

President's request but the Pentagon's. Some programs, like Block 30 of the Global Hawk, the Pentagon doesn't want at all. Funding for East Coast missile defense dumps money into systems that don't work against a remote, unlikely threat. Lastly, there are not sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that we are not only funding the right programs, but receiving a fair price for them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT T. SCHILLING

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. SCHILLING. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 18, 2012, during a rapid succession of two-minute votes, I was unable to cast my vote for rollcall Number 288.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the Rehberg Amendment No. 59 to H.R. 4310, which passed with a bipartisan vote of 238-162. Our nuclear deterrent is a vital part of our continued military strength and global presence.

Our nuclear deterrent through our nuclear triad continues to keep the peace, and we must ensure that any reductions that may occur to our nuclear triad are certified by the Secretary of Defense to be needed and in compliance. Congress must exercise its oversight to ensure that our national security is not placed at risk by political ideologies.

The Rehberg Amendment ensures that Congress does have that oversight while still complying with the international agreements we have made as a country. We also need to show Russia that we take their disingenuousness about the number of working missiles and platforms very seriously.

Again, had I not been delayed, I would have voted in support of Rehberg Amendment No. 59 to H.R. 4310.

STUDENT ESSAYS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 18, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight, into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Siri Soth is a junior at Austin High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

It is important for the government to play an active role in our lives but to a certain extent. I think it is an important duty of our government to provide us with a strong National Defense and protect our individual

rights and freedoms. Our government has an obligation to protect us from powers that we, as a nation, would not be able to adequately protect ourselves from. Our government's number one priority should be to protect its nation from any harm whatsoever. By providing this great nation with the strongest defense possible, our government is instilling faith and pride in the people of this country. It is also the government's duty to protect our rights. Our individual rights are very important to our freedom and if those rights are protected and respected, our nation will be happy. Our rights are given to us at birth, they are not granted by the state and they are not in anyone's control. Our government is there to ensure our rights and make sure that no one can take said rights away from an individual. Life and liberty are magnificent gifts that certainly cannot come from any government official, but can be protected by one. Protecting our rights is necessary for our government to do in order for our nation to feel safe and secure and to know that our rights cannot be taken away by anyone. In my opinion, the government is here to hold people accountable for their actions by making and administering laws for the good and safety of our nation. I also believe it is the role of the government to enforce the separation of church and state. In order to protect our rights, such as freedom of religion, I think it is a must to ensure that church is not associated with government. Because of the mass amount of diversity in our country and the numerous religion and religious values present, intertwining church and state is limiting people's first amendment. People of this nation should never feel uncomfortable about an action of the government because of a religious bias. So in short, our government definitely needs to play an active role in our lives, but under certain circumstances. The government needs to ensure safety in the people of this nation by protecting us from foreign powers and ensuring us with faith in them to respect our rights and keep us secure.

Stephanie Lin is a junior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country. Stephanie chose the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War has constantly been referred to as "The War We Couldn't Win". From an objective perspective, gazing at the maps of offensives, counterstrikes, and captures, it may seem the case. However, we must also examine the effects within our own domestic issues. Of course, the economic perspective forces us to acknowledge the losses incurred from the soldiers sent . . . and the innocents killed.

More than forty years ago, on the fourth of May, the city of Kent dawned upon a massacre of horrors. The Ohio National Guard, people meant to protect, fired over sixty-seven rounds of bullets in thirteen seconds into a crowd of Kent State University students protesting against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, killing four students and wounding nine others. Comparatively, the numbers seem small, insignificant even. However, what was killed was not only human lives, but an ideal. The public trusted the government to protect their freedom of expression, and their own people. The Kent State Massacre violated that trust for the public, desecrating and shattering the idealized vision of the youth of America.

Afterwards, the response from the public was astounding. Kent State photojournalism student John Filo captured a fourteen-year old runaway, Mary Ann Vecchio, screaming over the body of the dead student, Jeffrey

Miller, who had been brutally shot in the mouth. The photograph earned a Pulitzer.

The public seemed to interpret the photograph as a symbol of the broken faith, cupped in the hands of America's future generation, as they desperately scrambled for some humanity. The event may have seemed small in casualties, but it, in the end, was a ripple, causing a tremendous effect on the public's opinion over the role of government in the Vietnam War.

The shootings represented that America was not only fighting a war in Vietnam, but a war with itself. It caused people to question the roles and responsibilities of the government. The impact it has left on the people of America can be seen with the public's notions about the government now. The protests against big business seem to be lumped in with protests against how the government represses or does not pay attention to the people.

I may not fully understand the impact brought to the public from all these different events more than fifty years ago, but I do understand what it is like to be frustrated when your voice is not only unheard, but also gunned down. This is why I feel the Kent State Shootings are so significant to me. It showed how the people felt violated by the government, yet also taught us authority that abuses control, or senseless violence against protesters, will result in repercussions. We all have the power of voice. If our whispers are swiftly cut, we will swiftly scream for justice.

Today's government understands the role of expression and how wrong it is to rashly repress it. Perhaps Vietnam was The War We Couldn't Win, but we had victories in voice.

Stephanie Tsai is a senior at Foster High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her essay topic is: Select an important event that has occurred in the past 50 years and explain how that event has changed our country. Stephanie chose *Apollo 11's* Moon landing.

Below his feet, he felt the fine-grained dust that coated the surface of the moon. Stepping forward, Neil Armstrong uttered some of the most famous words in human history: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." In 1969, the *Apollo 11* moon landing brought American exploration and technological capability to new heights, both figuratively and literally. This major achievement was a testimony to our nation's unwavering perseverance in the face of adversity.

For years, humans dreamt of walking on the moon, yet such a task seemed impossible. To many, a moon landing was little more than a dream. But America is and has always been a nation of dreamers. With President Kennedy's challenge to "[land] a man on the moon and [return] him back safely" before the end of the decade, a goal which he correctly described as "important for the long-range exploration of space," brought America closer to the realization of a centuries-long ambition. In all human history, there had never been an accomplishment quite like this. The moon landing was the first time human beings had set foot outside the planet earth, and it paved the way for future space exploration.

Americans who witnessed the moon landing undoubtedly rank it among their most unforgettable memories. One of the proudest moments in American history, the moon landing spoke to the tenacity of the American people. It reminded people around the world of America's immense capabilities and the power of American resolve. The moon landing was the product of the cooperation of determined Americans to accomplish the impossible. It was a triumph for technological innovation and the foundation for