

But one such soldier returns from battle to America with a flag-draped coffin. He is Cody Norris, Army private first class, a machine gunner in the infantry, just 20 years old, barely an adult, but still an all-American man.

For the Norris family in La Porte, Texas, Cody was a son and a little brother. He died in a gun battle last week in Afghanistan for our country. He was the 38th warrior in my area of Texas to give his life for his country.

Cody grew up in La Porte. He graduated from La Porte High School just last year, but he quickly volunteered for the United States Army in October.

In high school, Cody loved to restore old military trucks. He restored a 1952 Dodge M-37 Army truck and drove it to school. He was a member of the Junior ROTC Color Guard at La Porte High School. But this year, his former classmates and peers in the Color Guard honored his life.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, before deploying to Afghanistan. It was his first deployment in Afghanistan.

October 1 marked his 1-year anniversary in the United States Army. Cody was killed in Kandahar province last week on November 9 when the enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire.

Kandahar province in Afghanistan has been called the birthplace and fateful home of the notorious Taliban. It is a dangerous part of the world. I've been to Afghanistan several times, and the sun is unbearable in the summer and the cold is brutally piercing in the winter. And our soldiers fight on, undeterred, tenaciously focused.

They go to battle in a land seemingly cursed by God. Our military in Afghanistan go where others fear to tread and the timid are not found.

When I spoke to Cody's mother, Teresa Denise Norris, she told me Cody marched to the beat of his own drum. He didn't care what others thought of him; he did what he thought was right.

She said Cody was proud to be a soldier and that their family believes in the red, white and blue; and they all love this country. That pride is carried through in Cody's older brother, Michael Norris. He's a cadet in his last year at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

□ 1040

The Norris family is a soldier's family. Cody's Facebook page is filled with heartfelt messages from his friends, classmates, and fellow soldiers. It is evident how much he made people laugh in his very young life.

Cody wrote on his Facebook in the "About Me" section, "I'm in the Army and I am an infantryman. I love what I do as my job and my dream in life, and no one can take that away from me. I am trained by the best, and I will be the best I can. Wanna do all I can for the ones I love and my country—to

keep us all free, even if it means death, so that every American can live their dreams out as well."

Cody loved what he did. He loved his country. He was selfless, and he was an American patriot.

For his service in the United States Army, Cody has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, and the NATO Medal and the Combat Infantry Medal.

Cody Norris was a part of the rare breed, the American breed—soldiers who take care of the rest of us and watch for the evildoers who would bring us harm. They prove their commitment to America by giving their lives for this Nation.

General George Patton said of the fallen soldiers, "Let us not only mourn for the men who have died fighting, but let us be grateful to God that such men ever lived."

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful to Private First Class Cody Norris and that he lived. He was a Texan, a soldier, an American Warrior.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

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

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 12th Annual National Adoption Day this Friday, November 18. As we prepare for Thanksgiving festivities with loved ones, many of us take for granted our opportunity to spend time with family and friends. But for thousands of foster youth around the country, celebrating a holiday with a permanent family remains out of reach.

In the United States today there are more than 400,000 children in foster care, some waiting years to be adopted by a permanent, loving family. Although the number of youth without a home seems discouraging, there is hope.

This week, in recognition of National Adoption Day, an unprecedented number of courts in 400 communities throughout the country will open their doors to finalize the adoption of thousands of children from the foster care system.

National Adoption Day is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of children in foster care who are eligible and waiting for adoption, as well as to celebrate families that have been chosen to make a lasting difference in the life of a child through adoption or relative-based care.

Since 2000, more than 35,000 children have been adopted through National Adoption Day activities. This year, nearly 5,000 adoptions will be finalized. In California alone, my home State, 500 youth will be adopted through these special events.

While the number of children in foster care has significantly decreased

over the past decade, the number of adoptions has remained unchanged. Youth often wait years in foster care before finding a permanent family through adoption. During their time in foster care, children are moved from home to home, changing schools, losing friends, coping with separation from siblings, and wondering if they will ever have anyone to call Mom or Dad again.

What's worse is that nearly 28,000 youth age out of foster care each year never having been adopted, often going through life alone without the support systems children with permanent families have, not to mention sharing holiday traditions or a family meal.

As the cochair of both the Congressional Coalition on Adoption and the Foster Youth Caucus, I look forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion to identify solutions to improve the quality of life for our Nation's most vulnerable children.

National Adoption Day reminds us that it is our responsibility and in our best interest to find solutions to ensure children have the opportunity to live in a safe and loving home. Nearly 48 million Americans have considered adopting from foster care, according to a recent national survey. If just one in 500 of these adults adopt, all the 107,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption would have permanent families to help create Thanksgiving traditions of their own.

In closing, in this spirit of giving thanks, I'd like to express sincere gratitude to all of the adoptive parents, relative caregivers, and child welfare caseworkers. Their commitment to improving the lives of today's youth is truly commendable.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Washington has a problem. It spends more than it brings in, and it has been doing that for a long time. That's why we are over \$15 trillion in debt. That's over \$46,000 of debt for every American man, woman, and child. Washington is currently borrowing 36 cents out of every dollar it spends, and under President Obama, our national debt has increased 34 percent. That's the fastest increase in the debt under any U.S. President in history.

Our government is digging a hole it might never get out of. We don't have the money, yet Big Government hasn't been able to restrain itself and keeps putting more and more of its spending on a credit card—our children's credit card.

Our national debt-to-GDP ratio rivals that of countries like Ireland, Portugal, and Greece, which are facing sovereign debt crises. Soon our Nation's Federal debt will equal our GDP. It is a losing proposition. It's like

someone's total credit card debt equaling the total amount of income that they bring in each year.

