're seeing decreasing compensation for the value that the worker brings to the working place. Between 1945 and 1975, we saw worker productivity rise in this country by 97 percent, and we saw household income rise in that same 30-year period by 95 percent. There was some parity in the contribution that workers made and the compensation that they received. You fast-forward to the last 30-year period, and we've seen a period of economic growth and expansion, increased productivity—80 percent over the last 30 years—but in real wages, a 10 percent increase in productivity.

One of the reasons that we've seen such a drop is that we are not compensating the average workers for the quality and the work that they do and that they contribute to the highly productive society that we live in. This is yet another attempt to continue the race to the bottom, where we continue to see real wages go down and productivity continue to rise.

I have done a tremendous amount of work in local development. As a public and private citizen, I have been involved in lots and lots of construction projects involving hundreds of millions of dollars, and I will tell you one thing: there is absolutely nothing sacrificed by making sure that the people who do this important work are paid wages that are fair and that fit the marketplace. It is not only good for those families that benefit from a decent and fair wage, but it supports those local employers and those small businesses that we all talk about every day that we're trying to support.

Where does the money come from into communities that support those folks?

It comes from the fact that the workers have a decent living wage that allows them to pay their bills, set a little money aside for their families and contribute to a local economy. Davis-Bacon wages contribute to the ability for workers to be trained as well.

This is the wrong direction for this country. This is certainly the wrong direction in this particular budget connected to the work that our Nation does when what we fought for in this country was a society that rewards people for the quality and the quantity of their hard work and their training that they put to work in doing these tough construction jobs particularly. When we're already seeing private sector wages go down, we ought not as a Nation participate in this race to the bottom.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa will be postponed.

□ 1850

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

An amendment by Mr. AMODEI of Nevada.

An amendment by Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

An amendment by Mr. KING of Iowa.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in the series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 151, noes 269, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 188]

AYES—151

Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Camp
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Cotton
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Franks (AZ)
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Harris
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kilmer
King (IA)
Kingston
LaMalfa
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
McCaul
McClintock
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nolan
Olson
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ross
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Shuster
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stockman
Stutzman
Tiberi
Tipton
Upton
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho

NOES—269

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Andrews
Barber
Barletta
Bass
Beatty
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crawford

Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gosar
Grayson
Green, Al
Griffin (AR)
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Issa
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
Lamborn
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wenstrup
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—13

Becerra
Campbell
Cramer
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Keating
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Palazzo
Watt

□ 1917

Messrs. RIGELL, KELLY of Pennsylvania, ALEXANDER, GOSAR, GARY G. MILLER of California, BOUSTANY, HINOJOSA, RUSH and Ms. GABBARD changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. POE of Texas, GUTHRIE, JOHNSON of Ohio, HUNTER, McCAUL, OLSON and MEEHAN changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. AMODEI

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 248, noes 172, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 189]

AYES—248

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Calvert
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Engel
Enyart
Farr
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garamendi
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Hahn
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Honda
Horsford
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hultgren
Hurt
Israel
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Pastor (AZ)
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Radel
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Vela
Velázquez
Walden
Walorski
Waters
Waxman
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOES—172

Amash
Andrews
Bachmann
Barrow (GA)
Beatty
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Camp
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSantis
Deutch
Dingell
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Flores
Fortenberry
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Hartzler
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Holt
Hoyer
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Issa
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Levin
Lewis
Loebsack
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McNerney
Meeks
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Negrete McLeod
Noem
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (MI)
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Stockman
Terry
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Upton
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Yoho

NOT VOTING—13

Becerra
Campbell
Cassidy
Granger
Gutierrez
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Palazzo
Watt

□ 1923

Mr. NOLAN changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Ms. WATERS and Messrs. LYNCH, McINTYRE, GARRETT, and BONNER changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MORAN

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the

gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 170, noes 254, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 190]

AYES—170

Amash
Andrews
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Heck (WA)
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—254

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cleaver
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Campbell
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt

□ 1928

Ms. GABBARD changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. KING OF IOWA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 192, noes 231, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 191]

AYES—192

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Kingston
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOES—231

Andrews
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar

Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Hultgren
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McKinley
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Richmond
Roskam
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—10

Campbell
Diaz-Balart
Granger
Hastings (FL)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Watt

□ 1933

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

This Act may be cited as the ''Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014''.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise and report the bill back to the House with sundry amendments and with the recommendation that the amendments be agreed to, and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Ms. FOXX, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2216) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 243, she reported the bill back to the House with sundry amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole, with a recommendation that the amendments be adopted and that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. ENYART. I am opposed in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. ENYART moves to recommit the bill H.R. 2216 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 22, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $9,200,000)''.

Page 33, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $9,200,000)''.

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this amendment to H.R. 2216 to increase funding for veterans claims processors so that we can reduce the disgraceful backlog of claims waiting to be processed.

This is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill nor send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

We have been fighting two wars for over 10 years, which has resulted in a large number of veterans returning home with both physical and mental injuries.

□ 1940

In addition, veterans who served in Vietnam and the gulf war are getting older, and many are discovering health issues that are related to their service. The result is that currently there are over 900,000 veterans' disability claims waiting to be processed. The average wait for that backlog is now 9 months.

We are talking about American heroes like Michael Boren of Energy, Illinois. Michael is a veteran in my district who was in danger of losing his home because the VA took 19 months to track down his paperwork and process his claim. Veterans like Michael are in your district, and you've heard their stories, just as I have. Too many veterans are threatened with home foreclosure, having their cars repossessed, having their credit cards cut off, all because of the VA backlog. It's shameful.

We must act to speed up the process so that disabled, honorably discharged American veterans are not waiting without income for months and years. This motion to recommit adds $9.2 million to hire 94 additional VA claims processors. This doubles the number of claims processors in the base bill. The amendment is fully offset from unobligated and unused funds and funds from military construction.

This vote serves as a lifeline to countless veterans who can no longer wait for this problem to be solved.

When I look out at this House, I look down the center aisle. I look at the right side and see my colleagues, my friends in the party of Dwight David Eisenhower; I see the party of Teddy Roosevelt; I see the party of Abraham Lincoln.

When I look at the left side, I see my friends who represent the party of Harry S. Truman; the party of Franklin Delano Roosevelt; the party of Woodrow Wilson—great wartime leaders, all.

Those great Presidents knew the meaning of commitment to the troops that we sent to defend and protect our Nation. Today, we stand in their shadows. We in Congress committed to send these brave men and women in harm's way for our country. Folks in the Active Duty service, in the Guard, and in the Reserve, they have served us honorably; they have served their commitment proudly. Now we must complete our commitment to veterans in our time.

To paraphrase President Lincoln, many of the votes we cast here in Congress will be little noted, nor long remembered. But the veterans, veterans up there in that gallery, veterans back in your district, veterans all across this Nation will remember this vote; their families will remember this vote. Today, we vote to fulfill the promise of a great Nation to those who have served that great Nation. This is a vote to serve them.

Vote ''yes'' on this final amendment to help veterans get the benefits they have earned and they deserve. Vote ''yes'' on this motion to recommit.

