

Greensboro paper said, "Get Out." It is time to bring our troops home. They've done everything they've been asked to do.

And that reminds me, a few weeks ago, I went to Walter Reed at Bethesda—it's the new consolidated military hospital here in Washington—and I saw four marines from my district, Camp Lejeune. Three of the four had lost both legs. The one that had not lost both legs was a lance corporal who asked me, with his mom in the room, Congressman, why are we still in Afghanistan? And I looked into the young man's face and I said, I don't know why we're still there. You all have won many, many battles, and it's time to bring you home. And the only thing he said, Mr. Speaker, was, Thank you.

That brings me to a letter that I received from a retired marine down in my district about a year ago. He said, "I am writing this letter to express my concern over the current Afghanistan war. I am a retired marine officer with 31-plus years of active duty."

Let me go down in the letter because there is another point I want to make.

"Our senior military leaders in Afghanistan continue to say that we are making progress, but at what cost to our country? This war is costing the United States billions of dollars a month to wage and we still continue to get more young Americans killed. The Afghanistan war has no end state for us. I urge you to make contact with all the current and newly elected men and women in Congress and ask them to end this war and bring our young men and women home."

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"If any of my comments will assist you in this effort, you are welcome to use them and my name."

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why we are—we've got this debt crisis facing our country, and yet we've got a corrupt leader in Afghanistan named Karzai that one day likes America, and the next day he hates America; and we send him \$10 billion a month, and it's borrowed money from the Chinese.

And yet we're going to say to the American people we're going to cut the programs for little children; we're going to cut the programs for senior citizens. But Mr. Karzai, you'll get your \$10 billion.

And that brings me toward the end of my comments, Mr. Speaker. I contacted a marine general who's been a very dear friend of mine for a number of years, and he sends me questions to ask in committees to the Secretary of Defense and others who might be testifying.

But something that has always stuck with me is what he closes this email with—and I have many emails—"What do we say to the mother and father or the wife of the last marine killed to support a corrupt government and a corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?"

That is the question. And I hope the American people will call on Congress,

both parties, to bring our troops home before 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people, and I ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people.

And three times I ask, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

Let's bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived audience.

SMART SECURITY: PROTECTING AMERICA BY RELYING ON THE VERY BEST OF AMERICAN VALUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REED). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this Congress believes that keeping the Nation safe, as well as providing benefits to our veterans as promised, is our very top priority. It's a question, however, of just how do we do that. And a decade of war and military occupation is not the best way.

Whenever spending cuts are on the agenda, as they are right now with the supercommittee racing to meet its deadline, military and defense programs continue to get a pass. Why should the Pentagon get a blank check while safety-net programs have to look for "change in the couch cushions" to keep their programs going?

It's time for the Pentagon to share in the sacrifice, especially since it's been so generously funded over the years, a 50 percent increase in the DOD budget over the last decade, bigger in real dollars today than it was at the height of the Cold War.

Ending the war in Afghanistan would save at least \$10 billion a month—actually, it's more like 12 now—to say nothing of the lives we would save and the injuries that would be avoided.

But I think we should go further in cutting the base Pentagon budget. Just to give a few examples, I'm a longtime advocate of eliminating the V-22 Osprey aircraft. It's a program that, if we eliminated it, would save \$10 billion, and it's a program that is notorious for cost overruns and for huge safety concerns.

And we can dramatically reduce the Nation's nuclear arsenal. Why do we need—I ask you this—why do we need 5,000 warheads when just one is enough to destroy life on Earth?

We can wring huge savings out of the system by fundamentally changing how we think and how we deal with national security. For pennies on the dollar we can keep America safe by implementing a smarter security policy, by supporting a civilian surge over a military surge.

My SMART Security platform, which is H. Res. 19, would make war a very last resort and adopt a different posture toward the rest of the world. It's not isolationism. When I say I want to bring our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, I'm not saying we abandon those countries. I'm saying we must engage them in a different way. That means investing in their people and their capacity to lead lives free of deprivation and despair.

So instead of weapons systems, let's invest more on development in humanitarian aid, more on maternal health programs, more on mosquito nets to prevent malaria, more on education, health care, microlending, et cetera, et cetera.

You know what would promote our national security, Mr. Speaker, like nothing else is a genuine, well-funded commitment to eradicating poverty and malnutrition in the developing world. Instead of invasions and occupations, SMART Security emphasizes diplomacy. It emphasizes the civilian surge, multilateralism, and peaceful conflict resolution.

It also calls for more investment in energy independence, nuclear non-proliferation, democracy promotion, and civil society programs abroad. Isn't that a better way to combat terrorism than sending 100,000 troops to a part of the world known for widespread anti-American sentiment?

We must stop equating national security with armed aggression because that's how we ended up with out-of-control Pentagon budgets and an ever more dangerous world. In fact, Mr. Speaker, military force has been proven to oftentimes undermine our security instead of enhancing it.

SMART Security protects America because it relies on the very best of American values, moral leadership, compassion, our commitment to peace and freedom. It costs pennies on the dollar. It is efficient and fiscally responsible.

So let's bring our troops home, cut the Pentagon budget, and implement SMART Security now. Then we can have real cost savings in the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

PFC CODY NORRIS—TEXAS SOLDIER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, halfway around the world, in the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, the American warrior stands fighting the forces of the enemy.

But one such soldier returns from battle to America with a flag-draped coffin. He is Cody Norris, Army private first class, a machine gunner in the infantry, just 20 years old, barely an adult, but still an all-American man.

