

world's largest nations both in terms of people and its economy.

In his inaugural address, President Loh reflected on Barack Obama's statement that America has reached a "sputnik moment," a moment when our place as a world economic and innovative leader is increasingly challenged. Institutions like the University of Maryland are critical to our continued leadership in the world. As President Loh said, and I quote, "The American research university—a crowning achievement of American civilization—must respond to this sputnik moment. We are a premier research university"—speaking of the University of Maryland. He went on to say that "we must also become a premier innovation and entrepreneurial university."

I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the University of Maryland is well-equipped to fill that role and do its part for our State and our Nation. And I have no doubt that Wallace Loh was exactly the right person to choose to lead the university at this time.

I want to wish Dr. Loh and the university the very best as it works with so many other extraordinary universities and colleges and educational institutions in the United States of America to make sure that we "make it in America." That is to say that we out-educate, we out-build, we out-innovate our competitors so that we can provide the kind of quality of life, the jobs that our people need, a growing economy for the future, for our children.

THANKING 26 REPUBLICANS WHO VOTED FOR MCGOVERN-JONES AMENDMENT

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, like most of my colleagues in the House, on Memorial Day I had the privilege to speak to two different groups down in the Third District of North Carolina, which I represent. One of the events comes to mind down in Beaufort, North Carolina. There were well over 150 people there—most of them obviously were veterans or family of veterans, and a couple of families whose loved ones didn't come home from previous wars.

That brings me to the point that last week JIM MCGOVERN and I offered an amendment to create a formula to bring our troops home from Afghanistan, and I want to thank the 26 Republicans who voted for that amendment. We came within six votes of creating a formula for the President to bring our troops home before 2015.

Mr. Speaker, at these two events down in my district, I had veterans line up when I finished to come up to say, "We agree with you on your position to bring our troops home from Afghanistan." And even at one event I got a very strong applause when I mentioned the McGovern-Jones amendment and

how close we came to create a formula to bring our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, they said to me, well, why did we go into Afghanistan? Bin Laden, he was responsible for 9/11, he's dead now. Al Qaeda, which had a large presence back in 2003, 2004 in Afghanistan, is now diminished. Now these are the veterans talking to me. I'm not a veteran. But my statement was, you're right. Our country is financially broke, we've spent over \$8 billion, we can't pay our bills, and yet Mr. Karzai—who's corrupt to begin with, the leader of Afghanistan—we always seem to find \$8 billion a month to send to him. It makes no sense.

So Mr. MCGOVERN and I and people on my side and his side, we're going to continue to work to create an atmosphere and environment to encourage President Obama not to wait until 2015.

□ 1020

That's exactly what Secretary Gates said to the Armed Services Committee, on which I serve: "In February of 2015, we will start bringing home our troops." Well, then, Mr. Speaker, how many more will have to die, lose their legs and their arms in the next 4 years? It's only 2011, and we're talking about 2015?

I can tell you our military has won the war many, many times. As you can see, this is a paper not even in my district, Greensboro, North Carolina, where Mr. HOWARD COBLE is from. This is an editorial a few weeks ago and it says, "Get Out," and there's a flag-draped coffin/transfer case being carried off the plane by soldiers or airmen.

So it is time that this Congress come together in a bipartisan way and bring our troops home.

I see the families down at Camp Lejeune, which is in my district. I talk to them. I listen to them. They think they have done their job. They think it's time to come home.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I do all the time on the floor of the House when I'm closing, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people in this great Nation. I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to Mr. Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for this great Nation.

And I will ask three times: God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR. DOROTHY SHARPE JOHNSON

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to pay tribute to a

lifelong friend, the Reverend Dr. Dorothy Sharpe Johnson, an accomplished pastor, educator and author who passed from labor to reward on 31 May 2011 after a long illness, a long illness that did not curtail her work.

A native of Wilson County, North Carolina, Dr. Johnson resided in Matthews, North Carolina, which is near the City of Charlotte, with her beloved husband of more than 50 years, Retired AME Zion Bishop Joseph Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Johnson was the fifth of eight children born to Mark Benjamin and Clara Farmer Sharpe. After finishing Speight High School at the age of 15, she went on to earn her bachelor's degree from North Carolina Central University, known at that time as North Carolina College at Durham. Later in life, she earned a master's degree in religious education and a Doctor of Divinity degree from the James Walker Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina, on the campus of historic Livingstone College, and she received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte.

Over the years, Dr. Johnson found many ways to serve her community as a public school teacher, school administrator, social worker, and even a seamstress. She was particularly devoted to her faith and church. In 1979, Dr. Johnson was elected by the AME Zion General Conference to oversee the youth mission. During her 8-year tenure, she worked to build a youth retreat that was eventually named in her honor and today serves as many as 575 youth at a time.

Dr. Johnson was a missionary supervisor with the AME Zion Church and was pastor of Indian Hill AME Zion Church in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Her work with the AME Zion Church took her around the world working in England and Puerto Rico, the Bahamas and across America as an outreach to her ministry. She published a great number of books that were inspired by her life experience and devotion to God. In addition to all of this, she was a devoted member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and the NAACP.

Mr. Speaker, one of most profound statements I can make about this great American is that despite having a medical condition known as systemic lupus erythematosus for more than 40 years, including many surgeries and hospitalizations, she lived a productive life that cannot be surpassed by anyone. She was a good wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, pastor, and friend. Dr. Johnson distinguished herself in so many ways and made a difference in this world.

The Johnsons are the proud parents of two adult sons, the Reverend Anthony Johnson, pastor of St. Matthew AME Zion Church of Rock Hill, South Carolina; and Timothy Johnson, a civil engineer in our great State. And they are the grandparents of two grandchildren, Angelica and Derrick, both of whom are honor students.

