

Especially during periods of national budgetary constraints affecting the bottom lines of States and local governments, the Byrne JAG grants are particularly important. Across our Nation, many jurisdictions, to shore up their budgets, are actually laying off police officers. When many of our citizens are experiencing economic hardship, we must not add to their burden by allowing public safety to suffer.

H.R. 6062 reaffirms the Federal Government's commitment to assisting State and local governments in their effort to prevent and fight crime. But reauthorization of the Byrne JAG grant program is obviously just a first step. We must also follow through with actually appropriating sufficient funds for the program.

In addition, we should encourage allocation of grant funds to the full range of programs that State and local governments are allowed to fund. Under current law, State and local governments may use Byrne JAG funding for programs or projects that improve law enforcement efforts; prosecution and court programs; prevention and education programs; corrections and community corrections; drug treatment programs; planning, evaluation, and technology projects; and crime victim and witness programs.

Each of these are essential to a comprehensive effort to protect us from crime, and, therefore, all of them should receive significant funding under the Byrne JAG grant program. An imbalance in justice assistance funding creates an imbalance in anticrime efforts. Specifically, an appropriate amount of funding should be allocated to prevent crime, which will help reduce the amount of money needed to fund the after-crime cost of investigation, prosecution, incarceration, and victim assistance.

We must also assist State and local governments to fund public defender programs in recognition of the fact that the public is also protected from injustice when we safeguard the Sixth Amendment rights of our citizens.

Finally, it is essential that the full range of other programs that assist State and local public safety initiatives, including the COPS program, are adequately funded. The COPS program has funded the hiring of more than 123,000 State and local police officers and sheriff's deputies in communities across our Nation, and it has been proven to be extremely effective in reducing crime.

□ 2040

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 6062, and I commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO) for his work on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.R. 6062 so that we can reaffirm our commitment to funding public safety programs, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time as well.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank my colleague from Virginia for yielding me the time.

I just want to reiterate what Mr. SCOTT just said. I have to say I have never had more requests and concern about programs from mayors and elected officials in my municipalities than I get for programs like this Byrne JAG program, like the COPS program, like the SAFER program that deals with fire prevention.

I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that many of my towns—and I'm sure this is true across the country—because of the recession, because of budgetary constraints are laying off police, laying off firemen, don't have the resources, if you will, to deal with a lot of the crime prevention problems, so these programs are crucial to them.

I want to reiterate what Mr. SCOTT said about the fact that right now it's not only a question of reauthorizing, but also making sure that there's adequate funding for it. If I could just use an example in my own district, and that is that last week I was able to announce that several towns in my district, the Sixth District, have been awarded grants under the Byrne JAG program to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime. One grant is administered by Neptune and is benefiting both Asbury Park and Long Branch—Long Branch being my home town. Another grant is administered by New Brunswick, and it's helping Perth Amboy, Edison, and Woodbridge.

The funding is used to purchase law enforcement equipment and supplies. In New Brunswick, it's being used for a police vehicle, which will have mobile video and data equipment. This is really all about community safety, which is of utmost importance. At a time when our local law enforcement has to cope with difficult funding levels, these Federal grants make it possible for towns to support critical crime-prevention activities that protect New Jersey families and their residents. I can't stress enough how important this is.

So I'm just very pleased today that on a bipartisan basis we are reauthorizing this, I think, for 5 years. And as Mr. SCOTT said, the next step is to make sure that there's adequate funding because this is a crucial program. That's why I came down here tonight to speak about it.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6062.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6169, PATHWAY TO JOB CREATION THROUGH A SIMPLER, FAIRER TAX CODE ACT OF 2012; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8, JOB PROTECTION AND RECESSION PREVENTION ACT OF 2012; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS FROM AUGUST 3, 2012, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7, 2012; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES; AND WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-641) on the resolution (H. Res. 747) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6169) to provide for expedited consideration of a bill providing for comprehensive tax reform; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8) to extend certain tax relief provisions enacted in 2001 and 2003, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from August 3, 2012, through September 7, 2012; providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules; and waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES ALLOCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1550) to establish programs in the Department of Justice and in the Department of Homeland Security to help States that have high rates of homicide and other violent crime, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1550

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Federal Law Enforcement Personnel and Resources Allocation Improvement Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. PRIORITY FOR ALLOCATION OF FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES.

