

If Members of Congress pay attention to the facts, they will see a clear path to dramatically reduce Pentagon spending without undermining America's position of being the most powerful Nation on the planet.

Nobody has done a better job of highlighting a path forward, an area of opportunity, than Walter Pincus, writing in the pages of *The Washington Post* over the course of the last couple of years as he details the sweep of our nuclear weapons program and the spending trajectory. This morning is his latest offering and should be required reading for every Member of Congress, and the ones who whine the loudest should be forced to read it twice. He details the vast array of nuclear weapons that are ready to be deployed within 30 minutes, a relic of our contending with the former Soviet Union, where deterrence was the order of the day and when we were relying on massive assured mutual destruction of that huge country with overwhelming force.

Now, not even the most delusional think we need a fraction of that firepower for today's threats, like North Korea, and it certainly wouldn't work against a nuclear weapon falling in the arms of some radical extremist. That, by the way, is most likely to happen with Pakistan's proven nuclear capability than Iran's, which is still being developed.

The cost of this overwhelming force, including its three delivery systems, ought to give people pause. Consider the 14 Ohio class submarines, each with 24 ICBMs and each missile armed with five warheads, each three times the explosive power of the bombs dropped on Japan. We've got 118 B-52 strategic bombers and, of course, all of the land-based missiles where people are in the silos, ready to launch at a moment's notice. It is, by any stretch of the imagination, extravagance that borders on lunacy.

The \$80 billion the White House was forced to promise for the upgrades on the nuclear weapons complex and the at least \$100 billion to replace the strategic delivery systems that were extracted in return for votes to pass the START treaty are obvious places to begin retrenchment. There are tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars to be saved over the next 10 years by refocusing our defense posture for the threats of today and the likely ones of tomorrow. Let's start cutting this massive Cold War deterrence based on the threat of nuclear weapons we've never been able to use, don't want to use, shouldn't use, and can't afford.

I invite my colleagues, especially those on the other side of the aisle, to join us in getting real and getting specific. There is a clear path forward that should command the support of Republicans and Democrats alike to achieve fiscal stability. Let's rein in outrageous crop insurance abuses. Don't fight health care reform—accelerate it. The work we're doing in Oregon, if applied nationally, could save up to \$1.5

trillion over the next 10 years. Pay for the privilege of taking America's mineral wealth by reforming the Mining Act of 1872, and slash the fossilized nuclear weapons program.

SOBER TRUTH ON PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING ACT

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

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, last week, I introduced H.R. 498, to reauthorize the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act, better known as the STOP Act.

The original STOP Act passed with bipartisan support in 2006. It was based on the recommendations of the 2003 Institute of Medicine report, which outlined the extent of the underage drinking problem in the United States. At that time, 20 percent of eighth graders, 42 percent of 10th graders, and 58 percent of 12th graders reported being drunk in their lifetimes.

□ 1030

Designed to address this public health crisis, the STOP Act established an interagency committee to coordinate Federal efforts to reduce and ultimately prevent underage drinking.

The law financed public health research on underage drinking, and it authorized a national media campaign to educate parents about the dangers of consuming alcohol before the age of 21.

The STOP Act also provided grants to communities throughout the country to enhance their underage drinking prevention efforts. As a result of this comprehensive approach, we have seen positive results in both national statistics and in communities across America.

According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future survey, the lifetime use of alcohol by 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders is at the lowest level in years. Unfortunately, there is more that needs to be done.

Despite the progress we have made, alcohol continues to be the number one drug of choice among youth, and the consequences are devastating.

In addition to costing society over \$62 billion a year, underage drinking by youths 15-20 years of age is a major cause of homicide, suicide, and motor vehicle accidents. And it results in the deaths of approximately 5,000 youths every year. Adding to this tragedy is the fact that all of these consequences are preventable. This makes reauthorization of the STOP Act even more necessary.

H.R. 498 continues the successful programs of the original STOP Act and adds a grant program to train pediatric health care providers on the best practices for screening and treating substance abuse among youth.

Mr. Speaker, the reauthorization of the STOP Act is an important bipartisan effort to help prevent the need-

less suffering and costs associated with underage drinking. I urge my colleagues to join me and my original cosponsors, Congressman FRANK WOLF and Congresswoman ROSA DELAUNO, by cosponsoring the STOP reauthorization bill, H.R. 498, so we can continue to move forward in our efforts to address this public health crisis affecting our children.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sincere appreciation for the opportunity I have to represent my region in our Nation's Capital. Throughout the past year, whether it was in Gray's Harbor or Port Angeles, Bremerton, or Tacoma, what I heard from folks around my region is they want solutions to our problems. People want to get back to work. They want to start new businesses. They want to explore new frontiers of science and technology. They want to help build our Nation's bridges and roads. They want to refurbish our schools and buildings. I'm passionate about these issues, and I'm committed to working with my colleagues from both sides of the aisles to find new ways to move this economy forward.

Over the past 6 weeks, I've had the opportunity to meet with constituents to talk about their top concerns. And whether it's back in Washington State, or visits with folks who've traveled 3,000 miles to our Nation's capital, the number one thing that I hear about is the reckless and devastating impact that impending across-the-board cuts would have on our families and on our communities.

I've heard from educators and administrators that they face dramatic cuts that would lead to ballooning class sizes and significant cuts to financial aid.

I've heard from parents who are afraid for their kids who have autism, fearful that their kids won't be able to get the services that they rely on.

I've heard from tribal leaders who say that these cuts will scale back community policing on our reservations and jeopardize patient access to the Indian Health Service.

And as someone who has spent the last decade working in economic development, I've heard from small business owners who say that all of this uncertainty is making them hesitant to hire new workers and expand their production lines. Virtually every meeting that I have had has detailed how reckless and wrong-headed these across-the-board cuts would be.

Yesterday, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter pointed out that these cuts aren't happening because we've

thought about them strategically. They're not happening because we've identified wasteful spending. They're not happening because we've discovered some new technology that makes it cheaper to keep our Nation safe. They're only happening because they are, as he put it, "the collateral damage of political gridlock."

We've already seen the effects of these looming cuts in Washington State. The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the largest employer in my district, had to postpone its career fair because of all of this budget uncertainty. This is a no brainer—we have the work and we have the workers, but they can't hire because Congress hasn't done its job. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard needs to be able to actively recruit and hire workers. Our local economy needs it, and our national security depends on it. And yet, here we are.

Later today, we will be focusing on legislation that doesn't solve this problem, isn't going to pass the Senate, and isn't going to become law. And after we finish legislative business tomorrow, we're all being sent home for a week. This leaves us with just 4 legislative days for us to act before these across-the-board cuts go into effect.

We were elected to this body to help people. Stopping these damaging, non-strategic, across-the-board cuts to avoid undermining our economy should be our top priority. We should be working day and night until we have a solution. By doing nothing, we risk putting our fragile economy back into a recession. By doing nothing, we refuse the commitments we've made. We're cutting education, kicking kids off Head Start, hurting small businesses, and gutting research and innovation—the foundations of our long-term economic growth.

By doing nothing, we hurt the men and women who spend their days protecting our Nation and providing essential services to the American people. And by doing nothing, Congress is spending the wrong message to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get America back to work. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to get Congress working again, too. Doing nothing is not an option. Let's put an end to these gimmicks, and let's stop kicking the can down the road. Let's stop these series of self-imposed crises that fissure the trust and predictability that the private sector needs.

Let's work together to reach a balanced compromise to replace the across-the-board cuts with a smart, balanced approach to addressing our fiscal challenges and getting our economy growing again. Let's maintain our commitment to our Nation's most vulnerable and preserve retirement security for our seniors. And let's get America back to work.

PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this month the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Shelby v. Holder*, a case that challenges the constitutionality of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. It is imperative that the Voting Rights Act be upheld in its entirety, for without it, a fundamental piece of our democracy will be out of reach for millions in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here after two decades, and I'm supposed to be standing here representing a district that has been altered twice. But, Mr. Speaker, I stand here representing a district that has been altered three times—that many times—in this last two decades. As we saw in the recent election, discrimination on the basis of race is a persistent reality throughout many localities in States protected by section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Without these protections, voters are at risk of losing their fundamental right to vote and to have that vote counted.

The Voting Rights Act provides a remedy to protect voters, either by addressing actual instances of discrimination or by preventing discrimination from happening in the first place.

□ 1040

Section 5 provides localities the opportunity to prove that they are fully committed to ensuring everyone has the right to vote, and sets out clear criteria for doing so. In this way, section 5 of the Voting Rights Act encourages localities to establish fair voting practices, but demands real proof of the progress.

I cannot tell you how many cases that come to the attention of the Justice Department, almost on a monthly basis, of discrimination in this area. The Constitution is unequivocally clear that the Congress has the authority to protect voters. That is why Congress spent so much time in 2006 reviewing all the data and hearing from all sides.

The 2006 reauthorization was recognition that discrimination still exists but that Congress has a responsibility to ensure that every voter must continue to exercise their right.

If every State would prove to the voters that they are willing not to discriminate, there would not be the need; but that has not happened. Even States not covered have had difficulty of allowing minorities to express themselves.

Now, I have been a victim of discrimination through redistricting and cracking and packing and every other technique that can happen in redistricting. Mr. Speaker, until we, in this country, can guarantee that voters will be handled fairly, there is no way that we should be talking about doing away

with section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first land-grant college in America. Founded on February 16, 1863, Kansas State University has faithfully served the people of Kansas and this great Nation for 150 years.

K-State was one of the first schools to offer a degree in home economics. K-State has helped feed a hungry world through innovative wheat, beef, and sorghum research; and Kansas State University is preparing for the next generation of animal research with the construction of the National Bio and Agri-Defense Facility Research Laboratory.

Let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to Kansas State University for the last 150 years as we look forward to many more successes in the next 150 years.

REAUTHORIZATION OF SECTION 5 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I've always had such great respect for this distinguished body, the holder and interpreter of democracy, the institution that proudly protects the Constitution that was written by those who saw in this land this bright and shining sun from sea to shining sea, enormous opportunity for freedom.

So many people came to this Nation, and they came in many different ways. We don't carry the way we came into the future, as much as the fact that we are grateful of the opportunity that this Nation has given us.

The Nation has been able to turn the tide on embracing democracy in its fullest because of the Constitution and the laws, because we adhere to the three branches of government. So although my ancestors came to this Nation in bondage that lasted for hundreds of years, slavery, that has its remnants continuously as we move throughout society, there are now laws that can ensure, no matter how you came to this country, no matter what language you spoke, you are, in fact, deserving of the protection of the Constitution.

And so out of that protection came the 14th and 15th Amendments. Those amendments provided that no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, and not deny any person in the jurisdiction equal protection.