When I step down from this podium, I will walk up that center aisle, not to the right, nor to the left, but up that center aisle, and cast my vote ''yes'' for this amendment, because it is for the veterans and for our great Nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members to refrain from referring to occupants in the gallery.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Our third-highest priority in the Constitution is to provide for the common defense. This bill, more than any other, has been done in a bipartisan way; this bill more than any other is vitally important to the peace of mind, to the quality of life of our men and women in uniform when they're on Active Duty standing on the walls of Rome defending our freedom and protecting us and putting themselves in harm's way, and the peace of mind and comfort of their families back in the United States and around the world where they're deployed, and when they become veterans and move into the veterans system.

We in this subcommittee, more than any other in the House, have been bipartisan, arm-in-arm, doing everything in our power to help ensure that no man or woman wearing the uniform of the United States should ever worry for one moment about the quality of their life, about the quality of their health care. We think of ourselves as the peace-of-mind committee for the men and women in uniform defending the United States. There's been no more bipartisan bill than this one, there's been no more open bill than this one, there's been no more open process for amendment than the appropriations process.

It is possible, in fact, for you to walk down here on the floor and with a yellow notepad and a pen write an amendment and walk down and hand it to the Clerk at any point during the debate on this bill and have it considered by the House. Yet we got this amendment 3 minutes and 45 seconds before the debate began. It reflects so poorly on the House of Representatives for the minority to present an amendment that we would have happily worked with you on to have accomplished in a bill in an amendment form had you just brought it down to the floor.

In fact, we have given the Veterans Affairs Secretary everything that he's asked for. The Veterans Administration has been given massive increases in funding to handle the claims backlog. In fact, Congressman KINGSTON of Georgia just offered an amendment, which the House has approved, which will cut the salary of the senior leadership of the VA by 25 percent if they don't meet their own deadlines on reducing the backlog.

The United States Congress has literally done everything. We've given them every dollar, everything they have possibly asked for. We've offered you every opportunity to just walk down here and amend the bill, yet you give it to us 3 minutes and 45 seconds before the debate begins. This ought to be exhibit A of why we need a rule in the House that all amendments ought to be published at least 24 hours in advance on the Internet, especially a motion to recommit as embarrassing, frankly, as this one.

I am happy to yield my time to the chairman of the Veterans Committee, Mr. MILLER.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the chairman very much for yielding his time. And I do think it's important that the Members know that the committee under both Democrat and Republican chairmen have given every dollar, every person, every piece of equipment, every software that the Department of Veterans Affairs has asked for. And to do this at the 12th hour is not the way to make a difference in what we are trying to do.

Our committee, the authorizing committee, has made it their number one focus; and Members here know this. MIKE MICHAUD and I together have worked with our committee members and other Members across the floor trying to make sure that the backlog is taken care of. This is purely a political stunt and not one that we should vote for.

Mr. CULBERSON. I urge Members to defeat this motion to recommit and vote ''no.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by a 5-minute vote on the passage of the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 198, noes 227, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 192]

AYES—198

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—227

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Radel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce

Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell
Granger
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt
Wolf

□ 1955

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

Under clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 4, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 193]

YEAS—421

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—4

Bass
Conyers
Miller, George
Nolan

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell
Granger
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Markey
McCarthy (NY)
Watt
Wolf

□ 2004

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION,

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday afternoon, June 4, 2013, I was required to return to my congressional district in Houston, Texas, in order to attend a memorial service for four members of the Houston Fire Department who lost their lives in the line of duty on Friday, May 31, 2013. This tragedy was the deadliest incident in terms of the numbers of firefighters lost in the history of the Houston Fire Department. As the senior Member of the Houston congressional delegation and a senior Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, attending the memorial service was directly related to my representational, legislative, and committee responsibilities.

Because of this excused absence I was not present for rollcall votes 188 through 193.

Had I been present I would have voted as follows:

1. On rollcall No. 188, I would have voted "no."

Broun Amendment, which eliminates funding for an on-going NATO headquarters project (a cut of $38,513,000) and applies the savings to the spending reduction account.

2. On rollcall No. 189, I would have voted "no."

Amodei Amendment, which takes overtime funding from 41 VA regional offices and concentrates it in the 15 offices with the worst backlog.

3. On rollcall No. 190, I would have voted "aye."

Moran Amendment, which language prohibiting the use of funds to construct, renovate or expand any facility in the United States to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment.

4. On rollcall No. 191, I would have voted "no."

King (IA) Amendment, which prohibits the use of funds to implement, administer, or enforce the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires federal contractors to pay locally prevailing wages

5. On rollcall No. 192, I would have voted "aye."

Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 2216.

6. On rollcall No. 193, I would have voted "aye."

Final Passage of H.R. 2216, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

EXTREME WEATHER

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, as hurricane season begins this week, there is no better time for Congress to refocus its efforts on better protecting our coastline communities and the more than 123 million people that live in them from extreme weather events.

In the wake of hurricanes like Katrina, Rita, Sandy, and Irene, which took lives and destroyed property in my district, extreme weather preparedness should be an issue that both

Democrats and Republicans support now more than ever.

Since 2011, extreme weather episodes have cost $188 billion in property destruction, business closures, and crop damages. Even worse, these storms have taken the lives of 1,107 Americans.

There is ample evidence to believe that this trend of increased extreme weather, which has grown exponentially since 2000, will only continue to get worse. Just today we heard about the widest tornado recorded in United States history at 2.6 miles wide and winds of 296 miles per hour.

We need to ask ourselves: Do we address the climate change problem now or do we continue to ignore future threats, making preventable disasters more and more costly with each passing year of inaction?

As the cochair of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition in the House of Representatives, I suggest we act now.

JOBS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, tonight we want to talk about jobs in America, we want to talk about how we can rebuild the great American manufacturing sector, and we also want to spend some time talking about a very special part of the American economy, and that is the infrastructure upon which that economy can grow and prosper. So there are many pieces to this puzzle about rebuilding the economic strength of this Nation.

□ 2010

Much of it comes down to what we call the Make It in America agenda. It's an agenda to rebuild the great manufacturing sector of this Nation. That's where the middle class found its strength. That's where the middle class grew following World War II. Unfortunately, in the last 15 years or so, we've seen a decline from some 20 million Americans in manufacturing down to perhaps 11 million.

In recent months, we've seen a resurgence in part due to some changes in law that we've put in place that end tax breaks that American corporations received when they sent jobs overseas—really foolish tax breaks. We ended many of those, and we have a few more to go. What we want to do is give manufacturers, American corporations and others, who want to on shore bring jobs back to America, we want to give them a tax break.

So the Make It in America agenda is about rebuilding that great American manufacturing base. There are many different parts to it. Part of it is the infrastructure system.

I was talking to one of my friends from the Connecticut area just a few moment ago, and he said, Listen, I can't be with you tonight, but what I want you to say is we had a terrible Amtrak train wreck in Connecticut just a week ago, and we think it may have been due to bad track.

That's the infrastructure, folks. We really need to build that train system here in America, the infrastructure for it.

I'm going to put up one more sign here before I call upon my friend from New York. Here it is. Now, that's a beautiful locomotive. That's an American-made locomotive. So this is manufacturing. This is an American-made locomotive by a German company, Siemens, one of the great industrial companies in this world. They bid on almost a half-a-billion-dollar project that was in the stimulus bill for 70 locomotives for Amtrak that had to be American made. This German company said half a billion dollars, American made, we can do that. They set up a factory in Sacramento, California, and that's the first American-made locomotive in many, many decades, or generations, and it's a beauty. It's electric. I think it's about 7,500 horsepower, and it's going to be used here on the East Coast and on that Boston to Washington, D.C., track. Hopefully, it'll be rebuilt.

