Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Today, the House will debate the Defense Authorization Act for the next fiscal year. While nothing is more important than protecting America while keeping our men and women in uniform safe, the authorization before us today wastes too much of our Nation's precious wealth and represents yet another missed opportunity for badly-needed reform.

H.R. 4310, unfortunately, highlights Congress's inability to make hard choices on defense spending. It opts for an all-of-the-above strategy and puts the funding of an already bloated military budget ahead of any semblance of fiscal responsibilities. If passed, the authorization would represent 57 percent of our total discretionary budget.

It's clear to most people outside Congress that we can no longer separate national security from fiscal responsibility. Congress needs to get that message. Our constituents certainly understand.

Last week, a Stimson Center poll showed that, on average, Americans feel that the defense budget should be reduced by 18 percent next year. Instead, this bill will decrease spending by less than one-half of 1 percent after 13 consecutive years of increase.

While budget hawks and military experts agree we need to cut defense spending, this year's defense authorization provides $8 billion more than the cap for the defense budget set by the Budget Control Act, which both parties supported and enacted into law to solve last summer's manufactured debt ceiling crisis.

Many supporting the bill will raise a false choice between defending America or rebuilding and renewing America, its infrastructure, and our economy. We can and we must do both. Spending too much for the wrong people to do the wrong things will undermine the very security at home we seek to buy through more military spending. Crumbling bridges and roads, failing schools, and a massive national debt all pose a greater national threat to America's power abroad than right-sized defense spending.

We know how to do this. We have had a cascade of plans, ranging from the Cato Institute to the Bowles-Simpson to progressive think-tanks. All would meet our 21st century need for national defense while keeping promises to future generations here at home.

In addition to ending the war in Afghanistan more quickly, there are many ways to decrease defense spending. Increased efficiency in naval deployment can reduce the need for battleships. We don't need a growing supercarrier fleet. The United States' 11 aircraft carriers add up to more than the rest of the world combined, and many of the countries that have aircraft carriers are our allies.

The current level of investment in our nuclear arsenal with capabilities that correspond to no real military challenge makes no sense and wastes hundreds of billions of dollars.

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Unfortunately, the Republican leadership either can't or doesn't want to work towards a balanced approach to reduce defense spending. This was illustrated by the response to an amendment I offered in the Budget Committee last week. Instead of making tough choices on defense spending, our Republican colleagues decided to give the Pentagon even more than they asked for and provide them this funding in part by eliminating food stamp benefits for 2 million people, reducing benefits for 44 million more, curtailing Meals on Wheels, and eliminating school lunches for 280,000 children.

The level of spending in today's defense authorization is absurd. But more shocking is what Americans are being forced to give up to continue funding the Pentagon at this level.

Congress needs to show some leadership and ability to make difficult choices. That's why I'm leading, along with Representatives LEE and FRANK, an amendment to cut defense spending for the next fiscal year by the $8 billion that would align the bill with the level already authorized and written into law last fall.

We can and should go further, but at the very least most should be able to agree that Congress ought to play by the rules we created, not sidestepping them at the expense of struggling families, disadvantaged school children, and our seniors. Unless we are able to fix this bill, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

EOD TECHNICIANS KILLED IN ACTION

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives of two brave men who died serving their Nation. Explosive ordnance disposal technicians serve the important role of disarming explosive devices (IEDs) in war zones and here at home. As a former EOD tech myself, I know the dangers these soldiers face, and today I honor their ultimate sacrifice.

Naval Lieutenant Christopher Mosko trained for more than a year to become an EOD technician. He was assigned to EOD Mobile Unit 3 for the past 3 years, and during that time, among other missions, he supported humanitarian operations following the earthquake in Haiti. He was killed in an IED blast in Afghanistan on April 26 of this year, directly supporting Navy and Army special operations forces.

Lieutenant Mosko and his wife, Amanda, called San Diego home. Lieutenant Mosko was described by his command as a personable and outstanding leader who went out of his way to support his men. They also said he was a kind and gentle person who will be greatly missed by the EOD family.

Twenty-five-year-old Marine Sergeant John Huling was killed by gunshot wounds inflicted by a person wearing an Afghan National Army uniform in the Helmand province of Afghanistan. Sergeant Huling enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2006. He deployed to Iraq in 2007 and was on his second combat deployment. As an EOD tech, he was assigned to the 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group at Camp Pendleton in California.

Sergeant Huling's mother said: ''He was brave and selfless and gave his life for his country so everybody could enjoy the freedom that we live now.''

Sergeant Huling is survived by his wife of 2 years, Priscilla; a brother, who is also a marine; and a sister.

Mr. Speaker, Navy Lieutenant Christopher Mosko and Marine Sergeant John Huling are American heroes. Each brave man died in action defending the freedoms so many Americans take for granted.

I did not know these two men, but to many, these men were sons, husbands, brothers and friends. Because they served, America and the world are safer and more free. Their families are in my thoughts and prayers, and I ask that all Americans remember the sacrifice they made.

Explosive ordnance disposal technicians are the first line of defense in the war on terror, protecting our servicemembers from IED threats overseas and in homeland missions. The EOD community deserves the respect and full resources of the Department of Defense to continue their lifesaving mission.

God bless the memory of Lieutenant Mosko and Sergeant Huling, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

LEGISLATION RELATING TO IRAN

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

Mr. KUCINICH. This week, Congress is considering two pieces of legislation relating to Iran. The first undermines a diplomatic solution with Iran and lowers the bar for war. The second authorizes a war of choice against Iran and begins military preparations for it.

With respect to H. Res. 568, which eliminates the most viable alternative to war, the House is expected to vote on this. I would urge Members to read the resolution because section 6 rejects any U.S. policy that would rely on efforts to contain a nuclear weapons capable Iran. Section 7 urges the President to reaffirm the unacceptability of an Iran with a nuclear weapons capability, and opposition to any policy that would rely on containment as an option in response to Iranian enrichment.