

end illegal cotton subsidies to American farmers. We could produce \$25 billion to \$30 billion in savings from direct payments, usually to large agribusiness interests; or, if we stop the obscene process of giving more to crop insurance agents than to farmers, reform crop insurance, we could yield another \$8 billion to \$12 billion. This is entirely within our capacity. If the House goes along with this travesty, shame on us.

The need to protect our children's health has never been clearer. The costs have never been more manageable. Indeed, this will more than pay for itself in savings for lifetime costs of health care. It will damage people's health and shorten lives. The "ketchup as vegetable" debacle of the Reagan era will look tame and sane by comparison. I strongly urge the House to reject this ill-advised initiative.

#### PASS THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, as of November 14, 2011, the United States national debt is \$14.973 trillion, according to the Department of the Treasury. With pending security auctions this month, it is inevitable that the national debt will reach the unprecedented level of \$15 trillion in the coming weeks. When the national debt reaches \$15 trillion, it means the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio will reach 99.7 percent, and our debt will equal \$47,900 for every living American.

Since President Obama took office in 2009, the debt has gone up by \$4.3 trillion. In the last 50 years, the Federal Government has only managed to balance its budget five times, most recently with President Clinton, a Democrat, and Republican control of the United States House of Representatives and Senate.

Washington now borrows approximately 40 percent of every dollar it spends. Foreign investors hold half of our Nation's public debt and one-third of overall debt, not only from China, but from Japan, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and other places as well.

□ 1010

Admiral Mullen, the recently retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has rightly called the national debt "the single biggest threat to our national security."

While we have made significant strides in reducing the cost of government over the last few months, much more needs to be done. The primary focus of this Congress and our new leadership has been to restore fiscal sanity and fiscal restraint to the Federal Government. We must remember that the money in the Treasury is not our money but it is the people's money, and we are charged with being good stewards of that money.

There is only one way to ensure that future Congresses and Presidents, re-

gardless of party, are unable to return to the reckless, out-of-control spending of the past, and that is to pass a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. This week, Congress will vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution for the first time in 16 years.

In 1995, following passage by the House of Representatives, the United States Senate came within one vote of sending a version of the balanced budget amendment to the States for ratification. Since then, our total national debt has almost tripled. Today's proposal is nearly identical with the one that passed the House of Representatives with 72 Democratic votes in 1995.

Amending our Constitution should not be taken lightly. I will support the balanced budget amendment because I believe it is the right thing to do to help get our Nation's fiscal house in order. I would have preferred that the balanced budget amendment include a spending cap, but we need Democratic Members to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority required for a constitutional amendment to be sent to the States for ratification. That is why the amendment we will be considering almost mirrors the 1995 text.

Before coming to Congress, I served in the New Jersey State Legislature, where I successfully sought reforms to ensure that our State government was responsible with the people's money. In 2008, the people of New Jersey passed by State constitutional amendment to require voter approval for all issuance of State borrowing. I am proud to be able to do my part here in Washington as well. Most States, including New Jersey, are required to balance their State budgets. If the Federal Government continues to spend what it does not have, the balanced budget amendment would provide a much needed safeguard to restrict future spending.

As someone who tries to be a student of American history, I know that a balanced budget amendment is not a new idea. Thomas Jefferson was a strong proponent of the idea. He said: "I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to the Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government." He was referring to a balanced budget amendment. Those were wise words when spoken, and they are wise words today.

Passing a balanced budget amendment would also help move us closer to much needed economic certainty that our Nation desperately needs to boost the economy and help create jobs.

When I was a boy and a young man, the fundamental issue confronting the Nation was the threat of the Soviet Union and international communism, the focus of evil in the modern world, as President Reagan said.

The fundamental issue confronting the Nation in the 21st century is fiscal responsibility. Will our children live in a diminished America? Will the promise of America that each generation

does better than the generation before it continue to exist? Will we continue to lead the world, or will leadership pass to China or India or to some other place?

This is the great issue confronting the people of the United States, and it is the great issue confronting us here in Congress. Let us get our fiscal house in order. Let's pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

#### HONORING LANCE CORPORAL NICKOLAS DANIELS

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to honor and recognize Marine Lance Corporal Nickolas Daniels. Lance Corporal Daniels of Elmwood Park, Illinois, was tragically killed November 5 at the age of 25 while on patrol in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

I want to pass on my deepest condolences to Nick's family and those who knew him and share with them the thanks of a grateful Nation.

Nick attended Elmwood Elementary School and graduated from St. Patrick High School in 2004, where he was an all-conference linebacker in football.

Mr. Daniels, after going back to St. Pat's to coach football, joined the Marines in 2010 to help achieve his goal of one day becoming a police officer. Nick was well known and respected throughout the St. Pat's community. He was a very funny, lighthearted person who would do anything for those around him. Not only was Nick a dedicated coach, but, most importantly, he was a loving son and grandson, an incredible mentor to his younger sister and brothers, and a loving and devoted fiancé. I've been told that Nick poured his heart into everything he did and always wanted to make sure that his friends and family were taken care of.

A decorated marine receiving multiple citations and a role model in his community, Nickolas Daniels was, and will remain, a shining example of the best this country has to offer.

We can never repay Nick or his family for what they have given to this country, but his sacrifice will forever be remembered by those he fought to protect.

As I thought about what to say today, I realized the inadequacy of words in any such effort. I was reminded that this feeling was shared by an American President who attempted to console a family that had lost five sons in battle during the Civil War, but he captured the essence of the loss as he wrote:

"I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

"I pray our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

"Yours, very sincerely and respectfully, Abraham Lincoln."