Joining me tonight in this discussion about infrastructure and jobs and Make It in America is my friend from New York, PAUL TONKO. We're redoing the East-West show.

Mr. TONKO. Representative GARAMENDI, thank you for leading us in this hour discussion focusing on jobs—from a manufacturing sector, jobs from an investment. They come about in an investment in research, R&D, and they come about through innovation.

We have talked about this many times on this floor, that we come from districts that have that keen sense of vision about how to do it smarter, which can be that difference in the competitive edge that our businesses require in an international marketplace.

What I like about the investment through this package, Make It in America, is an across-the-board holistic approach, incentives that provide everything from encouragement to the local industries to retrofit and rebuild their manufacturing processes; to investment in the workforce, making certain that those cutting-edge skills and trades are being developed within our workers, making certain that we have that human infrastructure up and ready to go so as to be robustly competitive; and also talking about the investment in this ideas economy, which speaks to the sophistication of our American society. The intellectual capacity that is harnessed to produce jobs is an awesome measure that allows us to maintain a great bit of hope that we can robustly respond to the needs of today's economy, an international economy, and be a winning agent out there. And it happens with this investment. That's how we grow jobs.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, you have come to a very important point here, and that is: Before you came to Congress, you headed up a consortium in New York that did precisely that, didn't you?

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. I was at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and we saw what public-private matches were about. We were able to deal with the ideas economy. We came up with new ways to harness energy, to create energy efficiency in the outcome, and by so doing, innovation and research equals jobs, good-paying jobs that allow us, again, to have that cutting edge of cleverness, of having a thoughtful way to do things. The smart factor can win those contracts on an international scale. So I'm thrilled about what we can do through research.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, the Make It in America agenda has many, many parts to it. It has a research piece. It has an innovation piece. It has some tax issues to it. All of these have been packaged and pulled together by our leader, STENY HOYER, who I see has joined us on the floor.

Maryland is on the East Coast. California is on the West Coast, so now we've augmented our East Coast-West Coast show. Mr. HOYER, thank you so very much for your leadership on Make It in America.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for taking the floor, and I thank the gentleman from New York for joining in. I think that we are on the cusp of a real expansion and reinvigoration of our manufacturing sector in this country for a lot of reasons that I point out around the country, and I know the two of you do as well.

First of all, salaries are going up overseas. That's good news for them and, frankly, for us.

Furthermore, as we all know, it's costing a lot more to ship goods back to the biggest market in the world than it used to.

Thirdly, I think both of you have talked about energy. We are about to become an energy-independent Nation with energy that has a cost less than most of our competitors around the world, so we have become, in a relatively short period of time, I think, in many respects, the venue of choice for someone who wants to either expand or establish manufacturing here in this country or, frankly, continue to grow things in this country.

As you know, our Make It in America agenda really has four component parts. One is having a plan. Nobody talks about this more than JOHN GARAMENDI of California, and God bless you for that. Thank you so much for your leadership on this issue. And PAUL TONKO from New York also has been very focused on this issue, and I thank him for that.

The second part of the agenda is to not only have a plan, but be focused on exports, be focused on building markets for small, medium, and large businesses. Large businesses have the resources to look for markets themselves. In many respects, small- and medium-sized businesses do not, but they are producing products that they can sell not only here but around the world.

President Obama was in Baltimore not too long ago at a relatively small company, Ellicott Dredges, in Baltimore. They have sold dredges to over 100 countries in the world, and they are making those dredges in America.

The third part is to encourage bringing jobs home, not sending them overseas. It makes no sense to have a tax policy that gives benefits to people who are sending job overseas while we have millions of Americans who can't find jobs. So what we want to do is incentivize bringing jobs home by giving a tax break for not only bringing jobs home, but creating jobs here in America.

Lastly—you both referenced this—we need to make sure that we have a 21st century workforce. As a result, we need to invest, as the gentleman from New York just said—I am just repeating his words, but I use them all the time as well—we need to invest in education, innovation, and infrastructure. That's what helps you grow American manufacturing jobs. And Americans, when they're polled, over 85 percent of them say, if America is going to be the kind of country we want it to be, it will be because we make things here in the United States of America. And the ''Made in America'' label is seen all over the world. In fact, the ''Made in America'' label is a very popular label all over the world.

So I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and the gentleman from New York for their leadership and their focus on what is critical: if the next generation of Americans is going to make it, that we provide the kinds of jobs and opportunity, as well as education and investment in innovation, that they need to continue to live in the most successful economic country on the face of the Earth. I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. HOYER, thank you so very much. As I've heard you say over and over again, America will make it when we Make It in America.

Mr. HOYER. Amen.

□ 2020

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much for joining us.

Mr. TONKO, education, innovation, infrastructure—those are keys. There are a couple of other keys, as Mr. HOYER was saying. Part of it is our tax policy, the policies that come out of this building. And we can really do the kinds of things, laws, that really make a difference.

I put up that picture of that new Amtrak locomotive. It was a law, the Stimulus Act, that allowed the men and women in Sacramento, some 200 of them, plus another 70 companies that are the supply chain that supply the various parts to this locomotive to have a job.

And what happened in the stimulus bill was, okay, we're going to spend half a billion dollars for 70 locomotives for Amtrak. But, another sentence, they must be American-made, using American taxpayer money to buy American-made equipment.

So we now have this manufacturing plant in Sacramento. We now have men and women employed, not only in Sacramento, but around the Nation, making the various parts for this most advanced locomotive.

So it's public policy. I have a bill in that does that. It requires that if we're going to build the infrastructure and locomotives, buses, trains, roads, bridges, and use American taxpayer money, then we must be buying American-made products. Pretty simple stuff. It's the Buy America, and it creates jobs in America.

I know you have several pieces of legislation that you're sponsoring and supporting. You may want to bring those up. We'll talk about them for a few moments.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. The wordsmithing that you talk about is so critical. The addition of language that clarifies or specifically states ''made in America'' as an outcome, very critical to the legislation. And two things were happening. The wordsmithing didn't happen as tenderly as it should have for American workers, but there was also a disinvestment in manufacturing as a sector of our economy. And agriculture was ignored. Manufacturing was ignored.

Service sector was paid attention to; and then more narrowly, financial services got great attention. But we know that story: turn your back as government, say go function as you choose, and create derivatives to avoid government overview and avoid the watchdog. And we saw trillions lost to American households because of that failure.

Here there's a conscious attempt to say, no, we're not going to pay to have you ship jobs offshore. Yes, we're going to pay to have you bring them back. Yes, we're going to invest in workers. Yes, we're going to invest in research to develop new processes.

I have a bill that deals with energy efficiency that allows for us to enhance the efficiency of turbines that are being produced in Schenectady, that are being made in Schenectady at GE, and then exported to the markets around the world.

Routinely, I am showcasing manufacturing in my district so that the media, as a partner, can showcase what's happening right in our very neighborhoods, and that the story fully, complete and told to everyone, is that we're also exporting from Tech Valley, New York. That is so important for people to know, and we need to enhance that.

