

Madam Speaker, if we don't pass this legislation, members of the National Guard and the Reserve, including members of Minnesota's famed Red Bulls, will stand to lose approximately 27 days of leave that they were promised. They've already earned that leave.

Let's do the right thing. This is simple. This is straightforward. We need to keep the promises out there for our service men and women.

I want to applaud Chairman KLINE. I want to applaud all the members of the Minnesota delegation for working together on something so critical and important and for sending a bipartisan message that we will stand behind our promises to our troops and our men and women in uniform.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank the gentlelady from Guam who, as always, is an absolute stalwart supporter of our military forces and has a long tradition, coming from Guam, in defense of this Nation.

Also, a special thank you to Colonel KLINE, my colleague from Minnesota, for his unwavering support of our veterans and for bringing this forward and trying to correct this injustice.

You've heard it today, Madam Speaker, about a change in policy. And while a stroke of the pen at the Pentagon may not seem like that much, it impacts our veterans and their families. These are folks that have deployed, in many cases, three times. For example, the Red Bulls from Minnesota: once for 9 months, once for 22 months, and once for a year.

We came up, as a Nation, to make the determination that these folks should have a little bit of time of leave when they come back, readjust with their families, see children they maybe have never celebrated a birthday with, and then try to go back and get into the job market.

As a Nation, these are our best and brightest. These are our future leaders. We want them getting readjusted. We want them back into the job market. And by the Pentagon changing this midstream, it's not so much the financial or the monetary insult; it's the insult to what these folks went through. When they went, they were promised a benefit. When they came back, we had cut it in half.

We hear a lot about a 99 and a 1 percent. There is a 99 and a 1 percent in this country—1 percent who are serving in uniform and have served overseas, 99 percent of us who have benefited from that sacrifice.

So I commend the delegation. I commend this House. If there is an issue that binds this Nation together, it's the absolute unwavering support of those who are willing to lay down their lives and sacrifice time with their families to serve each and every one of us. The least we can do is make sure that the benefits that were promised, that

were guaranteed, are delivered upon. It's the right thing to do. It's the right thing for the country. It binds us together.

And I want to thank all of the folks here who made this possible. I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

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Ms. BORDALLO. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), especially for his assistance with the Reserve Component Caucus.

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

Mr. KLINE. I have no further requests for time, and I'm going to close by thanking Members on both sides of the aisle. You've heard from members of the Minnesota delegation here tonight, my good friends, the Democrats Mr. WALZ and Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. CRAVAACK, and Mr. PAULSEN. This legislation affects members of the Guard and Reserve all over the country.

I'm especially pleased that my friend and fellow committee member and fellow traveler, Ms. BORDALLO, was managing the debate on the other side of the aisle. She and I have traveled to some fairly remote corners of Iraq and Afghanistan and places like that over the years, and I must say I've never been anywhere where our Nation was at conflict and where we had men and women serving in uniform that we didn't come across somebody from the Guam National Guard. So I really want to thank her for her support on this legislation and the support of men and women in uniform everywhere. I know from the reaction I see from those soldiers that when they see Ms. BORDALLO, there is great affection and respect there—both ways.

Again, I want to thank all who weighed in on this. It was clearly an injustice. It needed to be fixed, and this is one of those times when we've come together as Democrats and Republicans working together. We have Senators, Republicans and Democrats, in the Senate working the other body to move this through. Speed counts here. Every day that this is delayed, another soldier loses the opportunity to take advantage of this paid leave.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4045, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 201(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431 note), as amended, and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, of the following member on the part of the House to the Commission on International Religious Freedom for a term ending May 14, 2014:

Mr. Elliot Abrams, Virginia

MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Military Mental Health Awareness Day, which is tomorrow, May 16, 2012. Our servicemembers have made tremendous sacrifices for our country, and many face serious conditions, including the potential for anxiety, depression, anger; and a growing number of those experience post-traumatic stress injury. For one reason or another, too many, tragically, result in suicide. According to the Army, during 2011, there were a total of 164 confirmed active duty suicides. For 2012, there have been 61 potential active duty suicides—35 confirmed and 26 still under investigation.

Madam Speaker, these statistics are daunting. One servicemember taking his or her own life is too many. In Congress, we have worked to increase access and availability and also to remove the stigma associated with these conditions in hopes that more soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines will be more easily diagnosed and seek the available resources and treatments.

I want to thank everyone involved in Military Mental Health Awareness Day as we continue the important work of delivering care to these brave men and women who have served this country with honor and distinction.

BULLYING PREVENTION LAW

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more precious than the Nation's children. Of course, we love and respect our seniors, respect our families, and respect our men and women in the United States military. In fact, America has a great future. But all of us realize that that future is grounded not only on our democratic principles, but on what we do for our children.

Bullying in the Nation's schools is at epidemic proportions. Two weeks ago, in my community, one young person

took a sock with a lock in it and caused another young person to leave that school in an ambulance to go to the hospital for some 15 to 20 stitches. We've seen the results of bullying that resulted in the suicide of one college student and the suicide of a 13-year-old. And we've certainly seen the movie "Bully."

I want to thank Lee Hurst for joining me last week in listening to the stories of those who tell real stories. Today, I introduced H.R. 5770, which is a bullying prevention law, including the reauthorization of the Juvenile Block Grant. It is imperative that this Congress make a national statement that bullying is unacceptable, but more importantly, that we give the tools to school districts around the Nation and communities to intervene and prevent bullying.

