

Washington or by being moved by a memorable party convention speech. For others the history of military service leads to a career in public service. For still others a single issue, such as a proposed freeway through a vibrant community, propels them into politics. But for Senator CARL LEVIN, serving Michigan families is something of a family business. Senator LEVIN's father served as a Michigan corrections commissioner. His uncle Theodore was chief judge for the district court in the Eastern District of Michigan for many years.

I was elected to Congress in 1982—the same year Senator LEVIN's brother Sander was elected to the House of Representatives. He has been ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee. He is a distinguished Member of the House of Representatives, having served that body for going on 31 years.

The first time I met CARL LEVIN was over here. I was in the House, going to run for the Senate. We met in his office. The first thing I said was, I came to Washington a few years ago with your brother, elected in the same class.

He said: Yes, he is my brother but also my best friend.

How about that? That is something I have never ever forgotten. These two brothers, natives of Detroit, have done much for the State of Michigan.

CARL LEVIN is truly an outstanding Senator and an even better man. He is the longest serving Senator in his State's history. He dedicated his life to Michigan families long before he was elected to the Senate. He served as general counsel to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and as assistant attorney general for the State of Michigan. He served two terms on the Detroit City Council, one of them as president of the city council. As a Senator Senator LEVIN has consistently advocated for Michigan families, whether that meant supporting the auto industry, protecting Lake Michigan, holding credit card companies accountable or securing funding for sons and daughters serving in the U.S. military.

As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, CARL LEVIN is the Nation's most respected voice on national security and the most powerful advocate for the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. As chairman of the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations, he has sought truth on behalf of American families time and time again. He led investigations of the 2008 financial crisis, abusive credit practices and abusive credit card practices, and a long, extensive, extremely enlightening bit of work on the Enron collapse.

His dedication to the Senate is matched only by his dedication to his own family. He and his loving wife Barbara have been married for more than 50 years. They have three daughters and six grandchildren.

I am confident Carl is looking forward to spending more time with his

grandchildren, taking long walks through his and Sandy's tree farm. It is a wonderful place they go. They don't harvest anything; it is just a bunch of trees, and they love that tree farm.

I so admire Senator LEVIN. Clearly, when he retires in 2 years, the Senate will lose its powerful voice for military families and issues that need to be investigated by this body. Michigan is a much better place because of CARL LEVIN. Our country, the United States, is a much better place because of CARL LEVIN's service.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business for the day?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is no secret that our Tax Code is in dire need of reform. Although there are differences of opinion about how best to fix our Tax Code, I do not think there is anyone in the Chamber who would argue in favor of keeping our current code as it is.

As I have said before, I believe there is, for the first time in many years, real momentum to get something done on tax reform this year. The leaders of the tax-writing committees on both sides of the aisle have expressed a desire to move forward on tax reform, and there is real bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

This is going to be difficult, there is no question about it. It is going to be very hard to form and maintain a coalition in favor of a set of reforms that will simplify the current Tax Code and promote economic growth. It is going to take a lot of hard work and it is going to take people from both parties to get it done. But I think we can succeed.

However, last week it was disheartening to hear the chairperson of the Senate Budget Committee talk about the possibility of including instructions for tax reform in a budget reconciliation package. This news was dis-

couraging for a number of reasons. First and foremost, reconciliation, by its very nature, is a partisan process. In the few instances in recent history when reconciliation resulted in legislation, there was bipartisan support at the outset. That simply is not the case with this proposal. If the Budget Committee goes this route, it will needlessly inject partisanship into a process that, if it is going to have any chance of success, must be bipartisan.

There is simply no way to pass a purely partisan tax reform package with the current makeup of Congress. Make no mistake, if the Senate majority pursues this course of action, it will poison the well for tax reform. It will make it all but impossible.

I would urge my colleagues on the Budget Committee to resist this temptation. If they really want to see tax reform succeed, they should let the tax-writing committees in both the House and Senate do their jobs.

