

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to call on Congress to replace the dangerous and irrational sequester with a big and balanced deficit solution.

Ten weeks after the dysfunction of this Congress led to the sequester taking effect, our economy and the most vulnerable in our society are continuing to experience its effects. On a macro level, the sequester has added to the uncertainty businesses and markets were already facing, making it even more difficult to plan for the future and discouraging private sector investment and development that creates jobs.

Just this past Wednesday, the Federal Reserve issued a statement that "fiscal policy is restraining economic growth."

But the ill-effects of the Republican sequester policy have been most devastating to those who are in the greatest need and rely on Federal assistance. 70,000 children who will be 3 once and 4 once will be kicked out of Head Start. \$115 million in subsidies that help low-income parents access child care while they work will be eliminated. Over half a billion dollars is being taken away from children and family service programs. Because of the sequester, our most vulnerable children are at risk of losing their shot at the American Dream.

It's not only our youngest citizens who are being hurt by sequestration. Low-income seniors will see 4 million fewer Meals on Wheels deliveries this year, putting at risk seniors who are sick and homebound.

The National Institutes of Health will have to reduce life-saving medical research, and 600,000 women, infants, and children could be dropped from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nutrition program. What an extraordinarily perverse version of "women and children first"—an admonition to save first, not abandon first.

Congress, Mr. Speaker, must act to replace this stupid sequester. I tell people that sequester starts with "s," which stands for stupid. Congress needs to replace it with a big, balanced agreement that every bipartisan commission that has looked at our fiscal challenge has recommended. Restoring financial discipline sets America on a fiscally sustainable path and enables us to invest in education, innovation, and infrastructure that will grow our economy, create jobs and keep millions out of poverty and lift millions of others from poverty.

□ 1010

In order for that to happen, of course, Mr. Speaker, I think you should appoint budget conferees so that negotiations on such a rational solution can begin in earnest.

Sadly, it's becoming increasingly clear that Republicans are in no hurry to complete the work on a budget as a result of the draconian, unrealistic, and damaging spending levels they set

forth under the sequester. Simply put, they cannot implement the budget they adopted, neither through the appropriations process nor through the Ways and Means Committee.

Sequestration, of course, was meant to be so unacceptable that we surely would not allow it to come into effect. But it has. It has because it reflects the spending levels Republicans have long sought.

Now, when I say that, some Republicans say, oh, well, the sequester was the President's idea. Not only is the President opposed to sequester, Democrats in the Senate and Democrats in the House are opposed. Most Republicans—that is to say, 229 Republicans—voted for H.R. 2560, Cut, Cap, and Balance. And what this bill that 229 Republicans voted for—and, by the way, 181 Democrats voted against—was to say that we set numbers. If we don't meet them, what do we have? A sequester.

Sequester was their policy; the across-the-board, irrational cutting of the highest priority and the lowest priority the same was their policy that they voted for, an unfortunate policy because it is so irrational and so harmful. Now they won't say how we can get there, of course, because it just isn't possible without gutting some of the most important programs that have a positive impact on our communities. The Republican Appropriations chairman, my friend, Mr. ROGERS from Kentucky, said, on April 25:

There will be some who are shocked. I don't think people yet understand how severe the numbers will be.

That's the Republican chairman, my friend, with whom I served for many years on that committee, HAL ROGERS from Kentucky. "How severe the numbers will be." They're the numbers that were in the Ryan budget; they're the numbers that will be affected by sequester.

Republicans are setting up, in my view, a dangerous game of hide-and-seek in which they will hide what sequester levels actually mean and try to mitigate the ones they believe will have political backlash, very frankly, as we did just about 12 days ago regarding the FAA.

They know they can't achieve cuts their caucus can agree on and that the American people would support. And they seek, in my view, to blame the President and Democrats for what has been a wrong-standing Republican policy which I referenced in their Cut, Cap, and Balance legislation for which 229 of them voted for on July 19, 2011.