Dr. Johnson is also survived by four sisters, Barbara Jones, Trumilla Jones, Ernestine Wright, and Betty Coley; three brothers, Rudolph Sharpe, Eugene Sharpe, and a very good friend of mine, David Sharpe of Phoenix, Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this great life. We extend condolences to her husband, Bishop Joseph Johnson, their sons, and all of their family and friends.

DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the House overwhelmingly defeated by a vote of 318-97 a blank check on spending. We stopped the unconditional raising of the debt ceiling. The fact remains, we are in a debt crisis because Washington spends too much, not because it taxes too little.

America is drowning in debt, and we need to significantly reduce spending and make long-term reforms that encourage private sector job creation and move toward a balanced budget. Raising the debt limit without restoring financial accountability was unacceptable, and that's why I voted against this irresponsible debt limit increase.

I can't comprehend why this administration continues to push the same dangerous failed strategy that got us into this economic mess. The failure to increase the debt limit on the floor Tuesday would be enough evidence for the White House and Washington Democrats to conclude that Americans want Washington to stop signing a blank check, spending money we don't have and sending the bill to our children and our grandchildren—grandchildren that I personally have an opportunity every time I open my BlackBerry to see their faces and be reminded that it's for them that I speak and this House spoke on Tuesday evening.

Yet more than 100 House Democrats signed on to a letter publicly advocating for a debt limit increase without spending cuts and reforms. And unfortunately after meeting with the President yesterday, I'm not sure he's heard the people on this issue either.

According to the latest evidence, only 11 percent of Americans support a blank check raising of the debt limit and more spending. This vote demonstrates that President Obama and the House Democrats are far out of step with the rest of America and should join House Republicans in working to cut spending. The American people have said "no" to the Democrats and they're not going to take it anymore, not another blank check of more spending and more debt for the Obama administration.

It's the time now to think of the next generation and not the next election and take time to rip up a blank check of defeat for our country.

PENNY-WISE AND POUND-FOOLISH ON AMERICAN SECURITY

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we've learned a lot over the last several days about the Republican commitment to both national security and fiscal responsibility. Last week, after the party of limited government spending passed the \$690 billion defense authorization bill loaded with Pentagon pork, they jammed through a 4-year extension of key provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. With a last-minute rushed vote with virtually no debate, the party of small government authorized more wiretapping and more poking through Americans' personal records.

□ 1030

Now today, our ongoing debate over fiscal year 2012 Homeland Security appropriations shows us that the majority's penny-wise, pound-foolish approach is in all of its glory. This bill breaks faith with first responders, underfunding key firefighter assistance grants and State Homeland Security grants that primarily train and equip first responders. Important programs will be rolled into a block grant so that localities will be competing for dwindling Federal Homeland Security grants, this and more undermining our communities' ability to deal with all kinds of hazards, including potential nuclear, chemical, and biological attacks.

The bill cuts Homeland Security research and development programs by 40 percent, Mr. Speaker. So while terrorist organizations are busily mastering technologies, we will be eliminating very important research projects in biological and explosives detection and advanced cybersecurity. Shame on us.

Homeland Security already took a hit in fiscal year 2011. The majority, which claims to care about nothing more than the safety and security of the American people, wants to cut more than a billion dollars from last year's funding levels, and provides \$2 billion less than what the President has proposed.

Meantime, while we are nickel and diming our first responders, we are throwing \$10 billion every month, \$10 billion every month at a war in Afghanistan that is killing Americans, while doing very little, if anything, to advance our national security. Where are the budget cutters when it comes to appropriating that money? Where are all the hard questions and the tough scrutiny when it comes to funding a decade-long military occupation of Afghanistan that has failed in every conceivable way? Ten billion dollars a month on Afghanistan. For the price of about 6 days of fighting the war in Afghanistan, we could make up the difference between the President's Homeland Security request and the allocation in this bill. Six days.

The majority clearly has one set of standards for important domestic programs and quite another for military adventures abroad. If you want to wage a war, no questions asked. But if you want to support first responders, or educate small children, or preserve Medicare, you better duck, because the budget axe is aimed at the people's priorities.

I remind my friends in the majority that terrorists would strike us here on our shores, in our homeland, in our capital. An enormous military footprint that is stomping down in a sovereign country thousands of miles away, a country where Osama bin Laden wasn't hiding and al Qaeda is barely active, is not where we need to be putting our efforts.

Let's do the smart thing. Let's fully fund Homeland Security and let's save money and lives by bringing our troops home.

AMERICA'S CREDIT RATING

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week the United States House sent a clear message to the White House that it's time to address our Nation's growing debt crisis and get serious with real budgetary reforms so that America can meet its budget and credit obligations at home and around the world. There's good reason why the dollar is still the world's gold standard when it comes to credit ratings and that the U.S. is seen as a wise investment around the world.

A first-rate credit rating, which the United States currently has, means there is nothing for lenders to worry about. It lets investors know how likely a borrower can pay back a loan, and that they will receive a good return on their investment. That's why I can't emphasize enough the importance of our Nation's credit rating. A downgraded credit rating would erode confidence in our economy and reduce certainty for businesses, investors at home, and abroad. We must work to ensure that this never happens by reforming spending and fixing our debt problem. Make it so that there is not one doubt when it comes to the creditworthiness of the United States.

In April, Standard & Poor's lowered the outlook on the United States' credit to negative. S&P's rationale: the U.S. has a large debt and deficit compared with other highly rated nations, and unlike with those other nations, "the path to addressing the debt and the deficit is not clear to us."

To be clear, this warning from the S&P was not over the debt limit debate, but because Washington has no plan to tackle its massive debt. Since 1975, there have been at least nine examples when clean debt limit bills have failed to pass in either the House or the Senate. And remember, in 2006 then-