And so what do people do? If they do that at home, unfortunately a lot of people go and get another credit card and they borrow money from that to pay the minimum on the first credit card. But then they have to go and get another credit card to pay the minimum on that one to pay the minimum on that one. It doesn't work. It spirals down and down until finally it ends in bankruptcy. It's unsustainable.

Most American families understand that. They live within their means. Washington should, too.

I grew up watching my mom and my dad wrestle with balancing the budget on our family farm. They would sit down around the kitchen table at the start of the year and develop a cash flow projection for the upcoming year listing the expenses that would be necessary to put in the crops and projecting the anticipated yields and prices to see how we were going to fare and to ensure that we didn't go over budget.

Then my parents would monitor it throughout the year to see how it was doing. My mother would spend hours with her pencil erasing and adjusting the budget as conditions changed either up or down. They used to make my sister and me sit down and participate in the process with them. And I can tell you, as a child, we weren't that thrilled with this tedious task because sometimes it would take hours. But now I'm thankful that they did, and they had the foresight to teach us the importance of balancing a budget.

I conveyed that importance to my students when I used to teach personal family finance as a home economics teacher. I told the students that when you budget, the expenses shouldn't be more than the income. They got it. Washington should, too.

Now we have the opportunity this week to bring the common sense and the business sense of American families and American small businesses to Washington to force it to live within its means by passing the balanced budget amendment. I firmly believe that this constitutional amendment is the best way to restrain the out-of-control Federal spending of Big Government. Forty-nine States have some form of a balanced budget requirement, and it works for them. I know it works for Missouri, and I believe it will work in our Nation's capital, too.

When I was a Missouri State representative, we budgeted according to the revenue projection given us and designed our budget to match the income. If we didn't have the money, we didn't spend it. Because of that, Missouri is on sound financial footing. Clearly, Washington is not because it has failed to balance its budget.

Passing the balanced budget amendment will force Washington to cut up these credit cards and to start living within its means. Families are tight-

ening their belts at home to make ends meet. Our Federal Government needs to do likewise.

President Ronald Reagan understood the importance of the balanced budget amendment. He said, "Only a constitutional amendment will do the job. We've tried the carrot, and it failed. With the stick of a balanced budget amendment, we can stop government squandering, overtaxing ways, and save our economy."

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That's why I am excited about this historic vote that we're going to take tomorrow, and I urge all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to get behind this commonsense provision that will set us back on the path to a strong financial footing. Now is the time to stop the reckless course that we are on and get things right. I look forward to applying the cash-flow knowledge I learned around the kitchen table as a child to our Federal budget. It worked at home. It's time to make it work in Washington.

REFLECTIONS OF A LIFE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are unsung heroes and heroines among us. These are the persons who overcome great challenges just to do the ordinary. They're not born into plenty—they're often born into poverty—but they have lives that are rich in that they overcome great obstacles in life just so that they can be of benefit to the lives of others.

One such heroine was born on January 26, 1934. She passed last week on November 9, 2011. Her story is one that I would hope we would remember simply because it exemplifies the life of a person who met challenges, who did everything that was required, who played by the rules—and sometimes these persons go unnoticed.

Lola Mae Bolton Davis was born in Anderson, Texas, to Arllie Pratt Sanders and Charlie Bolton. She was their second born. She attended Allen Farm School up to the eighth grade. She joined Rockwest Baptist Church.

At the age of 16, she moved to Houston, Texas, where she acquired her first job as a housekeeper. At the age of 18, she met the love of her life, Ruben George Davis, Sr. A year later, they had their first child, Pamela. She went on to attend Franklin Beauty School. Eventually, she opened her own business, and it was known as the Lola Davis Beauty Nook. She later had three additional children—Ruben, Paula and Renwick.

She was hired by Texas Instruments in 1969. While she was working there, she received her GED. Later, she received her associate's degree from Houston Community College. She enrolled at Texas Southern University and graduated with a degree in edu-

cation. She taught in the Houston Independent School District.

Mind you, this is a person who dropped out of high school, who received a GED, who went on to get an associate's degree, who got her degree in education, and now she's teaching in the Houston Independent School District.

She was known as "Grandma Davis" to her students. Her son Ruben became a constable in Harris County. He is still a constable, but is now in Fort Bend County. Her children have done well.

She played by the rules. She did not receive all of the awards that one might receive who has excelled and made a great contribution by way of an invention or maybe made a great contribution of having been elected to public office, but she did do this—she was a good citizen who did the right thing: took care of her family and produced offspring who have done well.

So, today, I salute her as an unsung heroine. Thank God for the many unsung heroes and heroines who are at the very foundation of what makes this Nation great. God bless you.

God bless the United States of America, and God bless our unsung heroes and heroines.

LET US PASS A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of a balanced budget amendment, and some would say it's the only solution to our current fiscal crisis.

Statesmen throughout the history of our Republic have stressed the importance of fiscal responsibility, but it's the voice of Thomas Jefferson that, I think, we must pay particular attention to.

Thomas Jefferson bore the burden of debt throughout his entire life, and some historians have argued that Jefferson's personal experiences influenced his thinking about the public debt as well. Jefferson inherited a significant amount of debt at the young age of 31, and some say his own spending added to that and worsened his financial condition personally during his life. When he died, he, unfortunately, passed his debt on to his descendants, which is exactly what this Federal Government is doing now to future generations today.

So, if the Federal Government says that it's so concerned about the welfare of our children and the next generation and the next generation, then we should be taking the time right now to address this staggering public debt that our children and our grandchildren will stand to inherit if our leaders here in Congress fail to have the courage to—what?—cut spending and to balance our budget and to live within our means.