For the Norris family in La Porte, Texas, Cody was a son and a little brother. He died in a gun battle last week in Afghanistan for our country. He was the 38th warrior in my area of Texas to give his life for his country.

Cody grew up in La Porte. He graduated from La Porte High School just last year, but he quickly volunteered for the United States Army in October.

In high school, Cody loved to restore old military trucks. He restored a 1952 Dodge M-37 Army truck and drove it to school. He was a member of the Junior ROTC Color Guard at La Porte High School. But this year, his former classmates and peers in the Color Guard honored his life.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, before deploying to Afghanistan. It was his first deployment in Afghanistan.

October 1 marked his 1-year anniversary in the United States Army. Cody was killed in Kandahar province last week on November 9 when the enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire.

Kandahar province in Afghanistan has been called the birthplace and fanatical home of the notorious Taliban. It is a dangerous part of the world. I've been to Afghanistan several times, and the sun is unbearable in the summer and the cold is brutally piercing in the winter. And our soldiers fight on, undeterred, tenaciously focused.

They go to battle in a land seemingly cursed by God. Our military in Afghanistan go where others fear to tread and the timid are not found.

When I spoke to Cody's mother, Teresa Denise Norris, she told me Cody marched to the beat of his own drum. He didn't care what others thought of him; he did what he thought was right.

She said Cody was proud to be a soldier and that their family believes in the red, white and blue; and they all love this country. That pride is carried through in Cody's older brother, Michael Norris. He's a cadet in his last year at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

□ 1040

The Norris family is a soldier's family. Cody's Facebook page is filled with heartfelt messages from his friends, classmates, and fellow soldiers. It is evident how much he made people laugh in his very young life.

Cody wrote on his Facebook in the "About Me" section, "I'm in the Army and I am an infantryman. I love what I do as my job and my dream in life, and no one can take that away from me. I am trained by the best, and I will be the best I can. Wanna do all I can for the ones I love and my country—to

keep us all free, even if it means death, so that every American can live their dreams out as well."

Cody loved what he did. He loved his country. He was selfless, and he was an American patriot.

For his service in the United States Army, Cody has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, and the NATO Medal and the Combat Infantry Medal.

Cody Norris was a part of the rare breed, the American breed—soldiers who take care of the rest of us and watch for the evildoers who would bring us harm. They prove their commitment to America by giving their lives for this Nation.

General George Patton said of the fallen soldiers, "Let us not only mourn for the men who have died fighting, but let us be grateful to God that such men ever lived."

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful to Private First Class Cody Norris and that he lived. He was a Texan, a soldier, an American Warrior.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

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

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 12th Annual National Adoption Day this Friday, November 18. As we prepare for Thanksgiving festivities with loved ones, many of us take for granted our opportunity to spend time with family and friends. But for thousands of foster youth around the country, celebrating a holiday with a permanent family remains out of reach.

In the United States today there are more than 400,000 children in foster care, some waiting years to be adopted by a permanent, loving family. Although the number of youth without a home seems discouraging, there is hope.

This week, in recognition of National Adoption Day, an unprecedented number of courts in 400 communities throughout the country will open their doors to finalize the adoption of thousands of children from the foster care system.

National Adoption Day is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of children in foster care who are eligible and waiting for adoption, as well as to celebrate families that have been chosen to make a lasting difference in the life of a child through adoption or relative-based care.

Since 2000, more than 35,000 children have been adopted through National Adoption Day activities. This year, nearly 5,000 adoptions will be finalized. In California alone, my home State, 500 youth will be adopted through these special events.

While the number of children in foster care has significantly decreased

over the past decade, the number of adoptions has remained unchanged. Youth often wait years in foster care before finding a permanent family through adoption. During their time in foster care, children are moved from home to home, changing schools, losing friends, coping with separation from siblings, and wondering if they will ever have anyone to call Mom or Dad again.

What's worse is that nearly 28,000 youth age out of foster care each year never having been adopted, often going through life alone without the support systems children with permanent families have, not to mention sharing holiday traditions or a family meal.

As the cochair of both the Congressional Coalition on Adoption and the Foster Youth Caucus, I look forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion to identify solutions to improve the quality of life for our Nation's most vulnerable children.

National Adoption Day reminds us that it is our responsibility and in our best interest to find solutions to ensure children have the opportunity to live in a safe and loving home. Nearly 48 million Americans have considered adopting from foster care, according to a recent national survey. If just one in 500 of these adults adopt, all the 107,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption would have permanent families to help create Thanksgiving traditions of their own.

In closing, in this spirit of giving thanks, I'd like to express sincere gratitude to all of the adoptive parents, relative caregivers, and child welfare caseworkers. Their commitment to improving the lives of today's youth is truly commendable.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Washington has a problem. It spends more than it brings in, and it has been doing that for a long time. That's why we are over \$15 trillion in debt. That's over \$46,000 of debt for every American man, woman, and child. Washington is currently borrowing 36 cents out of every dollar it spends, and under President Obama, our national debt has increased 34 percent. That's the fastest increase in the debt under any U.S. President in history.

Our government is digging a hole it might never get out of. We don't have the money, yet Big Government hasn't been able to restrain itself and keeps putting more and more of its spending on a credit card—our children's credit card.

Our national debt-to-GDP ratio rivals that of countries like Ireland, Portugal, and Greece, which are facing sovereign debt crises. Soon our Nation's Federal debt will equal our GDP. It is a losing proposition. It's like