We need to provide for the reinforcement, the underpinning of support through language in bills, resources that are attached to various appropriations bills, and pointing a focus on American manufacturing.

I saw what happened through an incubator program at RPI, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in my district, where a local manufacturer was able to revisit his process, his manufacturing process. They upgraded it, went to a community college in the district, Hudson Valley Community College, which trained the workers from this facility how to use this new automated piece; and now they've added workers who are specifically trained on this automated concept. They're winning contracts, and Kintz Plastics in Schoharie, New York, in the upstate New York region, a rural county setting, by the way, is strengthened by all that investment.

That's what it takes. It's a focus, laser-sharp focus on how to meet the various elements of the equation that will take us to a winning effort. And it's straightforward, it's thought out, it's not mindless.

Instead of issues of ignoring manufacturing, providing for sequestration that automatically cuts programs where there ought to be investment, let's move forward with a sound budget. Let's move forward with an agenda that produces jobs.

The President has introduced a package that calls for a budget that's real, that displaces sequestration. He knows of the damage that that would do to the economy and to the investment in manufacturing that is needed now in a very targeted way.

So this is a thoughtful, mindful, analytical, academically driven agenda that really speaks to the needs of all sorts of efficiency operations, turbines that will be built to better scale, that will allow for better outcomes and save us, in the process, save jobs in the process, grow jobs, and then provide for more productivity on the local scene.

So, I think it's incredibly successful when we just apply simple logic to the situation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I certainly agree about logic and the sometimes lack of logic, the sequestration, which is no sense, otherwise known as nonsense, but extraordinarily damaging.

But you're talking about Rensselaer and what came out of that. I'll give you an example in my own district, Davis, California, University of California-Davis. And here's where your discussion really meets the road.

The engineering school did computerized programming for machine tools and did some very advanced research on how to do that. One of the Japanese companies that manufactured machine tools, one of the most advanced machine tool manufacturers in the world, Mori Seiki, came over to University of

California-Davis, talked to the engineers and the students and the professors that were putting together this computerized system for machine tools and said, we want to be part of that.

And so they began to use it and realized that what they needed to do was to be right next to the research so that they could constantly upgrade their machines. And they, therefore, came to Davis, California, built a factory, hired, I think, about 120 people now; and they're making the most advanced machine tools, computerized-driven machine tools anywhere in the world right in Davis, California.

So we can see the connection between research, the adaptation of that research into the manufacturing process, and then the jobs. These are all middle class jobs and above that are now available in Davis, California. And there are others that spin off from that, providing certain parts of it. So these are the keys.

Now, here's where the nonsense comes in. If those are the keys to industrial growth and manufacturing and job growth, why is it that we have a budget that's going to be back on the floor tomorrow that actually cuts research, cuts the educational components, cuts the job training, the retraining that's necessary, and doesn't do anything to create jobs except reduce the Federal support that has been critical in this Nation's history?

Why would we do that?

I don't understand, but it's going to be back here. This is the Republican Ryan budget. They're going to play some games tomorrow, try to pretend that somehow it passed the Senate when, in fact, we really need a budget conference committee so that we can sort out our differences, so we can lay the platform for future economic growth.

But that's not what that budget does. It's exactly the opposite. It's an austerity budget, and it cuts those things that really do create economic growth.

Unfortunate, but we have a different agenda; and we want that agenda of growth.

We, perhaps, ought to shift our gears here a little bit and talk about the infrastructure component which is integral to this. You mentioned it earlier.

I know that in your area a year ago you had tremendous flooding; and so the infrastructure, the protection from that, you may want to pick that up, and I'll follow along.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. Even the data compilation there, the research that's done with the weather patterns, putting together data that's compiled that are very compelling bits of information allow us to grow back smarter. If we're just going to rebuild after the damages of these consequences of Mother Nature——

Mr. GARAMENDI. It's global warming.

Mr. TONKO. Yes. And we have to be real about this. We have to take into mind and heart the situations out there. And to just simply rebuild and ignore the facts, if there's increased precipitation over the last 20 years, markedly so, discernibly speaking to us, we need to move forward accordingly. And so there should be retrofits that are responding to the data.

□ 2030

You don't rebuild a bridge to the same span and same height if the water volume is growing exponentially. We have combined heat and power situations that were impacted or survived the consequences of the disaster of Superstorm Sandy. Should we revisit how we rebuild some of the electric infrastructure?

So there are calls here that challenge us, that require us to do it more wisely, to do it more effectively, and to do it with intelligent approaches that allow us to use the innovative approaches that are available.

I watch what is being designed here by so many of the startup industries that are taking into account climate change, taking into account the various elements that are impacting us, causing coastal areas on your coast, on my coast of this country, where people need to rebuild in a clever way and in a way that's sensitive to the demands of the system. And the threshold years out there by which we need to respond to climate change are quickly approaching us. Some suggest as early as 2017. Others will stretch it to 2020. Regardless, that is around the corner. And the call to order here is to be sophisticated in the approach. Go forward, do it with science, do it with intellect, do it academically, so that we can grow jobs that are going to respond to the pressures out there that are bearing down upon us and are undeniable. Let's get the stuff done.

Recently, I went to several college graduations in my district. And to see the technical strength walking across that stage. From doctorates to master's degrees to bachelor's degrees, there is great talent being released out there. Let's put it to work so this Nation can build upon that pioneer spirit that has always driven us. There's just such great opportunity here. And if you believe that all the products ever required by humankind have been conceived, prototyped, developed, manufactured, and sold, the story is over. But we know better than that. Products are being developed as we speak. And the challenge to a sophisticated society such as ours, it's okay. Maybe some of those manufactured goods that you did a century ago are now replaced by some new, precision-oriented, heavy-duty ideas reformulation that really allows us to be clever in the attempt.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The infrastructure system of this Nation is the foundation for the economy. And any economic growth that we have has to be built on a solid infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers rates the American infrastructure at a D. That's not good. That's doggone bad, actually. You take a look at the other countries of the world, China and others, that are building first class infrastructure, and you come to the United States and see that we're really not. We're way behind.

You talked about the safety issue. I have probably well over 1,100 miles of levees in my district that are flood protection. And they're decades old. They need to be upgraded. So just in terms of the communities being safe—for example, Natomas, in Sacramento, is an area that I share with Congresswoman MATSUI and is one of the riskiest places in America for flooding, right behind New Orleans. We need to upgrade those levees so that that community can, A, be safe and, B, grow. We know that other areas in my district have the same problem.

Yet at the same time, the sequestration, to go back to that nonsense, removes $250 million of levee improvements from the Army Corps of Engineers' budget. So projects are going to be delayed. We're going to have another winter and, God willing, we won't have a flood. But it could happen. The money that is necessary to rebuild those levees is gone.

The President has been very, very upfront about this. The President was standing right behind us here at the State of the Union and said, We need to build our infrastructure. And he proposed three things. First of all, he wants to put in an additional $50 billion to be spent in the near term—this year and the year after—to really give a major push for America's infrastructure. He also said we need an infrastructure bank. Europe has had one for nearly three decades, and it really helps to finance projects that have a cash flow: sanitation systems, water systems, toll roads, toll bridges, and the like.