Another concern I have is that the statements by the Budget Committee chairwoman make it unclear whether she is arguing in favor of tax reform or simply in favor of raising taxes. My suspicion is she is talking about the latter. It has become more and more common for my friends on the other side of the aisle to argue in favor of simply eliminating so-called tax loopholes in order to raise revenue and then calling the process "tax reform."

Indeed, the President used this very same tactic in the State of the Union. He stated his support for "comprehensive tax reform," but he spoke almost exclusively about using the process to raise more revenue. Some of my colleagues have made similar arguments in the Senate.

That is not tax reform at all. Tax reform, as it has been traditionally proposed and understood, is a process of eliminating certain preferences in order to broaden the tax base and lower the rates. This is how you simplify the Tax Code. This is how you make it more efficient and fair. Most importantly, it is how you make the Tax Code more conducive to economic growth.

If you are eliminating select deductions and preferences only to pocket the revenue for future spending, you are not reforming the Tax Code, you are simply raising taxes. If the Budget Committee is about to report a budget which includes restrictions for tax reform, I can't help but assume the process will be more about raising revenues than it will be about actually fixing our broken tax system.

Once again, if this is the case, the Budget Committee would be injecting partisanship into what has up to now been mostly a bipartisan effort. At the same time, they would be perpetuating the myth that our Tax Code is full of so-called loopholes which benefit only the rich. I have spoken about this at length on the Senate floor, but the message bears repeating.

The term we hear most often to describe deductions and preferences in

the Tax Code is “tax expenditure,” which implies that by allowing people to keep more of their money, the government is somehow engaging in spending. Indeed, the President has even gone so far as to refer to deductions and preferences, which reduce an individual’s or business’s tax burden, as “spending in the tax code.”

As I said before, when many of my Democratic friends talk about tax reform, they are usually talking about eliminating these provisions in order to raise revenue so they can spend it. Far too often they refer to these provisions as loopholes. For example, the Budget Committee chairwoman was quoted last week as saying her committee is looking at closing loopholes as a means of reducing the deficit.

Let me make one thing clear: Describing tax expenditures as loopholes is simply and deliberately inaccurate. A loophole is something Congress did not intend; and, in general, we would eliminate loopholes once we learned they were being improperly exploited.

Tax expenditures, by contrast, are placed by Congress into the Tax Code deliberately. For example, the largest tax expenditure is the exclusion for employer-provided health insurance and benefits. Do we want to do away with that?

Another one of the largest tax expenditures is the home mortgage interest deduction. Some would like to do away with that and millions would not—especially all the home builders around the country. Whether these expenditures benefit someone in the middle class or one of the so-called rich, they are not loopholes. These are not tax schemes some lawyer or accountant concocted to help his clients game that system. These are broad-based tax incentives used by many Americans.

Favorable tax treatment of tuition expenses could be labeled spending through the Tax Code or a “loophole,” but you don’t hear many people using those terms to explain them. Rather, my friends on the other side of the aisle use the term “loophole” to describe things they do not like and “investment” to describe things they do like. This is about picking winners and losers and not about tax reform.

Even if you disagree with a particular tax expenditure, it is simply dishonest to refer to it as a loophole. An honest debate requires recognition that all of these tax expenditures were designed by Congress with economic or social goals in mind and are not tax escapes created by accident or sneaky abuses of the Tax Code.

Furthermore, if we are talking about eliminating tax expenditures, we need to be clear about who benefits from them. If you look at the largest list of tax expenditures, you will find the ones most often cited by my colleagues on the other side, such as bonus depreciation on corporate jets or tax breaks for oil companies, are not among them.

What you will find is a list of deductions which disproportionately benefit

the middle class. This being the case, if my colleagues are serious about significantly reducing the deficit by eliminating deductions and so-called loopholes, they will necessarily be talking about raising taxes on the middle class. Indeed, if they only focus on those provisions which benefit the so-called rich, they will not be able to raise enough revenue to make a serious dent in the deficit.