To do so, Republicans proposed shifting the defense portion of the sequester—"to do so," meaning to get to the numbers that they proposed—by shifting the defense portion of the sequester on to domestic programs. In other words, the cuts that would normally be across the board, their solution is to simply shift them to some of the programs that I mentioned earlier in terms of Head Start, Meals on Wheels,

and other programs that are so necessary to make sure that some of the least of ours are taken care of.

Of course, this is a breaking of the agreement reached in the Budget Control Act of 2011. We all know the likely outcome of these partisan games, Mr. Speaker. House Republicans will once again be divided, as they were a week before we left, and prevent the adoption of a budget that includes a balanced approach.

Now, balanced approach, I won't like all of it. My friend, Mr. JONES, won't like all of it. None of us will like all of it because it will be balanced and we'll have to take the good with the bad. But what it will be is an effort and a reality of getting America on a fiscally sustainable, credible path. Democrats are ready to make tough choices necessary to reach a compromise, and both sides have a responsibility—my side, their side. Very frankly, we ought to be on one side, the American side. Both sides have a responsibility to work together to meet our challenges in a sensible way, not a senseless, irrational way, which is what the sequester does, but in a smart way, worthy of our role as the American people's representatives.

#### OUT OF AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, like most Members of Congress, I was home last week and did two or three different civic clubs. Everywhere I went, when I said it's time to get our troops out of Afghanistan, save lives of our American soldiers, and save money, I would get applause.

Also, in the last couple of weeks, my office has sent out a survey, and 17,000 people of the Third District responded, and 70 percent of the 17,000 said the same thing: Why are we still in Afghanistan spending money we do not have and having our young men and women to give their life for a failed policy known as Afghanistan?

Mr. Speaker, a week ago, I was watching NBC News and Brian Williams broke the story that the CIA admitted that for the last 10 years, each month for the last 10 years they've been carrying cash money to Karzai—cash money. And they said that the best they could do was to estimate that this would be tens of millions of dollars. Poor Uncle Sam. I don't know how he can afford to continue to spend money of the taxpayers that we can't even account for so we can borrow more money from China to uphold Karzai, who's a corrupt leader to begin with.

I wonder where the outrage is in Congress? I have friends on both sides of the aisles that I think the world of and respect very greatly, but why isn't there more outrage by Congress on the money being spent and, more importantly, the lives of those lost?

Last Saturday, Mr. Speaker, an AP article said seven Americans were killed in Afghanistan. Seven Americans were killed. God help the families. Yet we in Congress just sit here and continue to think that Afghanistan is not our problem, it's just somewhere out there, and we'll find the millions and billions of dollars to send over there with no accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I'm on the Armed Services Committee, and I have written a letter to the chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee and asked her to hold hearings and bring in the inspectors general who've been looking into how the waste, fraud, and abuse abounds in Afghanistan. They can't even account for half the money we've spent over in Afghanistan. We've already spent over \$700 billion in Afghanistan, and half of it we can't even account for.

I don't blame the American people for being frustrated. I really do not. I'm frustrated, too. And I would hope we can find more members of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to join together in these budget bills coming up this summer and start bringing our troops out of Afghanistan.

I bring this photograph, Mr. Speaker, that has our marines carrying a flag-draped coffin. I try to do this down in the district, and I do it here on the floor because I'm afraid too many times the American people, unless they've got a family member in Afghanistan, probably, with all of the problems that the American people are faced with, and certainly we are here in Congress, don't think a whole lot about the war. But when you hear about the CIA sending cash money for 10 years, millions and millions and millions of dollars to Karzai so that he can take care of the warlords over in Afghanistan and give a little bit of money to the Taliban so they can buy weapons to kill Americans, then I don't know and I sometimes just am frustrated. Where is the outrage in Congress?

Just a couple more points, Mr. Speaker, before I relinquish my time. I hope that the leadership of the House, led by Speaker BOEHNER and Minority Leader PELOSI, I hope they will join us, Democrat and Republican, in trying to bring an end to this failed policy in Afghanistan. It is a failed policy. We're not going to change one thing. They've already acknowledged, Mr. Speaker, that we are fighting the Taliban, and most of the Taliban are Pashtuns, the largest tribe in Afghanistan. They will eventually be the leaders, and Mr. Karzai will not even be in Afghanistan. He'll probably be in Switzerland counting his money that Uncle Sam has sent to him. Taxpayer, taxpayer, it is wrong that you're having to pay that bill in Afghanistan.

