H.R. 1992 updates the definition of ''qualitative military edge'' so that the asymmetric and cyber warfare are considered and would require a 2-year reporting process.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee to advance this legislation and to increase our special relationship with Israel. I appreciate the chairman of Foreign Affairs, Mr. ROYCE, for his support and cosponsorship.

And I also would like to thank my friend from across the aisle, Mr. SCHNEIDER, for his support. Good policy knows no party line, and I look forward to working together to move forward this legislation.

REGARDING THE PATIENTS' RIGHTS REPEAL ACT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted a moment to reflect. This was a very sad day for me. Having been here during the emotional time during the debate on the Affordable Care Act, remembering the long hours and the deliberation in the committees in regular order, the opportunity for Republicans to offer amendments, and then today for the 37th time this particular act has now hurt millions of Americans.

My State is number one. Today, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to call the roll and ask those citizens of those States to call their Senators. For how can you vote for such a repeal of the Patients' Rights Act when Texas, Louisiana, Nevada, California, Florida, Georgia, Arkansas, Alaska, Mississippi, and Oklahoma all have uninsured over 20 percent, with Texas being 28.4 percent?

It is poverty that drives the need to expand Medicaid to my State, to my Governor. It is poverty that drives this. Whether you are poor, whether you are low-income, whether you are working middle class, the Affordable Care Act is to lift your boat to give you the opportunity to have preventive health care to be able to have access to doctors. Why would anybody vote to repeal the Patients' Rights Act?

□ 1840

RESCUING AMERICANS FROM THE TRACKS OF HEALTH CARE DESTRUCTION

(Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you why people would vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act. It has become very, very clear that no matter how well-intentioned it may have been, it will not work. Time after time, we are finding that the things that they told us just aren't panning out to be true; and Senator MAX BAUCUS, one of the law's main architects, recently described ObamaCare as a huge train wreck coming down.

We have a chance to save Americans from being casualties of the train wreck. We can yank them off the tracks. Today, I voted to show that I am trying to do just that.

I call on the United States Senate and the Senators to join us in rescuing the American people from the tracks of health care destruction.

SCANDALS IN WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the past few weeks, it seems as if you can't turn on the news without hearing of another drama, of another crisis in Washington undermining confidence in our government, whether it's Benghazi, the IRS, the Department of Justice, or the Department of Health and Human Services. It's hard to know what may be next.

Mr. Speaker, there is an age-old expression that goes like this: be careful to whom you give a gun and a badge.

Authority is a very delicate matter. A well-functioning government must ensure that those who are in positions of influence are committed to serving the public with impartiality and fairness. Recent revelations have done much to undermine the public trust.

Mr. Speaker, 8 months ago, our Ambassador to Libya was killed along with three other Americans. Not only is this an affront to America because we lost our Ambassador; it is also an attack on our Nation, and it undermines the international rule of law. The process by which we have tried to unpack the details of this attack has been careening all over the place. Even after several committee hearings on Benghazi, including a Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in which I participated last December, a core question remains unanswered:

Who said ''stand down'' when reinforcements were called for?

Now, there may be legitimate military and diplomatic reasoning here, but we simply need to know the answer to that question; or this could have been a very serious mistake with the gravest of consequences.

In the past week, we've learned of discrimination against specific groups by the Internal Revenue Service. These reports are causing a firestorm across our country. Our sensitivities are rightly heightened when it comes to the collection of taxes. No one wants to pay taxes, but we must have a revenue-collecting agency in order to have a functioning Federal Government. It is unconscionable, though, that this agency targeted citizens because of their political or religious beliefs.

The IRS, of all agencies, must be held to the highest of high standards of fairness and impartiality. The reported actions seriously undermine the foundation of trust necessary between citizens and their government. That's why, this week, the Taxpayer Nondiscrimination and Protection Act was introduced with my support. The legislation puts meaningful penalties in place when this foundation of trust is violated, penalties that could include prison time.

Perhaps it's also time for the IRS to implement a new policy. Everyone they are auditing, or perhaps have audited in the past 3 years, must be provided with a fuller explanation as to why they're going through this process so as to ensure that there is no improper targeting of American citizens based upon their religious or political beliefs. Just this morning, a friend of mine texted me, and another one called me just yesterday, worried that the audits that were undertaken against them were due to their own political leanings and engagements.

Mr. Speaker, the real issue is this: Just how deep and wide is the mind-set that pervaded the IRS that did target Americans based upon their religious or political leanings?

On another issue, we are learning that the Department of Justice seized phone records of Associated Press reporters, including records of their personal phone lines. Now, the ability to wiretap and probe needs to be in place in narrow circumstances, but the wide-ranging nature of what happened raises a number of questions, questions that beg us to ask: How do we protect the freedom of the press?

Another problem that hasn't been widely discussed is that the Department of Health and Human Services, in effect, is also targeting people based upon their beliefs. The Department is forcing Americans to pay for drugs and procedures that many find to be inconsistent with their deeply held, reasonable beliefs or their religious traditions. When the President introduced his health care plan, he told Americans that if they liked their health insurance, they could keep it. Now we are finding in some cases that you cannot keep your doctor, that you cannot keep your own health care plan, and now you may not even be able to keep your own faith tradition. This is a form of coercion that sets up a false choice and is un-American.

All of these events are converging to erode confidence in Washington. Now, thankfully, many of these concerns actually cross the political aisle. There is bipartisan concern. These are American issues, and these events underscore why we actually do have a balance of power in Washington. There is an executive branch that enforces the law, and there is a legislative branch that writes the law. The legislative branch also has the duty to provide oversight over the executive branch, which is a duty that Congress now is rightly embracing.