The other thing that I think we ought to do is, when we spend that money, we ought to spend it on American-made equipment. And that's what my bill does. The other part of this is that we really need to address the infrastructure issue with a very robust program.

I'm going to take this for just a second. For every $1 that we invest in infrastructure, there is a boost to the economy of $1.57. So by investing in the infrastructure, we actually grow the economy more than a one-to-one basis. It's $1.57 for every $1 that we invest. And so you set this kind of economic growth going on and you've built the foundation for the future. That's what we ought to be doing.

So I ask my Republican colleagues here: pay attention. Forget about whether it's President Obama or President whomever. Infrastructure is really, really important. Take up what the President has suggested. Call it a Republican suggestion. Boost the infrastructure spending in this Nation. Put the men and women who build America's foundation back to work so that

we have a foundation for economic growth and for safety.

Let's realize that we had a train wreck in Connecticut. Was it caused by a bad track situation? Possibly. We had a bridge collapse in Washington State. We know that that was an infrastructure maintenance problem. We have potholes. We know that the economy of this Nation has slowed down because of traffic jams and insufficient capacities on our highways. And we know that we have insufficient transit systems. In New York, you need to rebuild, as you just discussed, from Superstorm Sandy.

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. When you talk about roads and bridges, my home county of Montgomery, New York, in my district, was host to a terrible bridge collapse. We commemorated in 2012 the 25th anniversary of the collapse of a thruway bridge that took several lives. That was a stark reminder 25, 26 years ago. We have only accumulated more concern for deficiencies.

So it's roads and bridges. It's rail, as you made mention. But it's also telecommunications and utilities. You look at a system that was engineered to be a monopoly, serving regions of energy needs for people, and then with deregulation came the wheeling of electrons from region to region, State to State, nation to nation. You had Canada wheeling in electrons to New York State. We need to upgrade the system. The interconnection devices need to be upgraded. There's new technology. You get more efficiency, less line loss. These are the things that are smart. And we're asking with this package that we've talked about here tonight, let's be smart. Let's respect the hard-earned tax dollars that are under our stewardship.

In August of 2003, I was serving in State government in New York when we had a major collapse of the system that was driven by transmission. An outage in Ohio triggered a collapse into New York. So Ohio put out the lights on Broadway in New York City. And this was long-term in its consequences. Great economic loss, great challenge to us. In the midst of homeland security, anti-terrorist sentiment, you had a glaring, gaping vulnerability for terrorist minds to see that weakness.

We need to invest in the infrastructure. So an infrastructure bank bill, you're absolutely right, is a tremendously strong, powerful way to leverage public-private sector matches to extend the opportunities, to grow the opportunities to make investments in all sorts of infrastructure.

I live in one of the oldest sections of the country. Our water-sewer systems are antiquated. Our utility sectors are very, very old.

□ 2040

The upgrades that are required, the technology that can be invested, the cutting-edge improvements that are part and parcel to that solution, these are incredible opportunities for us to strengthen the outcome for businesses. We have business coming in to upstate New York that, in one case, Global Foundries, represents some of the greatest job growth in the world for chip manufacturing. Are they energy intensive? You better believe they are. Do we need state-of-the-art hookups? Do we need reliability and predictability in that capacity that's delivered? Absolutely. So we know what the needs of business happen to be. We know how best to respond to that. We do it through clever, public, progressive policy that enables us to see the worthiness of investment.

Belt tightening, we've talked about this before—waste, inefficiency, fraud, outmoded programs undone. We belt tighten. But that is cut where you can so that you invest where you must. And that mantra should guide us: cut where you can so you invest where you must.

And the infrastructure requires our response. You need to move freight. You need to move workers. You need to have safety addressed, public safety addressed. I saw the consequences. I saw the deaths that came from the tragic collapse of a thruway bridge in upstate New York 26 years ago. That should not be repeated. That sort of tragedy should be avoided with any clever cost being assumed. And here we're asking simply to put people to work.

This is not just spending money. It's investing in workers that will make for a stronger outcome, and it provides for state-of-art opportunities. And that's where the business partnership is with this country. If you're going to sit there and say we're just going to cut our way to prosperity, cut our way to deficit reduction, and cut our way to job growth, it's not going to happen that way.

Mr. GARAMENDI. No, it certainly won't. You've been talking about bridge collapses, the bridge that collapsed in the Twin Cities, Minnesota and Wisconsin, lives lost. We're continuing to see the infrastructure, bridges and others, unable to really carry the modern loads that are there, rusting and falling down. We need to really address that.

You did raise an essential point about the electric grid, that power infrastructure, the electric power infrastructure of this Nation, critically important. We need to make the investments there. And we're also making—Mr. HOYER talked about the energy independence that we're moving towards in the United States. One part of that is the natural gas that is now being more readily available and at a reasonable price, and we're seeing the repowering of many of the coal-fired power plants using natural gas, which also reduces the greenhouse gas emissions from coal. All of that is good.

I want to pick up another area of infrastructure that's really important. I've now become the ranking member of the Coast Guard and Maritime. While I've always been interested in the ports, at least in the California ports, I'm now in a position here to spend even more time focusing on the ports and the maritime industry. International commerce, critically important to economic growth, Mr. HOYER talked about the export potential that this country has and will even grow more in the future, but that is also the ports and the airports.

Both of these, airports and the ports, are unable to meet the demands of modern and advanced transportation. Many of the ports in America need to be deepened so that the new container ships that are now coming into play and many of the new oil tankers and the rest can access the American ports. In doing so, we will be able to maintain the vitality of international trade, the export market, which we really must, once again, dominate, and the jobs that go with the ports.

And so it's ports and it's railroads that lead out of the ports and the trucking industry that goes out of it so that we need a comprehensive transportation plan. We're going to rewrite the Surface Transportation Act in this session of Congress, start on it this year, get it done in, well, hopefully this year or maybe next year—not maybe. We have to do it next year because we see the expiration of the current transportation plan.

So there's enormous responsibilities that we have to create the infrastructure upon which America grows. It's the roads. It's the ports. It's the airports. It's the electrical system and the communication systems. All of these are critical, and all of them, in one way or another, are dependent upon the actions taken by the 435 of us in the House of Representatives and the 100 Members of the Senate and, of course, the President.

Bear in mind that the President has presented to the Congress a very robust infrastructure plan that takes into account all of the elements that we've discussed here tonight. Very, very little of that has actually been taken up in any committee hearing, and what we have seen pass the House thus far is not the kind of robust investment that is needed for infrastructure but quite the opposite: a disinvestment through such things as the sequestration and the Ryan budget which will be back on the floor again in the next day or so. These are not the way you grow the economy. These are austerity programs that actually reduce the investments that we need for the foundation of America's economic growth: education, research, infrastructure investment, modern manufacturing. These are the keys, and we have to do it.

Mr. TONKO, we've gone through most of our time. If you'd like to take a wrap, and then I'll take a wrap and we'll call it a night.

Mr. TONKO. Well, you talk about the challenges that we have out there, and you've listed what I think is a very aggressive agenda but a doable agenda; and I think to reinforce the doability

of it, the acceptability of it, perhaps we just need to recall some of our most golden moments in American history when we were challenged, when there was a need to respond with boldness, with vision, and with courage. We did it.

