

Nation's most significant college financial aid programs. We must also guarantee that our education system is preparing young people for career readiness, which I have worked on to ensure that we're offering more training options to young adults, moving them along on career pathways, and strengthening public-private partnerships so that business and government are working together to build and improve our workforce.

I recommend to my colleagues that they all read this report, if they haven't already. I also ask that they join me in renewing our commitment to keep fighting for middle class families as we work to help our country every day here in the Congress of the United States. It's time to get America back to work and to strengthen and support the hardworking middle class of this country, the hardworking middle class that's built this country.

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. It's a sad day in America when a major general in the United States Army cannot give his honest opinion about our war in Afghanistan without losing his job.

Last week Major General Peter Fuller gave an interview in which he commented on the Afghan Government and the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Karzai. And I want to quote the general, Mr. Speaker. These are his words: "erratic and isolated from reality," that is the leader of Afghanistan. He continued by saying: "Why don't you just poke me in the eye with a needle! You've got to be kidding me. I'm sorry, we just gave you \$11.6 billion, and now you're telling me, 'I don't really care'."

That's what our young men and women are doing; they are dying and losing their legs for this erratic leader of Afghanistan.

Let me further state, in a December 8, 2010, Washington Post article, while meeting with General Petraeus and former Ambassador Eikenberry, President Karzai said he has three "main enemies": the Taliban, the United States, and the international community. "If I had to choose sides today, I'd choose the Taliban." Yes, that's the erratic leader our young men and women are dying for.

Just last month during a television interview, President Karzai stated, "If ever there's a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan."

These are not the statements of a leader for whom United States servicemembers should give life and limb.

On May 12 of this year, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer and Sergeant Kevin Balduf, both from my district, Camp Lejeune and Cherry Point, were in Afghanistan, with the sole purpose to train Afghan officers, when one of

the trainees opened fire and shot and killed Lieutenant Colonel Palmer and Sergeant Balduf as they sat down for lunch. They both were killed by an Afghan trainee. And, Mr. Speaker, these two little girls on this poster are the daughters of Sergeant Balduf, Eden and Stephanie. They're standing at their father's service at Arlington.

The tragedy for these little girls is not just the fact that their daddy gave his life for this country, trying to help the Afghans learn to be policemen; but the day before he was killed, Sergeant Balduf emailed his wife, Amy, and he said, "I don't trust them. I don't trust them for anything, not for anything at all." The next day, he and Colonel Palmer were shot dead by the people that we're spending \$10 billion a month on in Afghanistan. And we're telling the American people, We've got to cut programs for your children and our senior citizens.

I'm asking that President Obama and Congress do everything to defend the truth and encourage military leaders to be honest with the American people as to what is happening in Afghanistan, and I will submit a letter that I wrote to President Obama regarding General Fuller.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with this debt supercommittee that's going to be making recommendations, I hope that my colleagues in the Republican Party will join those of us, the few of us in the Republican Party, as well as some of the Democrats, and let's bring our troops home before 2014. Yes, when you read in the paper we're bringing our troops home, it's 2014. How many more little girls and little boys have to go to their father's or mother's funeral? Why doesn't America wake up and demand that Congress bring our troops home before 2014?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will close, as I always do, from the bottom of my heart to ask God, 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. And I ask God to bless the House and the Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God and God's people.

Mr. Speaker, last night on ABC, I was so touched to see GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, one of our colleagues, making such a strong effort to come back to the Congress. I wish her the very best in my heart, and I ask God to bless her and her husband.

Dear God, I ask You, please give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States, where he will do what is right in the eyes of God. And God, please continue to bless America.

NOVEMBER 7, 2011.

President BARACK OBAMA,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA: It was with great sadness that I learned that a senior military

officer was relieved of his position for telling the truth. Major General Peter Fuller should receive praise from the American people, not the scorn of military leadership. His comments about Afghan leadership being "erratic" and ungrateful for the United States' financial assistance and military training are correct.