(a) **REQUIREMENT.**—In the allocation of Federal law enforcement personnel and resources, the Attorney General shall give priority to placing and retaining those personnel and resources in States and local jurisdictions that have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime, based on records of crime acquired under section 534 of title 28, United States Code, including reports of crime under the system known as the National Uniform Crime Reports, or on the best and most current information otherwise available to the Attorney General.

(b) **DESIGNATION OF EXISTING FEDERAL OFFICIAL.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall designate an existing official within the Department of Justice—

(1) to develop practices and procedures to carry out the requirement established in subsection (a); and

(2) to monitor compliance with those practices and procedures by the bureaus, agencies, and other subdivisions of the Department.

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations and the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of the requirement established in section 2. The report shall, for the year it covers—

(1) specify which States and local jurisdictions have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime;

(2) identify the specific steps taken by the Attorney General to implement the requirement with respect to each of those States and local jurisdictions; and

(3) provide a description of the methodology (including any changes made in that methodology) that the Attorney General has used to determine the total number of authorized Federal law enforcement positions, to allocate those authorized positions among States and local jurisdictions, and to assign personnel to fill those authorized positions.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) **FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.**—The term “Federal law enforcement personnel” means law enforcement personnel employed by the Department of Justice, including law enforcement personnel in any of the following agencies of the Department:

(A) The Drug Enforcement Administration.

(B) The Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(C) The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

(D) The United States Marshals Service.

(2) **LOCAL JURISDICTION.**—The term “local jurisdiction” has the meaning given the term “unit of local government” in section 901(3) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3791(3)).

(3) **STATE.**—The term “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1550, as amended, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1550, the Federal Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention Act of 2012, was introduced by my friend and colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Mr. PIERLUISI of Puerto Rico. It helps focus the Justice Department's law enforcement efforts on the areas of the country that need them the most.

Crime in the United States began to rise sharply in the 1960s and continued up to its peak in the early 1990s. In response, Congress and the States reformed their criminal laws to include tougher penalties and truth-in-sentencing laws, and they dedicated additional resources to target the rising crime rate.

To a great extent, our national focus on crime has been successful. The national violent crime rate in 2010 was almost half of what it was in 1991, and crime in the United States has continued to fall in spite of difficult economic times. The violent crime rate fell 5 percent from 2008 to 2009, and another 5 percent from 2009 to 2010.

Despite this good news, we are far from a solution to the problem of violent crime in all areas of the country. There are still areas where violent crime remains a very serious issue and is even on the rise. For example, in my district, the number of murders in the city of Austin nearly doubled in 1 year, going from 22 homicides in 2009 to 38 homicides in 2010. Puerto Rico, home to the sponsor of this bill, has experienced an increase in drug-related violent crime. With more than 1,100 deaths in 2011, the homicide rate in Puerto Rico last year was more than five times the national average. The majority of this violence is attributed to the area's growing drug trafficking trade, which has implications, of course, for mainland U.S.

The problem with high-crime areas may increase if there are not sufficient Federal law enforcement officers in these communities. To address this situation, the Justice Department started to dispatch surges of Federal law enforcement officers to prevent and investigate crime in high-crime cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Oakland, California. H.R. 1550 continues this momentum. It directs the Department of Justice to consider, in coordination with State and local governments, the need to recruit, assign, and retain Federal law enforcement personnel in areas of the country with high rates of homicides and other violent crimes, which of course should include Puerto Rico.

H.R. 1550 has bipartisan support and has been endorsed by the law enforcement community. The bill was reported out of the Judiciary Committee on a voice vote, and once again I want to thank Mr. PIERLUISI for sponsoring this legislation.