My district is the donor area in a large way to the Erie Canal system. You talk about ports. It grew a port out of a little town called New York. It was that port of entry that then allowed for the shipping of goods up the Hudson into the Mohawk, into the Erie Canal system, a system that was brought about under tough times. The proponents of the canal said, Look, we're going to do this; it's a tough time, but let's invest.

Did that prove successful? You'd better believe it. It sparked the westward movement and an industrial revolution, gave birth to a necklace of communities called mill towns. Mill towns became the powerful epicenters of invention and innovation.

When President Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, led this Nation out of its worst economic crunch, it was about investing in America, putting people to work and developing projects that were essential to our hopeful tomorrow. It put a lot of people to work. It pulled us out of the doldrums of the Depression and allowed us to rise from the situation and provide, again, hope for this Nation.

President Eisenhower, understanding that in some tough times we needed to develop an interstate system for our highway network because, again, it was transporting and shipping of goods and we needed to modernize and advance what was best for America, that golden moment of our history should speak to us.

Certainly, President Kennedy picked up on that Sputnik moment when we dusted off our backside and said, Never again. He called us together as a nation, a rather youthful President, saying, We're going to win this global race on space. We're going to do it, because with passionate resolve, we're going to say ''yes'' to the investments required so as to stake that American flag as the first flag onto the surface of the Moon, winning that race, that global race on space. And we did it because we invested, we believed, and we resolved with passion and worked together as a nation.

So, let's take inspiration from those golden moments, an Erie Canal, an FDR comeback with the workers corps and the building of an infrastructure, highway infrastructure, and the winning of a global race on space. Let's let that speak to us as a nation. Let us move forward with the passion and the resolve and say, Invest in the clean energy, science and tech, innovation economy. We know we can win this. But if we sit there complacently and don't allow for the investment in our workforce, deny the potential of this Nation, that is not leadership. That is not leadership. We will then be passed by by other nations.

We have the intellect that can be harnessed here to grow the sophisticated products, to deal with a position orientation of manufacturing today, to provide for advanced manufacturing, to come up with clever batteries as a linchpin to the energy revolution, and the list goes on and on and on. Leadership from this Chamber can make a difference, and a sound budget, an honest budget, one that invests in America is what we require right now.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. Your passion on this has been displayed on this floor numerous times as we talked about making it in America, about jobs and infrastructure. As you were going through that recitation of American history, I want to go back even further than the canal period. Let's go back to our very first President, George Washington.

□ 2050

He refused to go through the Inaugural in a suit made by England. So he wanted an American-made suit. He found the cloth from Boston and a tailor, and wore an American-made suit.

He also, immediately on taking office, our very first President in the very first days in his office, turned to his Treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, and said: We need to develop the manufacturing in this country. I want you to develop a plan on manufacturers.

Hamilton went out—I don't know if he had a committee or not—but he came back with a report. It was probably 30 to 50 pages. Now it would be 30–50,000 pages. But nonetheless, he came back with a report—I think he had about 15 different thoughts in it—and they were precisely on this subject of ''making it in America.''

You will love this. One of the very first things in that document was: We need to build the infrastructure; canals, roads, and ports. The very first President said: The role of the Federal Government is to help build the infrastructure. And here we are centuries later still debating how we're going to do it. Well, just pay attention to the Founding Fathers. They told us how to do it.

They also said we ought to spend the American taxpayers' money on American-made goods. It's in that document dating back to the very first policies of this Nation. And so when I introduced this bill that says use the taxpayer money to buy American-made products, it's not new, folks. I'm simply copying what Alexander Hamilton suggested to George Washington and the first Congress of the United States.

There are other elements in it that play into this in a similar way. And certainly we know that Thomas Jefferson was really big on education. And so the University of Virginia came up. These are the elements of economic growth.

Here we are—435 of us in the House of Representatives—and the question for us is are we going to put in place policies that provide the foundation for economic growth, or are we going to go the opposite direction and continue on the austerity route which actually disinvests on those key elements that create economic growth?

For me, I'm an investor, I want to invest in America's future with infrastructure, education, innovation, research, and manufacturing in America. Those are the policies that I believe we need to put in place, Mr. TONKO. You and I have been here many nights and we've talked about these issues many, many times. And we're not going to stop, are we?

Mr. TONKO. You know, we're not. And I think it's, again, that belief, that sense that we can accomplish; as you were talking about, those early, early days from our humble beginnings.

I was reminded of the event this weekend in my district in Saratoga where we were revisiting the area that hosted General Burgoyne's surrender to the American troops after the Battle of Saratoga. And this was the David and Goliath routine. We weren't supposed to win that battle. It's been dubbed the battle of the millennium. And that it was more than a national battle. It made a statement around the world that this mighty force came up against insurmountable odds and won. That's in our DNA.

We are replete in our history of all sorts of response that came in powerful measure, that said, ''this is America at her best.'' That's the moment to seize right here. Not to walk away and sequester us, weaken us, disinvest in us, defund us.

I told a group of young students this weekend with the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference, hundreds of students: Do not let us as a political generation undo your political generation. You are worthy of education dollars, you are in need of access affordability to a college path, you deserve your climate change to be addressed, your planet requires our stewardship. What is this walking away from the next generation? Is that our legacy? Is that what we want our legacy to be? Or is it us remembered as a generation that faced immense challenge after a difficult recession and we came to terms and said the academics applied here show us how to work our way through this critical test and how to invest in America so that her best days lie ahead?

That's responding with fairness, with respect, and justice to that next generation of workers who are only asking us to do what generations before us did: Believe in us, care for us, invest in us, so only our best will be available for us, our best opportunities.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, I don't think I could say it better. And so what I think I will say is, Mr. Speaker, we yield back our time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 5, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1691. A letter from the Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's ''Major'' final rule — Core Principles and Other Requirements for Swap Execution Facilities (RIN Number: 3038-AD18) receivd June 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1692. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Pears Grown in Oregon and Washington; Committee Membership Reapportionment for Processed Pears [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-12-0032; FV12-927-3 FR] received May 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1693. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Milk in the Northeast and Other Marketing Areas; Order Amending the Orders [Doc. No.: AMS-DA-07-0026; AO-14-A77, et al.; DA-07-02] received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1694. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Amendment to the Order To Raise the Assessment Rate [No.: AMS-LS-11-0038] received May 28, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1695. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Reestablishment of Membership on the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, Area No. 2 [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-12-0044; FV12-948-2 FR] received May 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1696. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a report entitled, ''Combating Terrorism Activities FY 2014 Budget Estimates''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1697. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's FY 2012 annual performance report to Congress required by the Prescription Drug User Fee Act of 1992 (PDUFA), as amended, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 379g note; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1698. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1699. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting Transmittal of D.C. ACT 20-76, ''Certified Business Enterprise Compliance Temporary Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1700. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Office of Management and Budget, transmitting seven reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows;

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky: Committee on Appropriations. Report on the Suballocation of Budget Allocations for Fiscal Year 2014 (Rept. 113–96). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (for himself, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. FLORES, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H.R. 2231. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to increase energy exploration and production on the Outer Continental Shelf, provide for equitable revenue sharing for all coastal States, implement the reorganization of the functions of the former Minerals Management Service into distinct and separate agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself, Mr. HANNA, Mr. PETERS of California, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. COLLINS of New York):

