

settled in the town of Bellmore, Long Island. Growing up during the Great Depression his family was faced with daily struggles, despite the economic hardships, Robert continued to strive towards a better future.

On June 19, 1942, at the young age of seventeen, Robert left his hometown of Bellmore with the goal of enlisting in the Navy. As part of the Navy Squadron VPB-33, he was stationed in South America and also the South Pacific where his active duties involved chasing submarines, air sea rescue, and sinking enemy ships. In February of 1945, Robert returned to the states and was stationed at NAS, Jacksonville, Florida.

Shortly after his return, Bob was released from the Navy and immediately joined the Marine Corps. He spent two years as a Marine and then resigned to pursue service in the Army Air Corps where he gained experience from all over the world. Not only did he heroically fight in the Korean War but also his perseverance continued throughout the Vietnam War.

Upon returning to the homeland, Robert met his wife Yvonne and they were married on January 19, 1946. After bravely serving his country for twenty-eight years, Robert retired from the Air Force on July 31, 1970 and he and his wife moved to Merced, California.

For two years Robert sold insurance and then decided to try his luck in the title and escrow business at First Merced Title Co. Transamerica Title Company bought the company in March 1977 and by July, he was named the branch manager where he remained until 1985. It was then he decided to become a business owner when he purchased the company and formed TransCounty Title Co. After numerous years in the business, Bob made the decision to retire in 2010, turning the operation over to his daughter Peg, who is now the president. TransCounty Title Co. remains the only locally owned title company in Merced County.

In addition to being a business owner, Bob was a dynamic member of the Merced community. He was actively involved in Kiwanis and served on the capital campaign for Mercy Medical Center. Also, he has been an active contributor to the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce and both higher education facilities, UC Merced and Merced College.

During their nearly 70 years of marriage, Robert and Yvonne welcomed three children, sons Robert Jr. and John Ayers and daughter Peg Larson. Both sons followed in their father's footsteps by serving their country. Robert Jr. is a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the U.S. Army and a retired correctional warden of several California State prisons. Their son John pursued a career in medicine and served as a medic in the United States Navy. Currently, he works in the surgery center at Marin General Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Robert Ayers for his unwavering leadership, and recognizing his accomplishments and contributions to this nation. As Bob celebrates his 90th birthday, he serves as an example of excellence to those in our community.

## INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 16, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2596) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, today I will vote against H.R. 2596, the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2016, because this bill continues the expansion of our intelligence community and includes harmful policy riders that will only serve to make America less safe, not more.

While large portions of the intelligence budget are classified, publicly available estimates are as high as \$80 billion a year. That's in addition to the more than \$580 billion we're set to spend on defense in the next 12 months. If today's bill moves forward, funding will again rise by nearly \$6 billion. Worse, it would do so by sidestepping Congressionally-imposed budget caps, while continuing to enforce these arbitrary rules for critical domestic programs, from education to medical research.

Efforts by the majority to undercut our president's ability to conduct foreign policy are nothing new, but for the first time this bill would put in place additional barriers to finally closing Guantanamo Bay, a recruiting tool available to terrorists so long as its doors remain open. It would also limit the types of information our intelligence community can share with our allies, a level of discretion best left to the President himself.

There are over 4.5 million federal employees and contractors with access to secret information, which is larger than the entire population of Los Angeles. I am concerned that the amount of information being reviewed by the intelligence community and number of people involved may actually be making us less safe.

Today's bill is a missed opportunity to re-evaluate methods of domestic surveillance, the growing size of the intelligence bureaucracy, and ending programs, like Guantanamo Bay, that only harm our national security, not help it.

## HONORING WILLIAM WALTER HOWARD

**HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 17, 2015*

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 8, William Walter Howard passed away in Johnson City, Tennessee, at the age of 87. Bill was one of the finest men I have ever known, and I knew him from my teenage years until his passing.

Bill was very accurately described in his obituary as being the "epitome of sweetness," and he certainly was. He was a kind, soft-spo-

ken man, and I never knew anyone who said anything but good things about Bill Howard.

He was married for 67 years to his wife Carolyn, who passed away just a short time ago. He was a devoted husband and father and loved God, family, and country.

He was proud of his service in the Navy and was very patriotic. He sometimes gave me conservative tapes and expressed similar views in our conversations. He worked very hard for me in several of my campaigns and had great concern about the direction of this Nation.

He was a successful banking and savings and loan executive and also did accounting work in the hotel-motel industry. He served the community through the Kiwanis club and also had me speak at the church where he was a Deacon.

Bill Howard was a great man, successful as a husband, father, businessman, community and church leader, and political activist. This country is a better place and many, many people are better because of the life Bill led and the example he set.

This Nation needs more people like Bill Howard. He was quite simply, a good man, and I will miss him greatly.

## OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 17, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,152,717,537,302.13. We've added \$7,525,840,488,389.05 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

## INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 16, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2596) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise to express my opposition to H.R. 2596, the Intelligence Authorization Act of 2016. Though I have always appreciated the bipartisan spirit in which the Intelligence Committee members work to craft the annual authorization bill, and I acknowledge the many vital programs the bill support, I disagree with the way H.R. 2596 uses Overseas Contingency Operations funding and how it prevents the closure of the detainment facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. For those reasons, I cannot vote for the bill.