H.R. 1550 improves the safety of the many Americans who live in fear of violent crime in their neighborhoods. So I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1550, the Federal Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention Act. This bill would require the Department of Justice to prioritize the placement and retention of personnel in those States and local jurisdictions that have high incidences of homicide and other violent crimes.

The recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers has become increasingly difficult in recent years. These challenges are faced not only by State and local police agencies, but also by Federal law enforcement agencies. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers is particularly acute in jurisdictions that experience high rates of violent crime.

□ 2050

In fact, the high incidence of crime in a jurisdiction can deter a Federal law enforcement officer from seeking assignment in that jurisdiction and can frequently lead to high turnover. The failure to retain a law enforcement officer has been estimated to result in approximately \$100,000 in additional costs for the Department of Justice.

H.R. 1550, as amended, aims to address this problem by directing the Attorney General to give priority in placing and retaining agents in jurisdictions with particularly high crime rates. This bill also requires the Department of Justice to annually provide Congress with a detailed report on how it is implementing this directive.

H.R. 1550 is a modest, but necessary, measure to focus our crime-fighting efforts on the areas most in need.

I, too, want to commend our colleague, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI), for his work in developing this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1550.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Thank you, Ranking Member SCOTT.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, LAMAR SMITH, for supporting H.R. 1550 and for

working with House leadership to schedule the bill for floor consideration.

I also want to thank the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Congressman CONYERS, the chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, Congressman SENSENBRENNER, and the ranking member of the Crime Subcommittee, Congressman SCOTT, for their support.

H.R. 1550 was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee and has been endorsed by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents over 25,000 Federal law enforcement officers employed by 65 agencies.

The short title of this bill, as modified, is the Federal Law Enforcement Personnel and Resources Allocation Improvement Act of 2012. The bill would direct the Department of Justice, when allocating law enforcement personnel and resources among U.S. jurisdictions, to give priority to those areas of the country that have high rates of homicide and other violent crime, including forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

The bill would require the Attorney General to designate an existing official within the Department of Justice who will be responsible for developing practices and procedures to implement this directive and for monitoring compliance with the directive by the Department's component agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the United States Marshals Service.

Finally, the bill would require the Attorney General to submit an annual report to the appropriate congressional committees. The report would specify which jurisdictions have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime and would identify the steps that the Department of Justice is taking to prioritize the allocation of law enforcement personnel and resources to those high-crime areas.

In addition, the report would describe the methodology the Department is using to determine the total number of authorized Federal law enforcement positions nationwide, to allocate those authorized positions among different jurisdictions, and to assign personnel to fill those authorized positions.

The basis for H.R. 1550 is as follows: in recent years, the number of murders and other violent crimes nationwide has decreased substantially. Between 2007 and 2011, for example, the total number of murders in the United States decreased by over 20 percent, and the total number of violent crimes decreased by nearly 18 percent.

Most U.S. jurisdictions, whether urban, suburban or rural, have experienced a meaningful reduction in murders and other violent crimes. From the macro-perspective, the progress we have witnessed has been real and, in many cases, remarkable. Much of the credit is due to law enforcement offi-

cers on the Federal and local levels. Enhanced and effective policing can make, and has made, a tremendous difference in our communities.

Unfortunately, certain jurisdictions, sometimes referred to as "hot spots," have been exceptions to this steady downward trend in violent crime. My own district, Puerto Rico, is a case in point. Today, the number of annual murders in Puerto Rico is nearly 90 percent higher than it was in 1990. Between 2007 and 2011 alone, homicides rose by 55 percent, with most of the violence linked to the drug trade. Yet the Federal law enforcement footprint in the U.S. Territory has not evolved in light of these changed circumstances. Instead, it has remained stagnant.

Puerto Rico may be the most dramatic example of a U.S. jurisdiction where violent crime has increased rather than decreased, but it's by no means alone. For example, Flint, Michigan, experienced a 73 percent increase in homicides between 2007 and 2011, while a major metropolitan area in the Central Valley of California witnessed a 100 percent increase in murders.

Moreover, there are numerous other areas where there has been some progress in reducing crime, but where violence remains far too high. Examples of such areas include Detroit, St. Louis, Memphis, Oakland, Little Rock, Birmingham, Atlanta, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, Miami, and New Orleans.