For example, let’s take a look at the mortgage interest deduction. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, only 35 percent of the benefit of the mortgage interest deduction goes to taxpayers with incomes over \$200,000 per year. The remaining 65 percent goes to taxpayers who make less than \$200,000. By a ratio of almost 2 to 1, the mortgage interest deduction benefits the middle class, not the so-called rich.

We may also look at the earned income tax credit, another large tax expenditure. This is another fully refundable tax credit, meaning taxpayers can receive it whether they pay income taxes or not. High-income earners receive no benefits from the earned income tax credit.

The story is the same with the child tax credit, which is limited to lower and middle-income earners. None of it goes to taxpayers with higher incomes. Likewise, all education credits go to taxpayers making less than \$200,000 a year.

The list goes on and on. Deductions for real property taxes, medical expenses, childcare, and student loan interest, all of them predominantly, if not exclusively, benefit people making less than \$200,000 a year.

Benefits from some other large tax expenditures are distributed almost proportionately between higher and middle-income earners. One such provision is the State and local income and sales tax deduction.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation data, 55 percent of the benefit of this deduction goes to taxpayers making more than \$200,000 a year, and 45 percent of the benefit goes to people making less than \$200,000 a year. This expenditure accounts for about one-half of the revenue loss attributable to itemized deductions. Since the benefits are slightly more in favor of those with higher incomes, it would likely be a target for a “tax reform” exercise designed to raise revenue. However, much of the burden of limiting or eliminating this deduction would still fall on the middle class.

It is also interesting to note that this past December the New York Times editorial page, which is usually very much in sync with the philosophy of the Democratic Party, recommended caution when considering limits to this particular deduction. Yet it is one of the largest tax expenditures in the country.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the New York Times editorial from December 6, 2012, entitled “Keep the State Tax Deduction.”

[From the New York Times, Dec. 6, 2012]

KEEP THE STATE TAX DEDUCTION

As they continue to wrangle over the year-end fiscal deadline, both Democrats and Republicans are considering caps on federal income-tax deductions.

That could be very bad news for residents of New York, New Jersey and other states and cities that rely heavily on their own income taxes. Such a cap would reduce the value of the deduction for state and local income taxes, which has been part of the federal tax code for a century (though the deduction has been diluted by the alternative minimum tax). That could substantially reduce middle-class disposable incomes in high-tax states, which, in turn, would put pressure on those states to cut taxes and the services they have long chosen to provide. (A cap would also affect property and sales taxes, though those are spread around more evenly among all the states.)

The theory behind the deduction was that the amount paid to states in taxes is not really part of an individual’s disposable income, because it is obligatory and, therefore, should not be taxed twice. Over time, the deduction has become the equivalent of a subsidy from the federal government to states that believe in a strong and active government. That may infuriate conservatives in low-tax states like Texas, who hate subsidizing states with different views of government’s role, but it’s actually a good thing for the country.

The deduction is Washington’s way of supporting states that support their most vulnerable citizens and neediest cities. The seven states that account for 90 percent of state and local tax deductions (including sales and property taxes)—New York, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois and Massachusetts—generally do a better job of providing for the health and welfare of their citizens, and are more willing to pay for institutions that are good for society as a whole.

Rapid-transit systems in states like New York and Massachusetts, subsidized with tax dollars, save energy and improve the environment. Few cities can afford to operate their own universities, but the City University of New York, also subsidized with tax dollars, is an enormously valuable institution with national benefits. Public hospital systems and generous Medicaid programs have improved and extended the lives of tens of millions of low-income people.

Texas is proud not to have an income tax, but it also has by far the highest percentage of uninsured people in the country. It ranks last in prenatal care as well and in overall federal assessment of health quality.