Our children are precious. I ask my colleagues to join in a bipartisan manner on this legislation.

FISCAL YEAR 2013 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIGELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is truly an honor tonight to stand with other freshman colleagues to discuss the ever-important number one constitutional responsibility of this Congress, in my opinion, very clearly spelled out: to provide for the common defense. Of course, this week the House will debate H.R. 4310, the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we marked this up in committee last week into the wee hours of the morning and it passed the House Armed Services Committee on May 10 with a bipartisan vote of 56-5. This legislation specifically provides for pay, funding, and authorities for America's men and women in uniform; and it's the key mechanism by which we fulfill our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense.

This bill does many things. But I thought what I would do in the beginning of this hour, as I see some of my freshman colleagues joining us tonight, is that I would start by just telling you what happened to me just this morning, as it often does. I, of course, have two very large military installations in Alabama's Second District. So I often-times have military men and women in uniform on my planes as I fly back and forth to and from Washington.

This morning, my husband had come in with me because I had some extra bags and he was helping me. And I could tell that there was a family sitting there, and I suspected that the young man was about to be deployed. The father came over to me and spoke. Now, I'm away from my children, as

are all Members of Congress, but they're usually for very short periods of time, and whereas that sacrifice is difficult in a lot of ways, it pales in comparison to the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform who put themselves in harm's way, not to mention their family members, who are also sacrificing their children and their spouses and their loved ones.

This morning, on this plane ride, not unlike many others, it was a stark reminder to me and to my family as my husband stood by and watched this family as they greeted us, as clearly the mom had a little tear in her eye, and it was just such a huge reminder to us of what individuals who have chosen to enter into our military service do for us to fight for the very freedoms that allow for me, Mr. Speaker, to stand in front of you tonight to discuss this ever-important act.

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And so to the young man that I met this morning in Montgomery, Alabama's regional airport, to all of our young men and women serving all over this great Nation and this world, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the privilege to serve them as a member of the House Armed Services Committee and as a Member of this Congress. It is a tremendous honor and a privilege, and one that I certainly do not take lightly.

Overall, this bill that we passed out of committee that we will take up this week restores fiscal sanity to our defense budget and keeps faith with America's men and women, as I have already mentioned. It aligns our military posture in this very, very dangerous world and rebuilds the force after a decade of war.

Now, do not be mistaken. You know, Mr. Speaker, that we are currently working, under the law, \$487 billion in cuts to the Department of Defense. We have sat as members of the House Armed Services Committee in committee hearing after committee hearing where our joint chiefs and our commanders have sat in front of us and told us that, yes, in fact, we will have a smaller force as a result of these current cuts. I think we can all agree in these fiscal times that there is not an area that is funded by hardworking taxpayer dollars of this Federal Government that doesn't deserve harsh scrutiny when it comes to fiscal cuts. And our military is certainly going to sustain those with these \$485 billion in cuts.

But under the Budget Control Act and the joint committee's failure to provide the necessary cuts under that law, the automatic trigger that we here in Congress call sequestration is set to take place at the beginning of January next year. What we have heard in our committee hearings over and over and over again from Secretary Panetta, from General Dempsey, and others, is that our military cannot sustain another half-trillion or more in

cuts. Not only would we have a smaller force, but there is a danger of a less capable force, particularly in this time in our Nation's history as we continue to fight the war on terror both here at home and abroad.

I bring all of this up to say that, again, the light in our military is our military families and the men and women who serve this country so honorably. And we, as members of the House Armed Services Committee and as Members of this United States Congress, have a duty to ensure that we are not only acting fiscally responsibly, but we are doing it in a way that ensures that those men and women have everything that they need to accomplish the task and the mission that we send them into.

There are several suggestions that have been made as it results to the \$487 billion in cuts as we downsize our force. One of them that came out and has been scrutinized particularly is the C-130 decision. I just want to spend a little time, since I, as a member of the committee, had an amendment before the Armed Services Committee last week to deal with the way that our military looked at these potential cuts, and actually provide us with the information that we need to then in turn provide oversight as members of this committee as to whether or not these are decisions that are going to provide us with the fiscal restraint that we need.

The committee passed this amendment during markup. Representative CONAWAY from Texas and Representative PALAZZO from Mississippi also were on this amendment regarding the Air Force's C-130. I look forward, with the other Members of the Alabama delegation, to have a conversation specifically with Secretary Donley and General Schwartz as it relates to decisions regarding the C-130. Mind you, and I want to be very clear when I say this, this could be the C-130, this could be the Abrams tank, this could be MEADS, this could be any other aspect of our military where we need to be asking these same questions. Certainly this is important to us, the Representatives that signed on to this amendment, because the C-130 is located in our districts, but I want to be clear, because this is not about just protecting the mission at home. This is about making sure that across the board we are asking the right questions to protect the missions, as I've already stated, as well as making decisions that are going to find the savings that we need.

So our amendment very clearly just says, how did you determine which C-130 aircraft will be retired and relocated, and the methodologies underlying such determinations, including what assumptions were made to define and shape these specific determinations. And the rationale for selecting various C-130 aircraft from regular and reserve components, and the details of the costs incurred, avoided or saved, with respect to these C-130s.