H.R. 1550 would promote and institutionalize steps that the Department of Justice, to its credit, has already begun to take. Recently, the Department developed a new initiative known as the Violent Crime Reduction Partnership to help target Federal resources to areas in need of additional law enforcement support.

Pursuant to this initiative, for example, more than 50 officials from the FBI, DEA, ATF, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and DOJ's criminal division have begun a 4-month surge of Federal law enforcement resources in order to prevent and combat violent crime in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This is a positive step that should be encouraged and replicated in other high-crime jurisdictions, which is the precise result that H.R. 1550 seeks to bring about.

To be clear, it is well understood that the methods that DOJ may successfully employ to reduce violent crime in, say, Philadelphia or Baltimore may need to be adjusted for use in San Juan or St. Louis, with the specific approach dependent upon the nature of the crime problem that each jurisdiction confronts and other relevant factors.

For that reason, my bill does not in any way try to micromanage the Department or to promote a one-size-fits-all approach to fighting crime. H.R. 1550 simply seeks to ensure, in this time of fiscal constraint on both the Federal and local levels, that DOJ has in place a carefully crafted and consistently applied policy of allocating lim-

ited law enforcement personnel and resources to those areas where they are needed the most.

Again, I thank Chairman SMITH, Ranking Member SCOTT; and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I too rise in very strong support of H.R. 1550, the Federal Law Enforcement Personnel and Resources Allocation Improvement Act of 2012, which would require the Attorney General, in the allocation of Federal law enforcement personnel and resources, to give priority to placing and retaining such personnel and resources in States and local jurisdictions that have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime.

I commend my friend, the Congressman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for its introduction, for his hard work, and for his leadership in getting it to the floor today.

If this bill were to become law, my district, along with Congressman PIERLUISI's, will be one of the local jurisdictions that would qualify for having that high incidence of homicide and violent crime. This is not a fact that we're proud of, but it is a reality; and it's the by-product of the USVI and Puerto Rico being a trans-shipment point for illegal drugs traveling from Central and South America to mainland United States.

There are many other communities in our country that are facing the same or similar incidence of violence; and the blame, in most cases, can be traced to drug trafficking. In the case of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, it stems from the fact that we have become the route of choice for drug shipments to the east coast of the United States.

According to Department of Justice statistics, in 2011, 165,000 metric tons of illegal drugs were seized in the Caribbean, Bahamas and Gulf of Mexico, up 36 percent over 4 years. And up to 80 percent of cocaine trafficked through the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico is directed to U.S. east coast cities.

□ 2100

Congressman PIERLUISI and I were recently at the Coast Guard station in Puerto Rico, and we had the opportunity to meet with the commander of the ship that had recently captured 1.4 kilos of cocaine off of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. That was the port's largest capture in its history. These routes are also a threat to America's national security. In addition to the guns, assault weapons and drugs, the Caribbean region is susceptible to smuggling nuclear and all other kinds

of materials that could easily be used as staging areas for violence against our country.

The most tragic of all are the young people who had been killed or who are now in jail, many of whom I knew and took care of as a family physician. Unfortunately, we, too, have one of the highest murder rates per 100,000 in our country. Our community was shocked a few months ago when two of our young policemen, who were in a high crime area but who were on what seemed to be a routine patrol, were shot earlier this year. Both sustained injuries which go beyond the physical. One is paralyzed and will require life-long care and support.

Our community, though, is fighting back. Our law enforcement has been meeting with those from across the Caribbean region. We are working with the Federal law enforcement that does exist in the Territory. Both of us, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, are high-intensity drug trafficking areas. We have a well-integrated but still incomplete team led by Adjutant General Vicens from Puerto Rico and Executive Director Catherine Mills from the Virgin Islands, but we do need more Federal help in order to restore the safety of our communities and to protect the lives of our children. This is not only important to my constituents and me; it is critical to the well-being of the constituents of all of our colleagues but especially to those whose communities have high homicide and violent crime rates.

