

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

Nation's most vulnerable residents. This TANF bill complements two previous bills I have introduced, which would include my constituents in SSI and SNAP. To see how Puerto Rico was hurt by its current territorial status, one need only look at the island's shocking treatment under these three key programs.

When you look at the status and well-being of all the American citizens living in the territories, you realize that what they face is geographic discrimination. It makes no sense to penalize the American residents who decide to reside in the five territories belonging to the United States. The only reason that sometimes is raised for such discrimination is that the residents of the territories do not pay Federal income taxes. But it is not right to even raise that argument when close to half of the U.S. households in the U.S. and the U.S. mainland in the 50 States are not paying Federal income taxes because of their income levels. It is also not right when most of the vast majority of the residents in the territories would not pay Federal income taxes anyway.

What we're talking about is fairness. What we're talking about is parity. There should be equal treatment for all American citizens, regardless of where they reside within America. I support statehood for Puerto Rico for several reasons, one of which is this concept of parity. Once a territory becomes a State, it doesn't have to seek parity. It automatically participates in all Federal programs.

That's one reason. But I support statehood for Puerto Rico for a more important reason. I'm talking about the lack of voting rights for the residents of Puerto Rico. I, for one, suffer the consequences. I am the one the American citizens in Puerto Rico elect to represent them in this Congress. When I come to this Chamber, I can speak, I can introduce legislation, I belong to committees. But when the time comes to vote for or against bills that benefit or affect my constituents, I cannot do so. My name doesn't even appear on the electronic board here in this Hall. That is embarrassing. It hurts me, and it hurts my constituents.

If Puerto Rico were a State, we would have at least five Members in the House of Representatives and two Senators advocating for our residents. That's one of the reasons I support statehood. But there's more to it than that.

Last year, President Obama visited Puerto Rico. I felt so proud because I had something to do with it. But you know what? It is embarrassing to say that no President had visited Puerto Rico in an official capacity in 50 years. We had to wait 50 years for a President to show up in Puerto Rico. I am sure that if the American citizens living in Puerto Rico were given the right to vote for their President, Presidents would be visiting Puerto Rico on a regular basis. They would be making com-

mitments, they would be learning about our needs, and they would be doing the right thing with respect to the American citizens living in Puerto Rico.

On November 6, there will be a plebiscite in Puerto Rico and two questions will be posed before the voters. The first question will be whether they want Puerto Rico to continue being a territory of the United States. We have to ask that question because that's how democracy works. The second question will ask them to express their preference with respect to the three available status options we have, apart from the current territorial status: statehood, independence, and free association. I hope they answer those questions, sending a message loud and clear to this Congress that they no longer want to be a territory and they want to be the 51st State of the Union.

WE ARE NOW IN THE SILLY SYSTEM

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, despite advice to the contrary, our Constitution establishes a government with two sovereigns, the Nation and the individual States. They worried about that in Philadelphia. In fact, James Wilson wondered if this system would be like two meteors on a collision course, the collision of which would be catastrophic, or if this system would be like the solar system where the planets stayed in their sphere and course and did not interfere with one another. That latter vision we call federalism. It is stated in the 10th Amendment where each level of government had a specific and distinct responsibility.

When the States were interfering with the Federal Government, it produced historical catastrophic consequences. But also when the Federal Government interferes with the role of States, the consequences range from being catastrophic to just plain silly. We are now in the silly system.

In 2010, this Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. We were wrong to pass it for five reasons: number one, it was a Senate bill. That should have been our first tip-off; number two, it was opposed by the National Governors Association; three, it was opposed by the National School Boards Association; four, it violated the Constitution.

You see, the Federal Government's only advantage is that everyone has to do the same thing in the same way at the same time. The Federal Government can impose that. But schools are given to the States because they require creativity, efficiency, and justice.

Finally, number five: we created a one-size-fits-all Federal program not defined by us. We simply passed this grand idea and then gave power to a

Secretary in some building here in Washington to come up with some kind of standards.

Two schools in my district have now been hit by those standards. I care about those schools because from one I graduated a long time ago, and the other I taught for 23 years. They were hit with a \$16,000 and \$19,000 fine respectively. What was the heinous crime for which these fines were levied against the funds that go to help the kids in these schools? During the lunch hour, their vending machines were plugged in. These vending machines were not in the cafeteria. That violated the standards. They were down in a different part of the school. But since the kids walked out of the cafeteria with their lunches and walked down the hallway towards the gym where the vending machines were and there was not a wall, by our standards, to stop them from doing that, the entire school was designated as a cafeteria and the schools were then penalized.

You see, by the standards that were created, if a kid buys a Coke and then takes it to lunch to drink, that's nutritional. But if he buys his lunch first and then goes down to buy a Coke, that is now, by our standards, unhealthy. Snickers by our standards are healthy food; licorice is not. Ice cream is healthy; Swedish Fish are not. Apparently by our standards, anything that could stick to your mouth is not a healthy food. Starbursts are out; Milky Ways are in.

It was wrong for Congress to pass a law without taking the time to establish standards that were rational by ourselves and giving that power to another body. It was wrong for Congress to invade the role of States. It was wrong to punish kids for these silly reasons. It is wrong to violate federalism. If a community school and their PTA wanted to create these standards themselves, fine.

Federalism means people at the local level should be free to create any decisions they want to do, even if those decisions are dumb. It is wrong for this body to think that every issue has to be decided here in this room, and it is wrong for us to forget that the 10th Amendment has a purpose. It is there for a reason. It should be respected.

□ 1100

IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR TROOPS INSTEAD OF ENDANGERING THEM

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, there are few things more important for us to deal with than the health and safety of our men and women in uniform. For everything they do, for all the courage they've shown and the sacrifices that they've made, we must be absolutely vigilant about protecting them from unnecessary risk.