H.R. 2232. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to permit prime contractors covered by a subcontracting plan pertaining to a single contract with a Federal agency to receive credit against such a plan for using small business subcontractors at any level of subcontracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 2233. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit against tax for hurricane and tornado mitigation expenditures; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BISHOP of New York:

H.R. 2234. A bill to reduce and prevent the sale and use of fraudulent degrees in order to protect the integrity of valid higher education degrees that are used for Federal employment purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Energy and Commerce, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CAPUANO (for himself, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NEAL, Mr. TIERNEY, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 2235. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide death benefits for campus police officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CHABOT (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. CHU, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Mr. COBLE):

H.R. 2236. A bill to amend title 35, United States Code, to modify the definition of micro entity; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CHU (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. HONDA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. LOEBSACK):

H.R. 2237. A bill to strengthen student achievement and graduation rates and prepare young people for college, careers, and citizenship through innovative partnerships that meet the comprehensive needs of children and youth; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COSTA (for himself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 2238. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to exempt the Crime Victims Fund from sequestration; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. COTTON:

H.R. 2239. A bill to reduce the number of Federal judgeships for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. FARR, Mr. COHEN, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Ms. LEE of California):

H.R. 2240. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DIAZ-BALART (for himself and Mr. HARRIS):

H.R. 2241. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for owning certain disaster resilient property; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2242. A bill to enable State and local promotion of natural gas, flexible fuel, and high-efficiency motor vehicle fleets; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. ENYART:

H.R. 2243. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to make competitive grants to support research and development, education, and training to produce a bio-based aviation fuel for use by the Air Force; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas (for himself, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. WOMACK):

H.R. 2244. A bill to designate the attack that occurred at a recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas, on June 1, 2009, in which Private William Long of the United States Army was killed and Private Quinton Ezeagwula of the United States Army was wounded, as an international terrorist attack for which the two soldiers are to be awarded the Purple Heart; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

H.R. 2245. A bill to prohibit the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation from making grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 2246. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to

limit the penalties to a State that does not meet its maintenance of effort level of funding to a one-time penalty; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 2247. A bill to amend the Arms Export Control Act to provide that certain firearms listed as curios or relics may be imported into the United States by a licensed importer without obtaining authorization from the Department of State or the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. LOWEY, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MORAN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 2248. A bill to ban the use of bisphenol A in food containers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 2249. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the payment of monthly annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan to a supplemental or special needs trust established for the sole benefit of a disabled dependent child of a participant in the Survivor Benefit Plan; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. OWENS (for himself, Mr. RENACCI, and Mrs. BUSTOS):

H.R. 2250. A bill to require the head of each executive agency to submit a report on the implementation of Government Accountability Office reports on reducing duplication, achieving savings, and enhancing revenue within the Federal Government; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PETERSON (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. KLINE, Mr. PAULSEN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. BACHMANN, and Mr. NOLAN):

H.R. 2251. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 118 South Mill Street, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, as the ''Edward J. Devitt United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Mr. PETRI, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. SCHOCK):

H.R. 2252. A bill to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCHOCK:

H.R. 2253. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to consolidate the current education tax incentives into one credit against income tax for higher education expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 2254. A bill to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. DELANEY):

H.R. 2255. A bill to amend the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Development Act to extend to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. PETERSON):

H.R. 2256. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to improve the coordination of refinery outages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 2257. A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to create a pilot program to award grants to units of general local government and community-based organizations to create jobs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BENTIVOLIO:

H. Res. 245. A resolution recognizing the 24th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, calling for the release of Dr. Wang Bingzhang, and for other reasons; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. OLSON, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. KING of New York):

H. Res. 246. A resolution expressing condolences to the families and loved ones of firefighters Matthew Renaud, Robert Bebee, Robert Garner, and Anne Sullivan and standing in solidarity with their families, members of the Houston Fire Department, and entire Houston community, as they mourn the loss of these 4 remarkable and selfless heroes who represented the best of the Houston community and exemplify the qualities of firefighters serving communities throughout the Nation; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GRIMM (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H. Res. 247. A resolution expressing support for internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. MOORE, Ms. WATERS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. CLAY, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. ENGEL):

H. Res. 248. A resolution recognizing the significance of National Caribbean American Heritage Month; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. HASTINGS of Washington:

H.R. 2231.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 2232.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. I, §8, cls. 1, 3, and 18 and Art. IV, 3, cl. 2 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 2233.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BISHOP of New York:

H.R. 2234. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 1

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 3

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 18

By Mr. CAPUANO:

H.R. 2235.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 2236.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8,: ''To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Rights to their respective Writings and Discoveries.''

By Ms. CHU:

H.R. 2237.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 and Article 1, Section 9, Clause 7 of the Constitution of the United States of America, the authority to enact this legislation rests with the Congress.

By Mr. COSTA:

H.R. 2238.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I

By Mr. COTTON:

H.R. 2239.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 9 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 2240.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitution of the United States provides clear authority for Congress to pass tax legislation. Article I of the Constitution, in detailing Congressional authority, provides that ''Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes. . .'' (Section 8, Clause 1). This legislation is introduced pursuant to that grant of authority.

By Mr. DIAZ-BALART:

H.R. 2241.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2242.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. ENYART:

H.R. 2243.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas:

H.R. 2244.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution (Clauses 12, 13, 14, 16, and 18), which grants Congress the power to raise and support an Army; to provide and maintain a Navy; to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia; and to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the foregoing powers.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

H.R. 2245.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 and 3 and implied powers to not act in these areas.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 2246.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 2247.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. MARKEY:

H.R. 2248.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MORAN:

H.R. 2249.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

This Bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, which provides Congress with the power to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

By Mr. OWENS:

H.R. 2250.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PETERSON:

H.R. 2251.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17 of the Constitution.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 2252.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 1, All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

By Mr. SCHOCK:

H.R. 2253.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress as stated in Article I, Section 7 and Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama:

H.R. 2254.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8:

''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

''To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

''To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

''To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

''To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

''To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

''To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

''To constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

''To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

''To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

''To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

''To provide and maintain a Navy;

''To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

''To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

''To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

''To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

H.R. 2255.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WALZ:

H.R. 2256.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 2257.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 7: Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 56: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 59: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 141: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 142: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 208: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 311: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 318: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 366: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 367: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 411: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 495: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 508: Mr. PASCRELL and Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 523: Mr. BERA of California and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 556: Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 580: Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 582: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 605: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 630: Mr. GARCIA, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. CONYERS, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 647: Mr. COTTON, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 675: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 683: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 685: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

H.R. 689: Mr. WELCH and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 721: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky and Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 755: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 762: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 781: Mr. KLINE.

H.R. 794: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 800: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 805: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 809: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 846: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LEWIS, Mrs. LOWEY, and Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 853: Mr. VELA and Mr. DENHAM.

H.R. 855: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 858: Mr. LUCAS, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 924: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. GRIMM.

H.R. 928: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 940: Mrs. NOEM and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.

H.R. 949: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 951: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 961: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 963: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 979: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 980: Mr. VELA.