In this legislation, which I am pleased to cosponsor, we are pleading for this critically important help in order to bring the vital Federal resources to save our communities—to save all of our communities—and to protect our Nation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1550.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands and the gentleman from Puerto Rico.

I urge the passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1550, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SEQUESTRATION: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 28 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CARTER. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of hard work to do in about the next 3 months around this place. I want to talk tonight about a process that we have brought upon ourselves so that now we are faced with what, I think, could be one of the greatest catastrophes in the modern history of the United States—and that is almost the complete destruction of our military through a process called “sequester.”

We use a lot of big words around this House, and half of the people who sit in this room on a daily basis don't even know what it means, to be honest with you, but they know what the process does: across-the-board cuts at every level of government. The reality of these cuts is that, at least in the current makeup of our government and with so many of our expenses in this government being mandatory spending and what we call “entitlements,” the lion's share automatically falls upon the military, on the Defense Department.

Even more critical to this particular agreement, which was made in the earlier part of this year when we had one of our many shutdown-the-government risks that have come upon this body in the last couple of years, the White House with the President, along with the majority leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, met to discuss how to keep from having a shutdown of the government and how to raise the debt ceiling so we could continue to operate this government. With everyone recognizing that there was a looming crisis from having spent more than we make for as long as we can remember, quite honestly, and, therefore, that we are now in a problem of debt which is drowning this Nation and the Members of this body wanting to address that, the discussion was about how we would do it.

They came up with a concept of a supercommittee. Most of you who keep up with current events know that we formed a supercommittee, the purpose of which was to come up with the cuts from the appropriate parts of this government so that we would reduce the spending of over \$1 trillion, thus starting ourselves down the road to fiscal responsibility. This is what we set out to do. It was an honest effort, let's be frank. It was an honest effort. Everybody, whether elected to do it or not, recognized that this was the issue that was before us. The question was how to do this, and they came up with this supercommittee.

They agreed that, if the supercommittee failed, then the process of se-

quester would replace the actions of the supercommittee. There will be a political debate that will go back and forth as to who killed the effort in the supercommittee; but wherever the fault may lie, the supercommittee failed. Those of us who were in this House asked about the sequester and looked at it and worried about it as the vote came up as to whether or not this was the right thing to do. We then asked the question of the leaders here, which I'm sure was asked on both sides of the aisle: So what happens if the supercommittee doesn't perform?

We were told sequester, which was the worst possible thing to happen to this House, and I think both sides of the aisle agreed with that. But don't worry, it has never happened. It never will happen. We will do the right thing. The committee failed.

It is almost August. Quite honestly, the number of legislative days left before the election can almost be counted on these two hands, and we haven't addressed how we are going to do this; but the folks who may most be affected have no choice but to address it.

The agreement that came out of the meeting between the President and the Congress was that roughly half the \$1.1 trillion number, I believe it is, would come out of the Defense Department and that the other half would come out of domestic spending. Well, the Defense Department being the Defense Department—and it cannot function without planning—is already planning what it would have to do in case this occurs.

We talk in big ideas and issues around here, but the reality is this: this is about a bunch of people who chose the profession for their lives, that of defending our Nation.

□ 2110

We should never forget that the ordinary soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and Coast Guardsman volunteered to join their branch of the service, most of them, as their profession. This is not the old drafted military of World War II or the Korean war or the Vietnam war or the Cold War. This is a volunteer military. This is a young man or woman saying: I choose the job of fighting for my country. This is what I choose to do with my life. I will earn my way. I will earn my promotions by being a good warrior.

My wife and I, when we first learned that we were going to have the honor of representing what we call a great place, Fort Hood in Texas, we wanted to meet with soldiers, and the place we could find them to meet with us around Thanksgiving time was in Korea. We went and met with Fort Hood soldiers in Korea. Most of them were from Texas at our table where they were talking to us, and I asked a question. I was new to getting to talk to the ordinary soldier. These were just ordinary soldiers. There may have been a couple of sergeants there, but most of them were not highly ranked.

I said, How long are you guys and gals going to be in Korea? They said,