

based ICBM modernization are found in unexpected and little-noticed places like the “Energy and Water” appropriations bill, which would spend \$19.8 billion for “Weapons Activities,” a \$2.7 billion increase from the previous year. So, what is the \$19.8 billion for? This year, the Department of Energy/NNSA requested a \$3 billion down payment for the production of “plutonium pits,” which are the hollow plutonium shells used to trigger the nuclear reaction. On its own, this number is astonishingly high, but it doesn’t include the anticipated \$8 billion to build the production facility in Los Alamos and the second facility at Savannah River, which alone has a projected total project cost of \$18–25 billion, nearly six times the initial estimated cost for construction. It will be the most expensive building in America. And there is the \$1.4 billion requested for stockpile sustainment, the \$1.1 billion dollars for the Sentinel warhead development at Lawrence Lab, which has grown by 63 percent, and the untold cost of the six other warheads and bombs that support the other nuclear modernization programs.

Even proponents of modernizing nuclear programs should be concerned about the high costs. The January 2023 GAO report found that the NNSA has not developed a comprehensive schedule or cost estimate and has not identified all necessary activities or milestones to achieve the required 80-pit-per-year production capacity. And why do we need to produce 80 pits per year when America already has over 4,000 plutonium pits in storage? Has anyone studied the potential of repurposing these pits for the new bombs? The bottom line is this: Senior officials at the NNSA admit they won’t meet deadlines and have no idea what the ultimate cost will be.

I have tried to force common-sense reforms to better estimate cost. For example, I offered a straightforward amendment that would change the current law requiring 80 pits per year to a lower number that represents the realistic number of plutonium pits our country needs and can feasibly produce. To some, this is seen as an “extreme radical position,” and my proposal was voted down. Time and time again, I have been denied the opportunity to bring important nuclear matters to the floor for debate.

Across the nuclear enterprise, costs are soaring, fears are growing, and it remains unclear what goals we are achieving. Yet, amidst soaring costs and escalating risks, it’s imperative to reassess our nuclear priorities. Investing more of the modernization budget into diplomacy, arms control, and education could yield far-reaching benefits, fostering a stronger and more secure nation. Congress must fulfill its duty to allocate taxpayer funds responsibly, avoiding excessive expenses on wasteful nuclear programs that do little to enhance genuine security. Maintaining a “safe, secure, and effective deterrent” does not necessitate these costly modernization plans, especially given the pressing needs in other areas critical to national strength and stability.

The significance of arms control cannot be overstated. Prioritizing de-escalation isn’t just an idealistic notion; it’s a necessity. Arms races cannot be won. When we attempt to outpace our adversaries in weapon development, they inevitably respond in kind, draining our limited resources and fostering international instability as fear predominates and the world’s most devastating weapons become a more likely option.

The critical role of arms control in preserving global stability and security is evident from history’s many close calls. We can’t afford to wait for another Cuban missile crisis to recognize the dangers of miscommunication and the failure to engage in dialogue.

Only a few lonely congressional voices have joined the clarion call put forth by the Arms Control Association, Ploughshares, Council for a Livable World, Union of Concerned Scientists, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Nuclear Threat Initiative, and other well-known arms control organizations. Year after year, funding proposals and resolutions to support non-proliferation, nuclear fissile material control and verification, and weapons negotiations have been made to draw attention to the importance of arms control. Like Sisyphus pushing the boulder up the hill, it is often thankless work, fighting and clawing for progress only to see it roll back down again, as had happened in the Intermediate Range Nuclear Missile Treaty, New START, and the Iran nuclear agreement. But the work could not be more important. Unlike that Greek myth, I do believe that we can get the boulder to the top of the hill and develop robust arms control regimes that will help us all to avoid an existential threat.

There are three key pillars in this endeavor. First, knowledge of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and an understanding of their role in modern warfare. The library is full of studies on nuclear war, deterrence, the risks of misunderstanding, compelling arguments for risk reduction, and the value of arms control. We cannot forget the horrors that nuclear weapons would inflict if they were ever used again. This work cannot be understated. It’s been 79 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki and 40 years since the movie “The Day After” aired, showing Americans and their leadership just how terrible such an event would be. It is a hard truth, but one we must face. We can’t allow nuclear weapons rhetoric to be divorced from the very real consequences of their use.

Secondly, encouraging dialogue and fostering open communication channels are essential. While it may appear impossible to have any arms control negotiations with Russia as it conducts its war of aggression in Ukraine, it is important to remember that many of the previous arms treaties with Russia began at the moment of maximum international tension. The recent dialogues with China’s political and military leaders are encouraging. We should accept China’s offer to discuss “No first use” policy. We don’t know where the discussion may lead, but it’s an opening.