H.R. 988: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1000: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 1001: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 1024: Mr. WELCH, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. PETRI, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 1026: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1037: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1038: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 1041: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 1079: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1097: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1102: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 1129: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1141: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1148: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1149: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 1151: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 1152: Mr. LOEBSACK and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1154: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1201: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1221: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1243: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 1248: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN and Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 1249: Mr. RADEL.
H.R. 1263: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 1274: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H.R. 1293: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1313: Mr. VELA.
H.R. 1339: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1351: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 1373: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1385: Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 1390: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1403: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1404: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1414: Mr. PETERS of Michigan.
H.R. 1416: Mr. JOYCE.
H.R. 1427: Mr. YOUNG of Florida.
H.R. 1451: Mr. NADLER, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1452: Mr. RUSH and Mr. VELA.
H.R. 1461: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 1507: Mr. LYNCH, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1523: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1528: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. COLE, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 1540: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1565: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 1593: Ms. ESTY and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 1598: Mr. WHITFIELD.
H.R. 1616: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1620: Mr. KINGSTON.
H.R. 1624: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1661: Mr. PETERS on and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.
H.R. 1663: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1666: Ms. MOORE, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1686: Mr. COHEN and Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 1717: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. BARR, and Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 1726: Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1731: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 1732: Mrs. CAPPS and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 1737: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 1739: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1749: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 1755: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 1762: Mr. BUCHANAN.
H.R. 1767: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1771: Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 1787: Mr. ENYART, Mr. FARR, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. PETRI, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 1797: Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 1798: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1801: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1812: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 1814: Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. PETERSON, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1821: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 1823: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 1825: Mr. TERRY, Mr. BURGESS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. OWENS.
H.R. 1845: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1857: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1861: Mr. LATHAM, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1868: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1869: Mr. COOK, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1884: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 1893: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 1908: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 1910: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1918: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 1920: Mr. GRIMM, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1961: Mr. TURNER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. LATTA, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 1962: Mr. JORDAN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. HIMES, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1971: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 1975: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BERA of California, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1976: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 1985: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 2009: Mr. MULLIN and Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 2014: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 2020: Mr. HONDA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2043: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2053: Mr. WESTMORELAND, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and Mr. LONG.
H.R. 2058: Ms. NORTON and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 2064: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARCIA, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 2066: Mr. MORAN and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2073: Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 2086: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2088: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2092: Mr. ELLMERS, Mr. NOEM, and Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 2093: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2115: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 2123: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2125: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 2132: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2137: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 2141: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. VELA, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. WATT, Mr. NOLAN, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 2143: Mr. PRICE of Georgia.
H.R. 2144: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2146: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2157: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 2159: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. ENYART.
H.R. 2169: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2194: Mr. CASSIDY.
H.R. 2203: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. RENACCI, Mrs. ELLMERS, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 2218: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H. Con. Res. 24: Mr. FORBES.
H. Con. Res. 27: Mr. COHEN and Mr. PETRI.
H. Con. Res. 34: Ms. MENG, Mrs. LOWEY, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H. Con. Res. 36: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. DEFAZIO.
H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H. Res. 35: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. MEADOWS, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. MESSER Mr. MULLIN, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. MASSIE.
H. Res. 89: Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. HOLT, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H. Res. 101: Mr. HANNA.
H. Res. 104: Mr. PEARCE, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 112: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. DENHAM.
H. Res. 114: Mr. HENSARLING.
H. Res. 123: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H. Res. 147: Mr. UPTON, Mr. KLINE, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. LANCE, and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H. Res. 203: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. COOPER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. TIBERI, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H. Res. 213: Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Ms. DELAURO.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to purchase any flag of the United States of America for use by the Federal Government that is not wholly produced in the United States from articles, materials, or supplies 100 percent of which are grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 5: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals:

(A) within a three-year period preceding this offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property; or

(B) are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated above in subsection (A); or

(C) within a three-year period preceding this offer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 6: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be awarded in a contract to any contractor whose past performance record indicates that its performance during the construction of a VA facility resulted in a completion date more than 18 months after the original agreed-upon completion date.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 7: Page 8, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced to $0)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $199,700,000)''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 8: Page 4, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $38,513,000)''

Page 5, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $38,513,000)''.

Page 63, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $38,513,000)''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. CULBERSON

AMENDMENT NO. 9: Page 35, line 11, strike ''Act''and insert ''heading''.

Page 35, line 13, strike ''unless'' and all that follows through ''Department:'' on page 36, line 16, and insert the following: ''except for a health record as set forth in the Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2013–2015 of the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense, Joint Executive Council:''.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. FRANKS OF ARIZONA

AMENDMENT NO. 10: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the prevailing wage requirements in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Davis-Bacon Act).

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. RUNYAN

AMENDMENT NO. 11: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to propose, plan for, or execute a new or additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. TERRY

AMENDMENT NO. 12: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following new section:

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act, including the funds made available for ''Construction, Major Projects'', may be used to increase the funding for any major medical facility project (as defined in subsection (a)(3)(A) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code), which is under construction as of the date of the enactment of this Act, above the amount specified in the prospectus described in subsection (b) of such section 8104 and the detailed estimate of cost described in paragraph (1) of such subsection.

H.R. 2216

OFFERED BY: MR. ENGEL

AMENDMENT NO. 13: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. CASSIDY

AMENDMENT NO. 1: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 5 _____. None of the funds made available in this 2 Act may be used to implement, carry out, administer, or 3 enforce section 1308(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(h)).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. COLLINS OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 2: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 236(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1226(c)).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. PRICE OF GEORGIA

AMENDMENT NO. 3: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used in contravention of immigration laws (as defined in section 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17))).

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. THOMPSON OF MISSISSIPPI

AMENDMENT NO. 4: At the end of the bill (before the short title), add the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Transportation Security Administration for the Behavior Detection Officer program.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 5: Page 17, line 15, after ''screeners:'' insert the following: ''*Provided further*, That the annual Federal personnel expenditures of the Transportation Security Administration at an airport participating in the Screening Partnership Program may not exceed the larger of—''

''(1) 1 percent of the total annual value of the Screening Partnership Program contract at that airport; or

''(2) $100,000:''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 6. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $23,334,000)''.

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $23,334,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 7. Page 15, line 20, after the dollar amount insert the following: '(reduced by $17,383,000)''.

Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(reduced by $17,383,000)''.

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount insert the following: ''(increased by $17,383,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 8. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $31,810,000)''.

Page 16, line 6, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $31,810,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 9. Page 52, line 11, insert before the proviso the following: ''*Provided further*, That the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center shall develop a plan to further integrate and utilize modeling and similation in the training of law enforcement and security personnel:''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. MICA

AMENDMENT NO. 10. Page 15, line 25, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $12,500,000) (increased by $12,500,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. LYNCH

AMENDMENT NO. 11. Page 19, line 1, after the dollar amount insert ''(increased by $15,676,000)''.

Page 3, line 13, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $15,676,000)''.

H.R. 2217

OFFERED BY: MR. PIERLUISI

AMENDMENT NO. 12. At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce section 1301(a) of title 31, United States Code, with respect to the use of amounts made available by this Act for the ''Salaries and Expenses'' and ''Air and Marine Operations'' accounts of U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the expenses authorized to be paid in section 9 of the Jones Act (48 U.S.C. 795) and for the collection of duties and taxes authorized to be levied, collected, and paid in Puerto Rico, as authorized in section 4 of the Foraker Act (48 U.S.C. 740), in addition to the more specific amounts available for such purposes in the Puerto Rico Trust Fund pursuant to such provisions of law.