Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the

amendment. This amendment is being offered for purely political

reasons.

As the gentleman knows, the Defense of Marriage Act is already

current law. Despite the successful repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell

last year under DOMA, same-sex military spouses are not entitled to the

same benefits as other married couples. This amendment only seeks to

divide this House. He knows that current law already prohibits same-sex

spouses from independently shopping at military commissaries, using

base gyms, or benefiting from subsidized dental and health care.

I do believe we should have the debate of the effects of DOMA on our

service members and their families, but introducing this contentious and

discriminatory amendment to this bill is not the place. I urge my

colleagues to oppose this divisive amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Frankly, we don't have any problem with this amendment. I

would be very surprised if the administration would give any classified

information to the Russian Government. Now, maybe the gentleman knows

something that I don't know. And I understand that there was an

inadvertent comment suggesting that after the election there may be a

better opportunity to work between the two governments. Those things

are said at times. But I have no personal information that anyone is

saying that we're going to give them this information. So I personally

think it would be a mistake to give it to them unless it was

declassified so the American people would know what the information

was.

But in this case, just to be sure, I'm willing to go along with the

gentleman's amendment. We have to be very careful here with classified

information, there's no question about that. There's been some concern

expressed about classified information being released to the public,

which is another questionable activity.

I support the gentleman's amendment, and I yield back the balance of

my time.

I have had a chance to talk to the distinguished chairman

of the Defense Subcommittee, Mr. Young of Florida, about this issue. I

can tell you, based on long experience, that no one cares more about

our wounded warriors and also of those who have lost their lives and

are coming home for the last time.

I think the way that the Department of Defense handles this is

appropriate. They are trying to get these bodies back to the parents or

to the families as expeditiously as possible. Obviously, Congress

doesn't tell them how to do this. Obviously, we fund that program. I

just appreciate Mr. Young's history of concern about our troops. I know

that he stood up to a journalist, as most of us have had to do from

time to time, who thinks he knows all the answers but who has not

gotten all of the information.

As was suggested, the decisions about how to do this from Dover to

the home are made by the Department of Defense. I think that it is done

appropriately, and I think it is done in a dignified way and in a way

that all of us can be proud of. So I appreciate what Mr. Young has done

here. I just want him to know that I support him and will be glad to

talk to any reporter.

I see the distinguished chairman of the authorizing committee is here

as well. Maybe it's necessary to have another meeting and to bring in

some of the senior Members of the House and those who are leaders in

defense to talk to this reporter and to try to make him understand how

this actually functions.

I just want my good friend Mr. Young to know that we support him.

This is not something that he has day-to-day responsibility for, and he

should not be blamed in any way. Again, we just know that he and his

wife, Beverly, have been such great supporters of the troops, so to

have any insinuation here is just not appropriate.

I yield back the balance of my time.

I agree with my colleague and look forward to working with

you on this issue. Our National Guard and Humvee ambulances must have

the cardiac monitoring and resuscitation equipment and capabilities

needed to respond to terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and homeland

security emergencies. This should be given careful thought when the

Department of Defense makes future purchases. I might point out that

this probably comes in other procurement for the Army, but also that

the committee has provided $2 billion in National Guard equipment so

that this money goes through and the National Guard actually gets to

decide what that equipment is.

We look forward to working with you, with the Army, and the National

Guard to see if there's an answer to this problem.

I appreciate the gentlelady yielding.

I support the amendment as well, and I appreciate the work

of my friend and colleague from Virginia (Mr. Moran) and Congresswoman

Rosa DeLauro on this issue.

There are some reasons why these Mi-17 helicopters are sold to the

Afghans. It's not just a blunder. It's because of the altitude of the

country. There is a legitimate national security issue here that has to

be addressed, and I think we do have helicopters, maybe not Black

Hawks, but CH-47s, that can go to a higher altitude. I don't know how

much more expensive they are or anything about it.

But I just want to point out that, because I don't want people to

have the impression that they just did this maliciously. There were

some legitimate reasons for this.

Very unique.