In their fiscal-cliff offer, Republicans have proposed raising \$800 billion by capping deductions for the wealthy, though their proposal would inevitably affect the middle class in expensive states like New York and California. President Obama would prefer to raise tax rates, but he has also proposed deduction limits that would affect states that have chosen to impose higher income taxes. Governors, mayors and representatives of those states need to make their voices heard in support of that choice.

Once again, when my friends on the other side of the aisle talk about eliminating so-called loopholes for the sole purpose of raising revenue, they are either talking about raising taxes on the middle class or they are proposing changes which will have no meaningful impact on the deficit at all. If the goal is to construct political talking points and raise relatively significant

amounts of revenue by going after politically convenient targets—jet owners, oil companies, private equity firms, and the like—you may do this by eliminating a handful of so-called loopholes.

This isn't the stated goal of the President, nor is it what my colleagues on the Budget Committee talk about when they say they want to pursue "tax reform" through reconciliation. No, instead they talk about reducing deficits, debt, and attaining fiscal sustainability. They cannot do this by focusing efforts on tax provisions which only benefit the wealthy. The money simply isn't there. If we are not going to cut spending, and if our deficit reduction efforts are focused only on eliminating so-called tax loopholes, then the middle class happens to be the target.

We need a different approach. We need tax reform which focuses on eliminating preferences in the Tax Code—not for the purpose of raising taxes but for lowering the rates and encouraging economic growth. Unlike the idea of tax reform advanced by some of my friends on the other side, this will benefit the middle class.

This is what tax reform is all about. Anyone talking about raising taxes or closing loopholes for the sole purpose of generating revenue is not talking about tax reform. For these reasons, I hope the Budget Committee will go a different route. I hope they will let the bipartisan tax reform efforts underway in both the House and Senate run their course.

If they don't, if they hijack the process in order to once again raise taxes on the American people and to vilify Republicans as being the "party of the rich," we will not see tax reform happen this year or, quite likely, any year in the near future.

Our Nation is facing a number of challenges. In addition to mounting debts and deficits, our economic recovery remains on a slow and tenuous path. We need people who are willing to make difficult choices in order to solve these problems. This will mean structural reforms to our entitlement programs, which are the main drivers of our debts. Once again, that will mean real, meaningful changes to our Tax Code, which continues to be an obstacle to sustainable economic growth.

As I stated, I do believe there are people on both sides of the aisle who recognize these needs, particularly when it comes to tax reform. Sadly, there are also those who would rather campaign on these problems, attacking anyone who proposes real solutions while offering only political talking points in return. That is not what the American people deserve.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, next week marks the third anniversary of ObamaCare, and I will remind you that leading up to its passage in March 2010, Republicans warned endlessly that the bill would cost too much and wouldn't work the way the President and other Washington Democrats said it would. Then-Speaker PELOSI famously said we needed to pass the bill to learn what was in it. Well, nearly 3 years and thousands of pages of regulations later, we have learned a lot about ObamaCare. It looks like our worst fears are coming true.

Right down the hall, President Obama promised if Congress would only pass the kind of health care takeover he was after, it would slow the growth of health care costs for our families, our businesses, and for our government. Today, the facts tell a very different story.

According to Congress's own nonpartisan budget experts, ObamaCare will increase Federal health spending and subsidies by nearly \$600 billion. That is only projected to get worse over time.

Just a few weeks ago, these same nonpartisan experts told us spending is set to "grow rapidly when provisions of the Affordable Care Act are fully implemented by mid decade." Their words, not mine.

So when the President tries to convince Americans that Washington doesn't have a spending problem but a health spending problem, what he is not saying is his own health care law is actually making things worse, not better, and that is to say nothing of the devastating effects of this law for American families.

Then-Senator Obama promised to lower premiums by as much as \$2,500 per family when he ran for President. Here are the facts: Three years after ObamaCare's passage, premiums for families have actually risen by nearly that same amount. And that is before the most expensive new rules, taxes, and mandates kick in. After that, the experts tell us premiums could increase by \$2,100 per family.