#### SUPPORTING RIGHT-TO-CARRY LAWS

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, today the House will consider H.R. 822, a long overdue measure to ensure that States recognize the concealed weapons permits issued by other States.

This very simple measure has unleashed a firestorm of protests from the political left. I noted one polemicist, who obviously has not read the Constitution, wax eloquently of the constitutional violation of States' rights enshrined in the 10th Amendment. What nonsense. Article IV of the Constitution could not possibly be more clear: "Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records and judicial proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may, by general laws, prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof."

It is precisely this article that requires one State to recognize driver's licenses or birth certificates or arrest warrants issued by another State. Without it, we are not a Union but merely a loose confederation.

Well, then we're told this is dangerous and risky to allow honest and law-abiding citizens to exercise their lawfully issued permits in other States. Upon what basis do they make this claim? Certainly not upon any empirical data.

The impact of right-to-carry laws, that is, laws that require the issuance of a concealed weapon permit to any law-abiding citizen, has been studied extensively, and the vast preponderance find that crime rates have fallen in those States after they've adopted such laws. No credible study has ever found that the enactment of such laws has produced an increase in crimes or suicides or accidental deaths.

Overall, States with right-to-carry laws have 22 percent lower violent crime rates, 30 percent lower murder rates, 46 percent lower robbery rates, and 12 percent lower aggravated assault rates as compared to the rest of the country. Indeed, right-to-carry laws have been so successful that no State has ever rescinded one.

So, if the left can't make a rational case on constitutional grounds or on empirical grounds, what is the problem? I suspect it comes down to what Ronald Reagan once called this irreconcilable conflict between those

who believe in the sanctity of individual freedom and those who believe in the supremacy of the State.

Years ago, I had the honor to work for the legendary chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, Ed Davis. During his 8½ years as chief of the LAPD, crime dropped in Los Angeles even while, during the same period across the rest of the Nation, it was ballooning by more than 50 percent. Chief Davis founded Neighborhood Watch. He was an ardent opponent of laws that restrict ownership of firearms by honest citizens. His successful philosophy was predicated on the principle that, as he put it: "It's not the responsibility of the police department to enforce the law. That is the job of every citizen. The police department is there to help."

□ 1020

As citizens, we're an integral part of the laws that we enact. That doesn't mean we act as vigilantes, but it does mean that each of us has an inalienable right to defend ourselves and our families from violent predators with whatever force is necessary. And if we see a child being molested or a woman being robbed or an old man being beaten, we have a moral responsibility to intervene to the extent that we can.

A concealed weapon in the hands of honest and law-abiding citizens makes us all safer. Simply knowing that there are responsible citizens among us capable of responding with force is itself a powerful deterrent to crime. That's the well-documented experience of every State with a right-to-carry law. But a society in which honest and law-abiding citizens are disarmed by their government is a society in which the gunman is king.

This is a truth that ought to be self-evident, but it is lost at the altar of the authoritarian left, which seems to concentrate all power in government at the expense of the people. Perhaps the best test of the self-evident nature of that truth is illustrated in a full-page newspaper ad I once saw that offered a cut-out sign, which in 150-point type said: "There are no guns in this house." The caption under it asked, "Would you post this sign in your front window?"

#### THE STOCK ACT

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge and implore my colleagues to support the STOCK Act, the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act, and I ask also that Speaker BOEHNER bring this bill to the floor for a vote immediately.

On Sunday night on CBS, their news program "60 Minutes" highlighted the potential problem of insider trading on Capitol Hill. Unlike all other Americans and investors, Members of Congress and their staff are not held le-

gally responsible for profiting from nonpublic information they gain from their official position serving the public. This is absolutely outrageous and strikes at the heart of the democracy.

When I first came to Congress and sat down with the author of this bill originally, Congressman Baird, and he started explaining to me what this was about, I, as most Americans, was shocked to believe it wasn't already a bill. Why would you allow the breach of trust of the American public to believe that their Member of Congress could potentially be trading on information to enrich themselves? It's not the point of, is it happening? The point is if the potential lies there.

At the heart of every relationship is trust. If the trust is violated, everything that comes after that is a moot point. And this might be the greatest understatement ever: the American public is understandably frustrated with all the bickering and gridlock here. They don't trust institutions, they don't trust their banker, they don't trust corporations, and they don't trust Congress. If you thought we couldn't go any lower than a 9 percent approval rating, just have the people who watch "60 Minutes" vote now and see where they're at.

This legislation is a very big step in the right direction. It's about restoring the faith and trust in Congress and the work of democracy. Ronald Reagan was right. We've heard about President Reagan several times today. Trust but verify. That's what this piece of legislation is about. We want to work with Speaker BOEHNER and get this bill moving. And let me tell you, it's very simple on what it does. The bill would prohibit insider trading on Capitol Hill. It will remove loopholes and any confusion about what's right, wrong, legal or illegal. No insider trading by Members of Congress and their staff, period. If you do it, you break the law and you will be held accountable. It's common sense.

The STOCK Act would prohibit Members of Congress and Congressional staff from using nonpublic information obtained through their official duties for personal gain in the stocks in the commodities markets. It would also prohibit private individuals and firms who attempt to mine such information from public officials to use it for insider trading. Specifically, the bill is simple and short and says this: It requires that the SEC and the CFTC write rules that ban using congressional, nonpublic information to make trades. It changes the House ethics rules to specifically ban Members and staff from using nonpublic information to make trades. It changes House disclosure rules to require Members and staff who already file financial disclosures to disclose trades of \$1,000 or more in a timely fashion, in addition to the annual disclosures. And it requires political intelligence firms to register like lobbyists. These are the people