There ought to be a competition. I mean, there is no

reason that this should be sole-sourced. There should be an opportunity

for American contractors to compete, and one thing we're going to have

to work on is logistics and their ability to handle equipment. That's a

very weak point right now with the Afghan military.

In that respect I am totally supportive of what the

gentleman is trying to accomplish.

I yield back the balance of my time.

As you know, the New START, or strategic arms reduction,

is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and

Russia. On December 22, 2010, the Senate increased our national

security by providing its advice and consent to ratification of the New

START Treaty with Russia. With the New START Treaty, the United States

and Russia will have another important element supporting our reset

relationship and expanding our bilateral cooperation on a wide range of

issues.

As the President said during the end of the last Congress, the treaty

is a national security imperative as well as a cornerstone of our

relations with Russia. Under the terms of the treaty, the U.S. and

Russia will be limited to significantly fewer strategic arms within 7

years from the date the treaty entered into force. Each party has the

flexibility to determine for itself the structure of the strategic

forces within the aggregate limits of the treaty.

We should carry out our commitment to the New START treaty and not

restrict our country's obligation to implement it. I urge my colleagues

to oppose the amendment.

I would say to the gentleman, if there is one thing--and I stand here

as a member of this subcommittee for 34 years--that we can reduce, it's

strategic weapons. We have never used one, except in Hiroshima and

Nagasaki. And we can have a credible deterrent with a much smaller

force. In fact, I agree with General Cartwright that we could use our

strategic ballistic missile submarines and our long-range bombers, the

B-2s and hopefully a new bomber, and reduce dramatically the number of

land-based ICBMs.

We simply don't need, and we can't afford to have and continue to

produce all of these nuclear weapons that will, more than likely, never

be used. They are a good deterrent and they have been an effective

deterrent. Thank God for that. But the Cold War is over, and we are in

a position today where we must reduce the size of our nuclear weapons

force.

I yield to the gentleman. I've been here a long time. I went through

all the arms control debates, and I know something about this subject.

It isn't used every day. It's available every day.

You don't need thousands of these weapons. A couple

hundred, frankly, could take out Iran and almost any country you can

imagine. So, again, we can't afford to do everything. We are in an era

where we're dealing with terrorists, and we need to have special forces

that can be utilized. We need to have these very effective drones. We

need to look at the threats that are out there today and equip our

military accordingly.

This is not our responsibility. The Senate handles advice and consent

on treaties. We should stay out of this. In my judgment, this amendment

is unnecessary.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Would you explain--you say here you have these two

brigades, except pursuant to article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Could you explain what the impact of this is, the treaty commitments

here?

It says:

Is there some commitment in the North Atlantic Treaty that requires

us to have these two brigades there?

I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

I believe that this amendment is unnecessary because the Department

of Defense is currently in the process of reducing the number of troops

in Europe. The Department has already announced the closure of Army

garrisons in Schweinfurt, Bamberg, and Heidelberg by fiscal year 2015.

Furthermore, the Department has begun the process of deactivating two

infantry brigades, the 170th Infantry Brigade and the 172nd Infantry

Brigade, each with 3,850 soldiers. I think this is what the gentleman

intends. In addition, the U.S. Army in Europe will see a reduction of

approximately 2,500 soldiers from enabling units over the next 5 years.

Reducing end strength of any military service is an art form, as

projecting future needs for future conflicts is a very difficult task.

Reducing end strength should be part of a deliberate and thoughtful

plan that incorporates current and future national security needs of

the Nation.

I believe adding an arbitrary cap to the number of service members

assigned to Europe could put our national security at risk. I urge all

my colleagues to vote ``no'' on the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

I was a very strong proponent of the C-17 even when

Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach was building this airplane. I had a

chance to go there when they were doing the wooden mock-ups and when

they brought in the load masters, who made it such that the plane was

built in a way that it could load cargo faster than any other airplane

in history. We have 54 of these at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the

great State of Washington. We are very proud of the C-17. It is now

built by the Boeing Company.

I just want you to know that we are a very strong proponent. We had

some great work done in the nineties in upgrading the software when we

had major software issues. We also had a dramatic workforce out there

that really used all of the tools of lean production. So the C-17 is a

very high priority, and we will certainly do everything we can.