In a December 8, 2010 Washington Post article, while meeting with General Petraeus and former Ambassador Eikenberry, President Karzai said he has three "main enemies"—the Taliban, the United States and the international community. "If I had to choose sides today, I'd choose the Taliban." Just last month, during a television interview, President Karzai stated "... if ever there is a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan." These are not the statements of a leader for whom U.S. service members should give life and limb.

On May 12 of this year, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer and Sergeant Kevin Balduf, both from my district, were in Afghanistan with the sole purpose to train Afghan officers when one of the trainees opened fire and shot and killed Lt. Col. Palmer and Sgt. Balduf as they sat down for lunch. In an email to his wife shortly before he died, Sgt. Balduf said "I don't trust them; I don't trust them for anything, not for anything at all." These two families quickly learned why.

Mr. President, the day after you visited the wounded at Walter Reed at Bethesda, I went and visited severely wounded Marines from my district, which includes Camp Lejeune. One Marine looked me in the eye and asked why we were still in Afghanistan. I had to tell this Marine and his mother that I did not know, and that I believed it was time to declare victory and bring our troops home before 2014. As of October, 1,812 U.S. service members have died in Afghanistan. How many more families will give a loved one for a corrupt leader?

Maj. Gen. Fuller spoke the truth and does not deserve this fate. As Commander in Chief, I hope you will support and demand the truth for the American people. If our military leaders cannot tell the truth, then America is in deep trouble. Mr. President, you can right a wrong by reinstating Maj. Gen. Fuller to his previous position.

Sincerely,

WALTER B. JONES,
Member of Congress.

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DO-NOTHING OPTION

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Eight days until the so-called supercommittee is to report. They're limping toward failure; although perhaps now they've found the way Washington always loves to do things—let's kick the can down the road. Let's pretend we did it. Let's say we'll adopt some future tax measures in the next 12 months that will get us to their rather modest goal of \$1.2 trillion of deficit reduction over 10 years. I tell you what, the do-nothing option is starting to look a lot better. Now, that's something that Congress is really good at doing—nothing.

So what happens if we do nothing? Well, first you get the sequestration. There's much gnashing of teeth about that. But Congress will have discretion

within accounts, within the Defense Department and elsewhere to find those cuts, which would be relatively modest over a 10-year period. But then the better thing with the do-nothing option is if Congress really, really can do nothing and continues to do nothing for the rest of this session, then all the Bush tax cuts go away and that means \$4 trillion of additional revenues with a little bit of shared sacrifice. It hits the people at the top mostly, takes them back to the Clinton-era rates of taxes. That's without closing tax loops and going through all that. Just let the Bush tax cuts expire; that would take care of 40 percent of the deficit problem over the next 10 years. Add in the sequestration from the failure of the committee another 1.2, plus the 1.3 we passed last summer, suddenly we're up to 67-70 percent of the projected deficit. That's pretty much what we need to do around here. And you can do it in an honest way, which is with revenues and spending reductions. That's how we balanced the budget in the 1990s. You can't do it all with just stopping cuts. Stop pretending that that'll work. It won't work.

Now, there'll be much gnashing of teeth, particularly on Wall Street, about oh, Congress can't get things done, and we're worried. And the crooks are the unindicted co-conspirators at the ratings agencies. The same people who rated designed-to-fail mortgage collateralized debt obligations as AAA-plus investments are now concerned about the government of the United States and how it conducts itself in its honesty and dealing with these difficult problems. Well, you know, maybe they should take a look at the do-nothing option, too. If they're really concerned about debt reduction, the do-nothing option is the best.

And then finally this week, Congress will have a chance to vote on a balanced budget amendment, the same one that passed in 1995. Let's think of what the world would look like today if the one that passed the House in 1995 had become the law of the land. We wouldn't have had 10 years of Bush tax cuts at a cost of \$5 trillion of new debt and no jobs. We wouldn't have had the wars fought on the credit card. We would have had to vote every year because we didn't declare war, and under this balanced budget amendment if you don't declare war and you have an overseas emergency, you have to vote every year on the spending. Maybe we wouldn't have spent those many hundreds of billions and trillions of dollars.

