

than the next 10 largest military spenders combined. We spend \$500 million a year on military bands alone.

But it's not just about what we spend; it's also how we spend. Former Secretary of Defense Gates called for billions in cuts, saying, "what had been a culture of endless money" at DOD must "become a culture of savings and restraint."

Admiral Mike Mullen once called our debt the "greatest threat to our national security."

The Sustainable Defense Task Force and the Bipartisan Policy Center have also outlined close to \$1 trillion in defense cuts that can still keep us safe.

But this defense budget doesn't reflect the expertise of our military leaders, defense experts, or the American people.

It ignores our military leaders by including a new east coast missile interceptor the Pentagon doesn't want, and it rolls back efforts by the DOD to be more energy efficient because the commanders on the ground know that lives are lost transporting fuel to troops abroad.

It ignores military experts by funding the deadly V-22 Osprey, which is 186 percent over budget, it is not safe to fly in extreme heat or excessive sand, has killed 36 servicemembers, and can be replaced with cheaper helicopters.

It also ignores experts such as Henry Kissinger, who promote drastically reducing our nuclear stockpile by including a huge funding increase for nuclear upgrades.

Finally, perhaps more importantly, it ignores the American people, who want a smaller military footprint and want our troops home from Afghanistan. According to a recent report released at the Stimson Center, the public supports cutting the defense budget by 18 percent. And according to the latest opinion polls, close to seven in 10 Americans oppose the war in Afghanistan, yet this defense bill includes language aimed at slowing down the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

We aren't fighting the Cold War anymore, yet this budget continues to invest billions in nuclear weapons and thousands of troops stationed in Europe and Asia.

Today our greatest threat is a global network of extremists who find safe haven in ungoverned spaces across the world. There have been at least 45 terrorist attacks plotted against the U.S. since 9/11, and each one of them was foiled, not by our mass ground forces in Afghanistan, but through intelligence, policing, and citizen engagement.

According to terrorism expert Erik Dahl of the Naval Postgraduate School, when it comes to domestic attacks and securing the homeland, what works is really good, old-fashioned policing, law enforcement, tips from the public, and police informants. Our enemy today must be caught with less costly policing, intelligence gathering, and special operations, not multibillion dollar tanks and nukes.

The real ramification of overspending on defense is not simply that we have too many unneeded nukes or planes, but that we don't have enough resources to support vital domestic investments such as health care, education, and infrastructure needed to remain a superpower.

Military power is not simply about spending more than our adversaries. Real military power, argues Kori Schake, a former McCain advisor, is "premised on the solvency of the American Government and the vibrancy of the U.S. economy." In order to maintain that vibrancy, we must get our fiscal house in order and do so by reexamining our defense spending, and making cuts and reforming where necessary.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCKINLEY. Madam Speaker, every year, in May, this country celebrates National Nurses Week. Often described as an art and a science, nursing is a profession that embraces dedicated people with varied interests, strengths, and passions because of the many opportunities the profession offers.

As a husband of a critical care nurse, I know all about the lives they touch each and every day. They work in emergency rooms, school-based clinics, hospitals, and homeless shelters, just to name a few. They have many roles, from staff nurses to educators to nurse practitioners and nurse researchers, and serve all of them with a passion for the profession and with a strong commitment to patient security and safety.

National Nurses Week occurs each year in May, surrounding Florence Nightingale's birthday. Our nurses strive for excellence in all they do. They provide patients and their families with skilled, compassionate care, and help them navigate a very complex and oftentimes overwhelming health care system to provide safe passage for the patients and their families.

Regardless of their role or title, nurses educate, counsel, advocate, and lead. These men and women work to make a difference to countless patients, families, and communities who benefit from nurses' dedication and professionalism.

This month is a time to reflect on all the good nurses do. It is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the differences our nurses make.

□ 1040

HORSE PROTECTION PROGRAM

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to discuss an important

and timely issue negatively affecting the welfare of the horses of this great country. It's called "soring." Soring is the act of deliberately causing pain to exaggerate the leg motion of high-gaited horses, such as Tennessee Walking Horses.