Tragically, ObamaCare will place the greatest burden on young Americans—those just starting to build lives of their own. This is a time in their lives when every dollar counts. Yet 3 years after ObamaCare's passage, experts say premiums for healthy young people could rise by 169 percent.

Part of the reason costs are set to increase so dramatically is because ObamaCare levies so many new taxes and fees. But that is really only half the story. It is also because the law imposes so many onerous regulations.

Just look at this stack right here. This is 1 day's worth of ObamaCare regulations—828 pages in 1 day. Overall, there are nearly 20,000 pages, with many more to come. But this is 1 day's worth—828 pages.

This law is a disaster waiting to happen. Imagine the burden we are placing on a single mom who wants to open her own store or the young entrepreneur who wants to sell some new idea or the business owners we all know from back home—the folks who employ so many of our constituents. Instead of encouraging them to create jobs and grow the economy, we are hitting them with a brick of regulations.

Last week the Federal Reserve said what many of us have been predicting all along: ObamaCare is also costing jobs. Recent polling bears this out too. One survey said that more than half of American small business owners are worried that health care costs and taxes will hurt their operating environment "a lot." Another small business survey recently identified these issues as the top two concerns among eight tested.

There are countless real-world examples of how this is hurting the folks we represent. Let me give you just one example. One of my constituents is Junior Bridgeman. He was once known for his skills on the basketball court. Today, Louisvillians know him as the owner of a successful restaurant franchise that employs a lot of Kentuckians. He wrote to me recently to say that ObamaCare is a serious impediment not only to hiring but to hiring low-income employees in particular. Here is what he had to say:

[It] does not consider our ability to afford the mandate. Under our current labor model . . . [it] will increase labor costs whether we offer health care or pay the tax penalties. . . . This creates, in essence, a disincentive to hire low income employees.

The President's allies are worried too. We have seen the stories about Democrats who voted for the bill now having second thoughts about specific funding mechanisms for it, but now union leaders are even expressing fears about the law driving up costs for their own health care plans, making unionized workers actually less competitive.

This is the worst time to be imposing tens of thousands of pages of new regulations and onerous taxes on the very families and businesses that can least afford them. We owe our constituents better, particularly those who are struggling the most.

Look, ObamaCare is just too expensive, and it is not working the way Washington Democrats promised. That is why ObamaCare needs to be repealed. That is why I will continue to push for its repeal.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, otherwise known as ICE, initiated an unexplainable order to take action to reduce the population of detained illegal aliens, and they said it was for budgetary reasons. I quote a spokesman for ICE, who said the decision was made because "fiscal uncertainty remains over the continuing resolution and possible sequestration . . ."

Well, we have had fiscal uncertainty for 4 years now, and the decision to release these detainees was made before the sequestration even took place. The procedures put in place under the continuing resolution and the resources for covering the costs of detaining these illegal immigrants until they could be brought to trial and sent back home were put in place by the funding we provided for the agency in September, running through the end of this month, or until March 27. So a lot of questions need to be answered about ICE's decision because there was a furor over why we are releasing illegal immigrants back on the streets of America. Why are we putting these people back out on the streets when the law didn't require it? The resources were there to keep them, and yet many were released before the sequestration even took place—before the across-the-board cuts even took place—and I want to get some answers. So I wrote Secretary Napolitano a letter asking her to provide answers to a series of questions, which I will state in a moment, and have the answer to me in my office by Friday, March 8.

Well, I returned today to find the answer was not there. I could give the Secretary the benefit of the doubt and say it is in the mail. We know it doesn't always guarantee next-day delivery. Nevertheless, I think the American people need to know. Particularly those impacted, those communities impacted by these illegal immigrants—not knowing who they are, not knowing why they were released, not knowing whether we can bring them back to stand before a judge and plead their case or be processed for return.

The law enforcement officials in these communities are up in arms because they don't know who these people are. They don't know whether they are criminals; they don't know whether they are ever going to be able to bring them back into the ICE system and be detained and readied for processing. So that is why I asked the Secretary to respond to my letter.