Lastly, garnering political support is crucial. Non-profits and advocacy groups have laid the groundwork; now, we must amplify their efforts and call on Congress to act. For too long, our focus on arms control has waned, and members of Congress have paid too little focus.

This is the moment to redouble our efforts. In a world marked by uncertainty and growing competition, building bridges and fostering understanding is more critical than ever. However, this effort must start at home. Inevitably, Congress must reconcile our infinite desires with our limited means. That means making hard decisions about how and where to spend taxpayer dollars to achieve real security. Hundreds of billions of dollars and 14 years have been spent in the modernization of America’s

nuclear weapons programs, and it has yielded a three-nation nuclear arms and space race. Are we more secure?

The Sentinel ICBM program, now estimated to be \$150 billion, breached the cost escalation limit of the Nunn-McCurdy law. The Pentagon and Congress must now justify the continuation of the program. Congress and the American public must not waste this pivotal moment to study the reality of the nuclear weapon arms race and make a decision to shift course. It’s past time to maximize our efforts to negotiate an end to the race and seek paths to reduce nuclear arms and the associated existential threat.

We face real challenges in this world, but too often, hyperbole and fear are being used to drive our decision-making. Competition need not mean hostility. It is time we returned to reason and rationality. Together, we must confront the challenges before us, not by building ever more dangerous weapons, but by placing the same priority on effective arms control and risk reduction measures that we currently place on modernization. We may face challenges, but we still have the choice of which future we will pursue. We know the risks, we know the dangers that modernizations and the inevitable arms race could hold, but that’s why it is so important we redouble our efforts toward making de-escalation real. Let us take this moment, this opportunity, to engage in a meaningful dialogue and choose the path towards a safer and more world.

HONORING FLORA WILSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Flora Wilson, a distinguished native of Batesville, Mississippi.

Mrs. Flora Wilson is a prominent Batesville, Mississippi, native who has resided in the City of Indianola since 1969. A respected member of her community, Mrs. Wilson is well known for her dedication, generosity, and service.

Mrs. Wilson is a proud mother of four, a grandmother of twelve, and a great-grandmother of four. She started working at a daycare at the age of 18, marking the beginning of her journey of dedication and service to people. After serving for twenty years at Stapleton-Staple Cotton Cooperative, she worked for nine years at Harvest Select Catfish Farm to wrap off her professional career. She retired in 2004 to take care of herself and her only daughter during a health difficulty.

After retiring, Mrs. Wilson has embraced an active and purposeful life. As the church mother at Mt. Zion Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, she has committed herself to full-time church service and serves her congregation by offering spiritual support and advice. She also acts as a caretaker, lending her empathy and support to others in need.

Additionally, Mrs. Wilson has also continued to use her skills as a seamstress, repairing and altering clothing for residents. Her work not only meets a practical need but also fosters a sense of community and care among her neighbors. Moreover, she has been an unwavering supporter of her granddaughter’s,

Marion, gospel music career. Traveling extensively to attend Marion's performances and offering her love and encouragement every step of the way.

Mrs. Wilson has constantly shown leadership and caring traits throughout her life, always volunteering to help her family and the community. Her employment as a seamstress and her nurturing obligations in her family and church are just two examples of the various ways her hands have been endowed.

The life of Mrs. Flora Wilson serves as an example of the strength of love, religion, and devotion. Her daily life will continue to inspire future generations, and her efforts have left a lasting impression on those who were lucky enough to know her.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Flora Wilson for her hard work and dedication to her community.

RECOGNIZING THE ASSOCIATION OF EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTORS

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge members of the Association of Equipment Distributors from all over the country who are in D.C. this week for their annual fly-in. In fact, some of them are joining us in the gallery tonight. These great men and women are entrepreneurs who provide millions of pieces of equipment to all kinds of industries in our country every year that help our country's economy. They deserve our admiration and thanks. They certainly have mine.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF DR. ROBERT SIMARI

HON. SHARICE DAVIDS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of Dr. Robert Simari, executive vice chancellor for the University of Kansas Medical Center, who will be retiring from the University of Kansas on June 30, 2024.

Dr. Simari's career has been marked by a distinguished commitment to uplifting the medical community and paving the way for critical medical research and advancements.

The staff and students at KU are fortunate to have had Dr. Simari as a part of their community throughout his career. Dr. Simari graduated from the KU School of Medicine in 1986 before going on to serve as vice chairman of the Mayo Clinic's Division of Cardiology Diseases. He then returned to KU as executive dean of the School of Medicine from 2014 to 2019.

Dr. Simari then began serving in his most recent position as executive vice chancellor of the KU Medical Center, where he has been credited with leading the Center during a particularly transformational period. He took part in hiring the deans of the schools of Medicine and Nursing, helped the KU Cancer Center earn comprehensive designation from the Na-

tional Cancer Institute, led a commitment to building a valued and respected workforce, and helped grow KU's research infrastructure in such a way as to enhance KU's status of one of the Nation's top research institutions.