This inhumane practice, despite being illegal for almost 40 years, is still used far too often by many owners and trainers to win in the show ring. Today, I hope I can persuade you, my fellow Members of Congress, to take interest in this issue, to oppose this cruel and illegal practice, and to increase the support for the USDA's Horse Protection Program.

Horses are sored in several different ways:

Caustic materials, such as kerosene or mustard oil, are applied to the lower leg. This makes the horse's leg sensitive so that, when certain cruel devices like chains are placed against it, it causes severe pain, causing the horse to lift its leg high in an exaggerated gait. There are other common approaches also, like trimming the hoof excessively, exposing sensitive tissues, inserting devices between the shoe pads and the sole of the horse and, frankly, improper shoeing techniques. No matter the technique, its purpose is to cause the horse pain so that it lifts its leg higher and faster.

While rest and training may allow some horses to eventually recover from that harm, others suffer irreversible hoof damage and are actually crippled for life. The harm caused by soring is not just physical. The mental damage done to the horse can make its rehabilitation difficult, if not impossible.

Soring is so egregious that it has actually been illegal in this country for over 40 years. The Horse Protection Act was passed in 1970. So why, 40 years later, are we still having the same conversation?

The problem lies within the culture of some of those in the walking horse industry, in which unethical trainers and unethical owners not only continue this practice but use tricks to deceive detection. Substantial financial gains come from winning horse shows, and this makes soring appealing to many unscrupulous owners and trainers. Soring is a shortcut that overshadows the balance and collection seen in the beautiful natural movement of horses that perform racking gaits. These gaits can actually be achieved without soring, rather by investing the proper time, training, and conditioning on the horse.

The Horse Protection Program at the USDA serves as regulatory enforcement for the Horse Protection Act. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, USDA inspectors only attend a small fraction of the shows. In 2011, USDA documented 587 violations of the act while attending only 62 of the 600 to 700 shows held that year. Fiscal year 2012 was the first time in the history of the Horse Protection Program that it actually received more than \$500,000 in

funding. In February of this year, Barney Davis, a Tennessee trainer, was convicted of soring, fined \$4,000, and was sentenced to a year in prison. In March, nationally known trainer Jackie L. McConnell and three of his associates were charged with 52 counts of violating the Horse Protection Act. These recent charges, including the first two convictions in two decades under the U.S. Horse Protection Act, have brought increased attention to this horrible abuse.

These indictments and prosecutions are long overdue, and I applaud the U.S. Attorneys and USDA civil servants who have courageously worked to end soring. Yet adequate funding of the Horse Protection Program is critical for the enforcement of this act and for the prevention of this abusive practice. It is imperative that USDA's Horse Protection Program be adequately funded, ensuring the end of this cruel practice. Financial backing must be supported, not hampered, by this Congress.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has condemned soring for over 40 years. I join my fellow veterinarians across America in calling for a stop to this heinous abuse of America's horses. We in Congress need to stand up as well and speak out against this egregious form of animal cruelty. It is time for soring to end.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NOEM. Today, I rise to mark a major milestone for an important installation in the State of South Dakota. This year is the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base. It is a privilege to stand here today on the House floor and honor the thousands of airmen who have been stationed at Ellsworth. I would like to personally thank every single man and woman who has served our Nation and the people of South Dakota at this base.

Ellsworth has played an important role in this country and in our Nation's military since World War II. The attack on Pearl Harbor sent our country into one of the most destructive wars that the world has ever known. Our country needed a large and immediate force to fight a two-front war—one in the Pacific theater and another one in Europe.

Thousands of young men and women rushed into the military, and in response, our Nation built many new bases to accommodate the growing number of soldiers. In 1942, a small Army base was established near Rapid City, outside Box Elder, South Dakota. Its original purpose was to train the crews of the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. Later in the war, the base trained and deployed B-29 Superfortress crews, which were instrumental on the Eastern front.