Subsequent to that, officials at ICE have denied recent press reports regarding plans to release even more detained illegal immigrants. Last Tuesday, an internal ICE document obtained by the House Judiciary Com-

mittee revealed a plan of ICE to continue reducing detention center populations each week while the sequestration is in place. That document shows one scenario where the number of illegal immigrants in custody could be reduced by more than 1,000 a week between February 15 and March 31. The initial report said it was a couple hundred—I think 300 was the number given—only to find out it is more than 1,000, and now we find out it may be more than 1,000 each week for about a 6- or 7-week period of time.

What we are trying to do is get the facts and get an explanation of what has happened, why it took place in the manner it did, and what is the administration's plan for going forward with this. I am doing this because as ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, I am getting all kinds of questions from people—not just my colleagues but others across the country—basically asking what is going on here. I wish to be able to respond to those questions with answers, or have the Department respond.

As the head of the Department, Secretary Napolitano needs to provide information on who made this decision, why this decision was made, why was it made before sequestration even took effect, why was the number of released individuals said to be around 300 when it was well over 1,000? Releasing the detained individuals has the potential to put these communities at risk and sends a message to those who come here and break the law as illegal immigrants that our government is not serious. I am sure word is spreading through Mexico and other ports of entry to illegal immigrants: Don't worry, you may get picked up; you may get put in a detention center; they will provide a bed, food, and so on, but they are releasing 1,000 a week. I can just see the traffickers now pitching this to tens of hundreds or thousands of people, taking their money, getting them across the border, reaching the fence, or tunneling under the fence or climbing over the fence, or any of a number of other ways they are bringing illegals into this country.

I spent 3 days down on the border. While we are making some strides, we have a long way to go to stop this illegal immigration. So we need clarification and we need an explanation of what has happened.

Let me state some of the questions I have raised to the Secretary:

Why did the Federal Government release detained illegal immigrants 1 week before the sequester took effect and blame it on budget cuts when those cuts had not even yet been put into place?

Why didn't ICE take the proper steps necessary to manage its resources efficiently across the various programs? As I said earlier, the Congress itself provided them with adequate resources to maintain a level of 34,000 illegal detainees per year and not go below that. They do not need to go below that

number because they had the resources to pay for it. They are required by Congress to do that.

What triggered ICE to instruct field offices to reduce the detainee population a week before the sequestration hit?

How many illegal immigrants were released during that time?

Exactly how many of these individuals were released solely due to budget reasons?

How many of the released individuals, if any, were designated as criminal? The law enforcement people obviously need to know that.

Have instructions been given to field offices to reduce the intake and arrests of illegal aliens into detention?

These are just some of the many questions I asked Secretary Napolitano because I think Congress and the American people deserve answers.

As the head of the Department, Secretary Napolitano has the ultimate responsibility to oversee the decisions in the management of agency resources. She said this decision was made at a level below her. We hear a lot of that from administration officials: It is not my fault, it is somebody else's fault. That is why they rise to the position of Secretary, because they are the ones who ultimately oversee the program and need to take responsibility, or at least need to answer a question posed by a Member of the Senate as to why they did what they did and how we are going to fix this.

Failing to respond to the Congress and to our requests and the failure to provide the American people with more information behind this decision is simply not something we should accept. I will keep pressing for these answers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MILITARY MEDAL PRECEDENCE

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring attention to a recent decision by the Department of Defense to authorize a new military decoration—the Distinguished Warfare Medal—as a way to recognize the contributions of silent warriors, such as drone pilots and cyber warriors.

I have absolutely no objection to the creation of the Distinguished Warfare Medal. Every day our silent warriors use modern warfare technology in ways that have had an extraordinary impact on today's battlefield—saving the lives of countless American service men and women and enhancing the national security of our country.

However, I adamantly oppose the decision by the Defense Department to