I wish we'd built more of them, frankly, while we had the line open,

but we did everything we could. We are at a point now where the line is

closing down except for foreign sales. We have a number of foreign

sales; and if at some point we need to come back to it, I certainly

would be open to that.

This has been a subject I've been very interested in as

former chairman of the Interior Appropriation Subcommittee where we

have to fund the efforts for firefighting, which are very massive.

I have tried to work with the Defense Department. The biggest problem

we face is that OMB, when you want to lease these airplanes--we're

looking mainly at the C-130J here--lease them for firefighting purposes

and then have them deployed with the National Guard in California or

somewhere on the west coast, you get into the fact that if you try to

lease them, the budget control people want to put the whole burden on

the first year. This is why leasing has become difficult. We've got to

work out a way to get these airplanes.

I'm very interested in this, and I want to talk to my good

friend about this. I would like to work with you on it.

I want the gentlelady to know that we worked with Mr.

Young on a number of insertions of report language in the report

because of our concern about this issue as well. This is something

where we always have to be vigilant because the people kind of forget

what the legal responsibilities are. These are statutory

responsibilities.

I appreciate the gentlelady from California bringing this to our

attention. We'll work with her on this issue.

The New START Treaty limits the total number of weapon

delivery vehicles by 2017. According to the Air Force, they are funded

for New START implementation, but are awaiting final force structure

decisions to determine numbers of weapon delivery vehicles to be

reduced in FY 13.

We should carry out our obligation under the New START Treaty and not

restrict the Department's obligation to implement it. I urge my

colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I want to make it clear to my colleagues just what we're talking

about. Under the New START we will have 520 ICBMs with 420 warheads. We

will have 60 bombers, 42 B-52s and 18 B-2s that are nuclear capable,

and they have many warheads. We have 240 sub-launched missiles. The

number of subs are not restricted, but we have 14 Trident submarines.

I would, with all due respect, just say this, this is one area where

we can, if we can come down on a mutual agreement with the Russians to

a lower level, we can save ourselves the money of not having to replace

all of these weapons systems. A lot of very thoughtful people have

looked at this issue, and they believe that the two most survivable

legs of the triad are the ballistic missile submarines and the bombers.

The land-based missiles are vulnerable. Now, we had great debates over

the MX missile. We got into how many RVs coming in to take out an

existing missile, usually it's two, so the enemy would be using up

weapons.

But the point of it all is, the last thing that we're going to be

using is nuclear weapons. It just is not going to happen; it would

destroy the world. So we can come down to a lower level and still have

a credible deterrent. We can't afford to do everything.

The most important thing today, I think, is to build up our Special

Forces, build up our intelligence capabilities, and look at the threats

that we're facing out there with al Qaeda and the terrorists. Frankly,

nuclear weapons are a relic of the Cold War, and we should bring down

the size of this.

General Cartwright, one of the most thoughtful former members of the

Joint Chiefs, has suggested that we go to a DYAD, just having ballistic

missile submarines and bombers. That's something that we should

consider. The Markey amendment would have started us in a way of

reducing the number of land-based missiles.

I just think it's not right for us to get in the middle of this. The

Senate had long hearings. They went through a process of ratification.

This treaty was ratified by the United States Senate.

Again, I just think if there is one area where we can make some

reductions, it's in the area of nuclear weapons. We're just not going

to need as many as we've had in the past, and we can have great

deterrents at a lower level. I hope we can reach that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

I can assure the gentleman from New Jersey that the

committee intends to fund those programs that most effectively minimize

suicides. And I'd point out that in most of these situations, this

money is going to be competitively awarded. But I'm sure that the

gentleman's New Jersey program will compete very well.

The gentleman from New Jersey has my assurance we will

work with him on this issue. And I would just say that our chairman has

been a great leader on this issue. No one has done more than Bill Young

on this. I look forward to working with him and trying to make sure

that this program is completely and thoroughly evaluated by the Army,

by the National Guard, and by the VA.