During World War II, the base was so successful that it was changed to permanent status. Yet, sadly, a tragedy struck. While returning from a training mission, an RB-36 Peacemaker aircraft crashed in Newfoundland. Later that year, President Eisenhower came to South Dakota and dedicated the base, renaming it after Brigadier General Richard Ellsworth, who perished in the crash. Ever since then, the base has kept the name Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Ellsworth continued to prove itself as an enduring asset during the Cold War. In fact, during the first major international event of the Cold War, B-29 bombers from Ellsworth were sent to help in the Berlin Airlift, and as the Cold War progressed, so did the capabilities of Ellsworth. The aircraft at Ellsworth were used as an intimidating deterrent to our potential enemies. The base also became a hub of missile activity, transporting and storing Titan and Minuteman missiles. Without a doubt, Ellsworth was a crucial player in keeping peace during a very uneasy time in our Nation's history.

Today, Ellsworth is the home of the 28th Bomb Wing with the B-1 Lancer, which is a shining example of resourcefulness. The aircraft was originally designed for low altitude nuclear payloads, but as the Cold War ended and as the demand for nuclear capability aircraft declined, the Air Force modified the aircraft for long-range conventional bombing runs. It has been described as the workhorse of operations in Afghanistan. Most recently, B-1s from Ellsworth Air Force Base were used in Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya. The B-1 has truly become the backbone of our long-range bombing force. In fact, earlier this year, the B-1 completed its 10,000th combat mission. It is an impressive milestone for any piece of weaponry.

More recently, the Air Force selected Ellsworth to be the home of the unmanned MQ-9 Reapers. It is one of only two bases on the ground that has the control capabilities of these high-tech aircraft. It is a testament to the ongoing relevance of Ellsworth as a part of our national defense strategy.

Ellsworth has also become an integral part of South Dakota's economy. In 2010, the base estimated that it supports over 1,500 jobs in western South Dakota, and that's not including the thousands of active airmen and -women. It is also home to the Air Force Financial Services Center. It is, without a doubt, an economic engine that keeps South Dakota thriving and vibrant.

When I reflect on what makes Ellsworth Air Force Base so significant, I think beyond the impressive aircraft and the historical and economic significance that the base has to South Dakota. Instead, I think about the individual airmen, and I believe that the true strength of our Armed Forces lies with them. It doesn't come from the equipment that they use or from the

aircraft that they fly. It is their courage, their resilience, and the bravery of these fine men and women. As great as the B-17s, the B-29s, the B-1s, and the MQ-9 unmanned Reapers are, nothing can compare to the everyday American servicemember.

That's why I want to make sure, as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of Ellsworth Air Force Base, we don't focus only on the national importance the base has played or on the economic impact it has had in South Dakota. Instead, we focus on the individual airmen and on the sacrifices that they make every single day. It is the airman who leaves his family, who protects our country day in and day out and who responds to the call of duty. Each airman plays one small part in a larger operation. Whether they are pilots, navigators, engineers, munitions personnel, or air traffic controllers, each one plays an important role.

I thank all of the airmen and -women who came to Ellsworth and who did their duty to the best of their ability. They've done so for 70 years and have done an incredible job.

I would also like to commend the families of the airmen, past and present. I have heard from many of the military personnel and their families, and I am always inspired by their selfless commitment to our country. Every family member of our servicemen and -women make sacrifices. God bless them for staying strong and for providing a strong support system for our servicemembers who are stationed at Ellsworth and at bases across the country.

Again, thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to show my deep respect and appreciation for everyone at Ellsworth for its 70 years of outstanding service to our country. May God bless all who serve at Ellsworth.

□ 1050

TERRITORIAL TANF EQUITY ACT OF 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, today I'm introducing legislation to provide equitable treatment to Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories under the TANF program, which provides cash payments to needy families with children.

Currently the territories are not eligible for supplemental grants, contingency funds, and child care funds under TANF. Moreover, Federal law imposes an annual cap on the overall funding that each of the territories can receive under a variety of public assistance programs, including TANF. My legislation removes this funding cap and makes the territories eligible for TANF grants that they do not presently receive.

Puerto Rico is treated unfairly under Federal programs designed to help our