As KU continues to produce excellent medical professionals, cutting-edge researchers, and lifesaving health discoveries, we will have Dr. Simari's legacy to thank. His service to the Kansas City community and the medical community at large will be forever cemented by these contributions, and I'm incredibly grateful for his lifelong dedication to the health and well-being of our region.

REMEMBERING WAYNE SMITH

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the remarkable life of Mr. Wayne Smith, who passed away on June 6, 2024, and offer my sympathy to his family. I am grateful for his service to our country as a distinguished maritime captain and an influential legislative figure, notably contributing to the U.S. House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. His dedication to community service, creative spirit, and transformative mentorship leaves behind an enduring legacy of compassion and leadership. I include in the RECORD the following obituary for Wayne Smith:

Wayne Smith was born on December 10, 1945, in Winchester, Massachusetts, where he grew up alongside his beloved sister Wendy, whom he adored.

Wayne graduated from Abingdon High School in 1963 and went on to receive his bachelor's degree from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 1968. His maritime career was distinguished by his service as a Captain, commanding U.S. Naval Oceanographic vessels and traveling the world.

From 1975 to 1987, Wayne made significant contributions to the U.S. House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. As Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Oceanography and the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, he played a pivotal role in shaping maritime and environmental legislation. Concurrently, he served as Chief of Staff to Congressman and Senator John Breaux of Louisiana, where his leadership and expertise were invaluable.

In 1981, Wayne, joined forces with Senator John Breaux, who was then serving as the captain of the Mystick Krewe of Louisiana. Together, they conceived a grand and ambitious idea: Louisiana Alive! They aimed to celebrate and showcase the vibrant and diverse culture of Louisiana, extending beyond the well-known charm of New Orleans to include the rich traditions and unique flavors of all the state's parishes. Their vision was to create an event that captured the essence of Louisiana's music, cuisine, and heritage, offering an immersive experience that highlighted the best the state had to offer.

In recognition of Wayne's extraordinary creativity, dedication, and inclusive spirit, Louisiana Alive! 2025 is set to proceed as a tribute to his legacy. This event will not only honor Wayne's contributions but also continue his mission of celebrating Louisiana's unique cultural tapestry.

In 1987, Wayne founded the POTOMACGroup, where he served as

President and CEO. Under his visionary leadership, the firm thrived, representing individuals, associations, and Fortune 500 companies with distinction.

Wayne's commitment to community and education was evident in his service as Vice Chair of the Washington International School and his longstanding board membership with the CASI Foundation for Children, where he focused on adoption issues.

Wayne celebrated 37 years of sobriety, during which he dedicated himself to helping others achieve the same, transforming countless lives through his unwavering support and mentorship. His crowning achievement came in 1999 when he and Don adopted their son, Qwan. As a devoted and supportive father, Wayne nurtured Qwan with boundless love and guidance, playing a pivotal role in his development into the remarkable gentleman he is today. Wayne's commitment to both his sobriety and his family is a testament to his character, illustrating the profound impact one person can have on the lives of many. His legacy of compassion and resilience continues to inspire all who knew him.

Wayne's legacy is one of empathy, wisdom, humor, and stability. He will be remembered for his class, style, elegance, and fierce compassion. His cultivated appreciation for art and color enriched the lives of all who knew him.

Wayne is survived by his loving husband, Don Schimanski; his cherished son, Qwan Smith; his nephews, David and Doug Dekker; and many beloved in-laws, nieces, and nephews.

Wayne's life was a tapestry of compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to those he loved and the causes he championed. His memory will live on in the hearts of all who were fortunate enough to know him.

RECOGNIZING TED DANSON AND MARY STEENBURGEN

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ted Danson and Mary Steenburgen for their deep and abiding allyship to the LGBTQ+ community. They did so early in their careers, at a time when we were without many allies who would stand with us. Their courage is to be commended.

Ted Danson is known to many through his leading roles on hit TV shows and movies, like "Cheers" and "The Good Place." He has used his platform as a bully pulpit, fervently championing marriage equality and vocally opposing discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. He has used his star power for good, raising money for LGBTQ+ advocacy groups that fight for a more just and equal society. By bringing the power of his celebrity to bear, Danson exemplifies the profound impact public figures can have in shaping a more inclusive and accepting society.

Mary Steenburgen has built a career on playing warm and wise characters—winning an Oscar along the way—but also one deeply entwined with advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community. From "Philadelphia" to "Happiest Season," she has found ways to use her public persona to advance the cause of LGBTQ+ rights and visibility. Rarely has any one person been able to combine their artistry and advocacy into one, complete body of work. She is a wonder.