And, finally, the prescription drug benefit designed to subsidize the pharmaceutical industry with borrowed money and that gives seniors a donut hole, we wouldn't have had that either.

Now, I have liberal friends over here who say: Oh, we can't have a balanced budget amendment. That would be horrible. Well, just think, if those things hadn't happened and we didn't have \$14

trillion of debt today, wouldn't we be in a place to make the investments we need to put America back to work and not burdening our kids with a mountain of debt? Think about it. A balanced budget amendment works both ways. This one's honest. It doesn't say supermajority for taxes. It doesn't say supermajority for cuts. It says you figure it out. You were elected, you figure it out. And do it in a way that both builds a country with a sustainable economy and gives us a financial future that isn't a huge burden to our kids.

CONGRATULATING WAYZATA GIRLS SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Wayzata High School girls soccer team on winning this year's Class 2A State championship. This is a team that embodies the philosophy of practice makes perfect. Every day throughout the season, this team would practice penalty kicks just in case a big game would depend on it.

And when it came down to the championship game, when regulation time ran out, when overtime passed, 10 minutes extra of overtime, the State title would be decided by a penalty kick shootout. In the end, it was Wayzata's practice of the fundamentals that really did pay off when Chelsey Ulrich scored the game-winning goal in that shootout.

So congratulations to the student athletes of Wayzata High School and the girls soccer team, as well as the coaches, for being great student athletes and for a job well done.

INVESTING IN AMERICA

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, in a few days our Congress will see the reporting out of the work of the supercommittee. This is a big deal, and it's something that the American people, I pray, focus their attention on. It's a big deal because it is true, and I say this as a proud liberal Member of this Congress, that we do need to make sure that we reduce our country's long-term deficit. We need to do that because programs I care about like Head Start, home heating oil for seniors, programs that are going to help develop our human capital, get crowded out when we say we just don't have enough money. We do need to make sure that we can live within the budget of this country.

But the question is not what we are going to cut, but what are we going to spend on. That's the real question. The deeper question is what are we going to invest in because the fact is, whether we do only stimulus and spend a lot of

money in the hope that we increase aggregate demand, or whether we do what Republicans suggest, which is to cut everything and just have austerity, neither one of those solutions will really put America on the track that it needs to be on.

The fact is that we need to invest in this country because as we look around, this country, the land of opportunity, is not making the investments that it needs to make in order to be the world leader in the years to come. We need to invest in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. Let's start by talking about greening America. We need to retrofit old buildings. We need to invest in a smart grid. We need to invest in renewable energy—wind, solar, things that will really help power our Nation and make us less dependent not only on foreign oil but oil altogether—fossil fuels. We need to reduce that dependency.

We need to invest in transit and roads and bridges. In my own City of Minneapolis, we saw a bridge fall 65 feet into the Mississippi River because it had not been adequately maintained. People think, oh, that's Minneapolis's problem. If they think that, they're wrong. Bridges all over this country are in critically bad shape, and we need to invest in making sure that they are not only safe but are adequate for the future; well fitted so that they can accommodate transit and other sorts of things that can move people around and not just be dependent upon cars. We need to invest in a smart grid so we use energy efficiently and we can power our society in efficient and important ways.

But not only do we need to invest in infrastructure, we need to invest in our people. We need to invest in skills training. This should start, Mr. Speaker, with early childhood education. Any economist who studies this will tell you, the investments you make in little kids, zero to six, pay off for a lifetime. And yet we don't have universal kindergarten or universal early education. We have millions of children across this country whose young minds could be being developed by the age of 3 or 4 or 5; and yet they're not. They are languishing at home and they are being, in some cases, baby-sat by the television or even worse. Some don't have adequate nutrition. Mr. Speaker, we need to invest in the earliest, youngest Americans so they can have success throughout a lifetime.

We need to do something immediately about the awesome debt burden that our young people in college are shouldering. This has the potential, as young people who are in their 20s and 30s should be buying houses, buying cars, should be saving for their retirement, they're paying back student loans. This is going to have a long-term negative effect on our economy, and we need to do something about it right now.

There are a lot more things to talk about, but one of the things I don't