I, too, echo the gentleman's interest in the field of

directed energy and solid-state laser technology. With the threats and

environment that the warfighter and the intelligence community are

facing, the addition of new technologies that provide a tactical and

strategic edge should be examined more rigorously.

I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I rise to seek the chairman's support in addressing an

issue of which he is deeply and painfully aware: the rapidly increasing

numbers of cases of amputations, post-traumatic stress disorder, and

traumatic brain injury suffered by our brave young men and women

returning from combat theaters. Of course, these conditions can have a

devastating impact on military dependents. They are also having an

increasingly devastating impact on the military health care system that

serves our soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and their families.

There is no one who has worked harder than the chairman of our

subcommittee to ensure that the very best medical care is available to

the 9 million Americans who have earned the benefits of our military

health care system. Yet I remain concerned that newer, innovative

practices are not being sufficiently integrated into the military

medical system.

One such innovative practice is systems medicine. By more rapidly and

accurately quantifying wellness and deciphering disease, systems

medicine will promote translational research by linking the

Department's research and development programs, initiatives, and

laboratories with its clinical care programs, initiatives and

facilities.

I ask the chairman to join me in urging the Department to

implement systems medicine into the medical practices of all service

branches.

To facilitate the training of DOD medical personnel in systems

medicine, the Defense Department should consider systems medicine pilot

projects that address post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain

injury, and amputee health, along with other high-priority concerns

that impact all aspects of total readiness, including mental

resilience.

The three of you have grayer hair than I do, and that

means you have wisdom and experience along with it.

I just want to say that I've enjoyed working with all three of you.

Bill Young and I have worked together for many years. Jerry Lewis and I

have worked together many years. We've taken many trips to Afghanistan

and Iraq to try to be with the troops and find out what was going on.

We've had a good group.

It bothers me greatly when there's this sense out there that we can't

work together. This committee works together. I'm proud of that, and

I'm proud to be associated with my colleagues.

One issue that didn't come up today was this question of

what are we going to do at the end of this year with sequestration, and

there was some discussion of an amendment that didn't happen because of

points of order and other possible reasons.

I really believe that somehow we've got to avoid sequestration and

that collectively we've got to work together in the next several

months, because I honestly believe that the economy of this country

will be severely and adversely affected if we allow sequestration not

just for defense, which we're talking about here today, but for the

other part of the government, the discretionary domestic part of the

government. We have got to avoid this.

I would love to see an agreement reached between the parties and

between the leadership so that we can get an agreement that is fair and

balanced and equitable. I think with the four of us and a couple of

others I can think of, I think we could put something like that

together. Somehow it's got to happen, because the consequences to

defense--and not only to defense, but the economy of the country is at

stake here.

The CBO says that the difference in growth, if we do sequestration,

if we don't deal with the tax issue, will go from 4.4 percent to 5

percent. It is a 4 1/2 percent difference in economic growth. That

means unemployment will be greater. That means the deficit will be

greater. The whole idea of the Budget Control Act was to get the

deficit under control.

Again, I hope that we will all continue to think about how we can

come up with a solution that's bipartisan, bicameral. We have got to

work with the administration. From a national security and a defense

perspective, there is nothing more treacherous out there than

sequestration. We've got to avoid it.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Regaining my time, just for a second, I worked to convert

the B-2 bomber from a nuclear weapon carrier to a conventional carrier.

Do you know why a conventional bomber is, I think, more of a deterrent

than a nuclear bomber? Because with a conventional bomber, you can use

bombs. You can go in, and with the JDAMs that we put on those bombers,

in one sortie, you could take out 16 targets. That is real deterrence.

And that is having a conventional force that is usable.

Nuclear weapons are not going to be used, and that's why both sides

can have a much smaller force. We can bring the number of nuclear

weapons down. At some point, it becomes ridiculous to have that many

warheads when there aren't that many targets, and we're not going to

use them.

I know the gentleman is all wrought up about this and protecting our

great deterrent, which has been a very valuable thing to our national

security. But I have to tell you, if there is one thing that we can

reduce by agreement with the Russians, it is nuclear weapons.

I will yield to the gentleman again if he wants to say anything else.