Families who've lost loved ones and families who have kids losing their legs and their lives, it's not fair to you, either.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to continue to bless

the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I'll ask God to please bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for his people. I'll ask God to bless President Obama, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for his people. And as I yield back, God, please, God, please, God, please, continue to bless America.

□ 1020

#### THE TIME HAS COME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT IN OUR MILITARY

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, next to me is a mug shot. It's a mug shot of someone who's been charged with sexual assault. This is a mug shot of Jeffrey Krusinski.

Jeffrey Krusinski is a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. His job is to work at the Pentagon as the chief officer of the Sexual Assault and Prevention Office within the Air Force. This man is charged with the responsibility of preventing and reporting sexual assault in the military, in the Air Force. And just this last weekend, he was charged with sexually assaulting a woman in a parking lot.

The best and the brightest the Air Force has to offer to run this office, and he's a sexual predator? Is that what we're talking about?

This is an indictment of the SAPRO office that is supposed to be the solution for military rape and assault. It's an indictment of our procedures. It's an indictment of everything we have done on this issue.

And Congress is as culpable as the military in not addressing it, because we've known about this issue for 25 years. And we are big on holding hearings and beating our chests and saying, This has got to stop. And the big brass comes up to the Hill, and they say all the right words. They say, We have a zero tolerance. And then our chief prevention officer is charged with a sexual assault.

But it doesn't end there. The bad news doesn't end there.

The military just released today its Sexual Assault and Prevention Office report on how many sexual assaults took place in the military last year. And guess what? The numbers have gone up by 30 percent, from 19,000 sexual assaults and rapes in the military, based on the last year's figures, to the most recent year's figures of 26,000 rapes and sexual assaults in the military.

For all the money we've been throwing at this issue, for all the prevention and all the rehabilitation and all of the training, the numbers keep going up. And now, this most recent report also suggests that one-third of the women serving in the military reported that they were sexually harassed last year.

This is an institution of military good discipline, good order?

It is time for us to roll up our sleeves and do something real about this. We have got to stop just kind of nibbling around the edges in an effort to try and fix a broken system.

121 Members have joined me as co-authors of legislation that would take the reporting of sexual assault out of the chain of command, keep it in the military, but place it in a separate office staffed by persons who are experts in investigations, experts in prosecuting these crimes.

And until we do something like this, the numbers of sexual assaults will continue to rise in the military. The number of unrestricted reports will not rise as fast as the number of restricted reports.

And why do we have restricted reports? Why would we say to any member of the military, Yes, report this, but we will keep it quiet, we will sweep it under the rug?

This, my friends, is time for us to do something. It is time for us to say that we are not going to tolerate another scandal. We're not going to tolerate a scandal on Lackland Air Force Base, where there were 59 victims and 32 military training instructors who were implicated. We're not going to tolerate that in Aviano, Italy. We had a major general who overturned the decision by five military members of a jury who court-martialed a lieutenant colonel and found him guilty, and yet the major general overturned the decision and decided to reinstate this individual.

The time, my friends, has come to do something.

#### ADDRESSING THE DEBT LIMIT

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, amidst all the controversies gripping the Congress, certainly we should at least all be able to agree that the full faith and credit of the United States, the very trust that the public has when it loans money to the government, should not hang in the balance every time there's a fiscal debate in Washington.

This week, the House is expected to consider H.R. 807, to allow a temporary exception to the debt limit solely to assure that the full and prompt payment of principal and interest is made on the debt in the event of an impasse in Washington.

Now, that should make perfect sense. As a practical matter, a family that's depending on its credit cards to pay its bills had better make sure to pay the credit card bills first.

The executive branch already has considerable powers to protect the Nation's credit, but the administration hasn't always acknowledged it. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution