

In the 112th Congress, the House of Representatives passed two bills, H.R. 5652, the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act of 2012 and H.R. 6684, the Spending Reduction Act of 2012 which would have canceled the sequester of approximately \$98 billion in discretionary defense, discretionary non-defense, and mandatory defense FY2013 spending. Neither bill was even considered by the U.S. Senate. The House of Representatives shouldn't have to move a third bill before you or the Senate finally acts.

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta recently stated, "If sequester happens, it is going to badly damage the readiness of the United States of America. We have the most powerful military force on the face of the earth right now. It is important in terms of providing stability and peace in the world. If sequester goes into effect, and we have to do the kind of cuts that will go right at readiness, right at maintenance, right at training, we are going to weaken the United States. And make it much more difficult for us to respond to the crises in the world."

Gen. Martin Dempsey went further in recent testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee and stated that sequestration would put our military on a path where the "force is so degraded and so unready" that it would be "immoral to use the force."

Mr. President, I represent the 25th Congressional District of Texas which includes a large portion of Fort Hood—one of the largest military installations in the world. The United States Army estimates \$291 million in cuts for Fort Hood including nearly 600 civilian jobs, and nearly 30 thousand jobs statewide. This is preventable! Let's cut the nonsense—drop the politics, drop the campaign speeches, and do something.

We shouldn't put our national security, public safety, and the economy at risk by letting the sequester pass without preventative action. Our troops, our businesses, and our families deserve better. Mr. President, Americans expect you to lead.

Sincerely,

ROGER WILLIAMS,
Member of Congress.

SEQUESTER

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

Ms. SINEMA. Madam Speaker, my State, Arizona, has made tremendous sacrifices in the struggle to stand strong through our Nation's fiscal crisis. Today, Arizona is last in education funding, last in retail growth, and first in home foreclosures.

I'm proud to say, however, that Arizonans are resilient. We are tough. Our State was forged out of rugged frontierism—we're independent and we have deep respect for the traditions that make us Arizona. We've never shrunk from a tough fight and we've never been afraid to roll up our sleeves and work hard. Right now, we're working hard to climb out of the recession that we all face together. It hasn't been easy, but we're doing it.

Arizona is sixth in the Nation for defense sector jobs. Most of these are private sector jobs. Employers have come to Arizona because of our people and our work ethic. We innovate and compete alongside booming defense States like California, Texas, and Virginia.

Employers are hiring thousands of skilled workers from our communities. Our State is a vital resource to our Nation's military readiness. We were able to get there through hard work, innovative thought, and intense collaboration between community and industry partners.

In the greater Phoenix area, our economy is currently growing steadily at the rate of 3 percent, but the deep cuts, known as the sequester, would cut our growth in half. In fact, Arizona's potential job losses caused by sequestration rank 13th among all U.S. States. These losses will be felt by families working in Arizona's defense sector and military base operations. These are skilled, middle class jobs.

Of the nearly 50,000 jobs that we expect to lose in Arizona from the sequester, approximately 35,000 are linked to military readiness and base operations. Furloughs will affect 10,000 civilian workers, and Arizonans will experience a devastating \$52 million pay cut.

I come home each week and I talk about the work that we're doing in Congress, but most of the time I come home to listen. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to listen to plant engineers at General Dynamics in Scottsdale. They showed me the high-tech and innovative defense products that were coming right out of our own community, built and programmed by our friends and neighbors. This type of innovation in our own backyard is the future of our State, and that future is in danger.

Last week, a bipartisan group of city elected officials, business leaders, and community advocates gave me a message to bring back to Congress. I'm proud of their joint effort, and I'm proud of their service to our community. I consider it a privilege to deliver their message.

In our State, we are concerned that Congress will turn the clock back on Arizona's hard work and progress. We are worried about hardworking families losing their jobs.

As the granddaughter of a World War II veteran and a proud sister of a gunner's mate in the U.S. Navy today, I remember every day that it is our moral duty to do right by the men and women in uniform who risk their lives to keep us safe.

Avoiding the sequestration should not be about partisanship or finger-pointing; it's about jobs. It's that simple. I stand with the dean of our State's delegation, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, when I say that this sequester will be devastating for Arizona. It's bad for hardworking Americans, and it turns a blind eye to my State's proud efforts and proven perseverance. I affirm my commitment to working with anybody who's willing to put our differences aside and put the people we serve first.

We still have time to stop this. Let's roll up our sleeves together and get the work done.

SEQUESTER

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today because we have to get our fiscal house in order, but sequestration is not the way to do it.

There is no question we need to address our unsustainable debt and deficit. Our debt remains above 73 percent of GDP—up from 36 percent just 6 years ago—and our deficit still hovers just below \$1 trillion. But the solution must be a big, balanced, and bipartisan deficit reduction plan modeled on plans like Cooper-LaTourette over a 10-year period, not the meat-ax approach of sequestration.

We can't pursue deficit reduction at all costs. The cure shouldn't be worse than the disease. The sequester will undermine our growing—but still fragile—economic recovery.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicts sequestration would halve economic growth for 2013. Another study projects job loss in 2013 alone would hit 2.1 million jobs, mostly from small businesses. We just went through this not more than 2 months ago, as we remember, the fiscal cliff. Sadly, we seem no wiser for that experience. We continue to bicker rather than plan; we posture rather than negotiate; we delay rather than decide. We go from one crisis to the next, thereby threatening our economy and further undermining the public's tenuous faith in its political institutions.

We lack a comprehensive approach to just about every challenge we face, including climate change, energy, transportation, health care, social insurance, defense spending, immigration reform and gun violence. It is management by paralysis. It's budgeting with a meat cleaver. It's absurd, and it has to end.

The sequester lops off \$1.2 trillion from the Federal budget over the next decade, cutting \$85 billion just this year.

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Over the last week, I have met with dozens of groups for whom the sequester is not some abstract budgeting term. For these organizations and people back in my district, sequestration will have real, damaging effects.

I met with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, which explained that under sequestration in Illinois, 125 AIDS-afflicted families will lose their housing. Another 613 people in Illinois won't receive their medication through the AIDS Drug Assistance program, which will be cut by \$3 million. I also met with the Illinois Partners for Human Service and heard from the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Both groups informed me that 4,000 children in Illinois won't receive Head Start services under sequestration. Thanks to sequestration, 4,100 college students in Illinois won't receive Federal work-study assistance.

The bigger picture in Illinois is equally devastating. Sequestration will cost Illinois more than 53,000 jobs and \$5.3 billion in the State's economic output. Nationwide, sequestration threatens our physical safety as well as our economy. Ten percent of the FAA's workforce could be furloughed, resulting in reduced air traffic control, longer delays, and economic losses for our tourism industries. Meat and poultry inspectors at USDA would also face furlough, potentially shuttering meat processing facilities and even affecting restaurants and grocery stores. Layoffs at the FDA would mean 2,100 fewer safety inspectors. There would be 25,000 fewer breast and cervical cancer screenings for low-income women. Mindless cuts to military and law enforcement affect our ability to protect our borders and meet the ever-present threat of terrorism, both here and abroad.

Madam Speaker, this is unacceptable. Somewhere along the way, buried in the din of the 24-hour news cycle and partisan bellowing, we lost the art of compromise. But that's what allowed the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s and saved Social Security in the 1980s. Legislators of both parties sat down and talked to each other, not past each other, to hammer out their differences and achieve something that made this country better.

I have no illusion that everyone in this body agrees with my ideas about reshaping Pentagon spending or reforming entitlements to ensure they provide benefits for generations to come; but I do know that making the changes that are best for the long-term interests of this country can't be accomplished overnight. These decisions require our best effort and precise planning. As the threat of sequester has painfully revealed, a chain saw is no way to create a budget for the most powerful country on Earth.

JUMP-STARTING THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. POCAN. Madam Speaker, as a lifelong Wisconsinite and a proud resident of Madison for the last 30 years, I am deeply humbled and honored to represent Wisconsin's Second District in the House of Representatives. The Second District is home to a world-class university, innovative small businessowners, and hardworking dairy farmers and cheese makers who produce the best milk and cheese you can find.

I ran for Congress because I wanted to ensure these voices, the voices of south central Wisconsin, are heard, respected and represented in Washington. And I am committed to serving their needs by working with my colleagues—all of my colleagues—regardless of party affiliation. But I hate to say it, Madam Speaker, right now the people of Wisconsin's Second District are frus-

trated, and I understand why. When I went home last week, I met with people from all kinds of professions and all walks of life, and their concerns could not have been more different from what we talk about right here in Washington. What they care about is what all families care about: how can they make a living so they can pay their bills, provide for their loved ones, and create opportunities for their children.

They don't care about political finger-pointing. They care about how we in Congress can support an environment where businesses can attract more buyers for their products, hire more workers, and increase wages; in other words, how do we grow the economy.

What I told them, and what I'll repeat here today, is that the sequester and its irresponsible, indiscriminate and across-the-board spending cuts is the exact opposite of what we need to be doing right now to grow our economy. Taken as a whole, these spending cuts represent a harsh austerity policy that I fear could only move our country backwards.

We've seen in Europe the severe effects austerity policies have had on fragile economies working their way back from recessions. Four years after the global economic crisis, our friends across the ocean are at risk of a triple-dip recession. Unemployment is climbing; and even with these massive spending cuts, countries have seen their debt loads increase. Is this the model we want to follow in our country?

Madam Speaker, we must remember that the biggest threat to our long-term economic security is not the deficit. It's the economy. It's a lack of jobs, and it's about the more than 12 million people who are unemployed in this country.

I own a printing shop in Wisconsin; and as a small businessowner, I can tell you that it's about the lack of access to capital because of economic uncertainty, it's about a lack of consumer confidence, and it's about people needing to get back to work. These are the issues we need to address, not austerity; and we are not going to create jobs or help spur spending by gutting critical government programs without any thought to the consequences. To people in Wisconsin, that's just politics as usual.

We need to change the conversation right here in Washington. We need to be talking about what people are talking about in Beloit, in Baraboo, and in Sun Prairie. Instead of asking about how much we can cut, we need to be asking ourselves how we can jump-start the economy, how we can invest in our future, and how we can support our local small businessowners who are the backbone of our communities. That's how we'll fix the economy.

We need to support education, infrastructure projects, research and development, and new industries such as green energy that will help lead to job

growth and bring our unemployment rate down. And by growing the economy, we will fix our fiscal problems.

Now, that doesn't mean I don't see a place for responsible restraint. As the former chair of the Joint Finance Committee in Wisconsin, I understand that when you put together a budget, tough decisions have to be made, and you can stay up all night agonizing over the smallest details, the tiniest programs, because these programs make a difference in people's lives. It's a lot of work, and it should be, because our budget priorities have a direct effect on our middle class families and on long-term economic growth. But the sequester trades in the tough work and replaces it with massive, indiscriminate, and irresponsible spending cuts. It's like taking a meat cleaver to the budget instead of a scalpel.

It could cost 750,000 jobs nationwide, including 36,000 jobs right in Wisconsin. It could mean 70,000 students across the country, and 1,000 in my State, would see their Head Start services eliminated this year, and it would mean \$900 million less in loan guarantees to small businessowners nationwide, including in Wisconsin.

Now, I'm a cosponsor of a plan put forward by Representative VAN HOLLEN that would avert these disastrous spending cuts and replace them with a balanced approach that promotes economic growth while responsibly reducing the deficit. I strongly urge my colleagues to come to the table, stop this irresponsible sequester, and then refocus our efforts.

The time has come to stop talking about harmful spending cuts and start talking about getting the people of Wisconsin and of America back to work. We need less austerity and more prosperity. We don't have time to waste.

SEQUESTRATION AND WEST POINT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, earlier this week, I was home in the Hudson Valley at the United States Military Academy at West Point talking to the cadets there to better understand these arbitrary cuts to that legendary American institution that will happen if we fail to act.

West Point has been educating and training our Nation's next generation of military leaders since 1802. It is as old as the Nation itself. Each year, over 1,000 young men and women from all across our country step into the long gray line where two American Presidents, 18 astronauts, 74 Medal of Honor recipients, 70 Rhodes Scholars, and three Heisman Trophy winners have stood before them.

These kids take the hard road. They give up the easy life to serve us and our country. For many of them, their time