I'd like to first thank my friend, Ms. Lee, for bringing

up this important amendment. She knows so well that the less experience

people in this body have had with the military, the fiercer they are.

That goes to the Republicans wanting to exceed their own funding cap in

the Budget Control Act by $8 billion. This is a moderate amendment to

bring us back under the Budget Control Act.

This is the 12th year that we've been fighting and funding a war in

Afghanistan and that area; and there's no peace, there's nothing, no

stability. The war in Afghanistan has basically

contributed to our instability. Nothing has happened over there. Since

2001, we have spent $600 billion or $700 billion on this Afghani war

alone, and the Defense Department appropriations bill wants another

$600 billion.

Republicans like to talk about entitlements like Medicare driving the

debt. Well, let me tell you, defense spending has become just as much

of an entitlement, with a team of lobbyists and Members of this body

who are more interested in protecting defense contractors than

protecting our country's health, education, and economic growth.

This bill ignores administration proposals to delay or terminate

military programs while providing funding instead for weapons that the

Department of Defense doesn't want, doesn't need, and won't work.

Apparently, funding wars and weapons instead of better health care,

education, and repairing our infrastructure are more important to the

Republican majority than all other issues.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment and start

reining in our out-of-control defense budget.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5856, the

Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2013. Until we

can rein in defense spending and treat it like all other federal

programs facing damaging funding cuts, I cannot support yet another

bloated defense budget. Republicans talk about how entitlements like

Medicare are driving the debt. But it is clear that defense spending

has become just as much of an entitlement, complete with a team of

lobbyists and members of this body that are more interested in

protecting defense contractors than protecting our country.

This bill marks the 12th fiscal year the United States has been

fighting and funding the War in Afghanistan. During this time, we have

pursued a variety of strategies and plans--none of which have delivered

peace and stability to Afghanistan or the region. The War has, however,

contributed to fiscal instability in our own country. Since 2001, we

have spent $634 billion on the Afghanistan War alone. This

appropriations bill is going to cost another $608.2 billion that we do

not have. Yet the cycle continues.

This year's bill exceeds the Republicans' own funding caps set by the

Budget Control Act by almost $8 billion. This bill ignores

administration proposals to delay or terminate several military

programs while providing funding for weapons programs the DoD said it

doesn't want or need. Apparently, funding wars and weapons instead of

better health care, education, and repairing our crumbling

infrastructure are more important to the Republican Majority. It is

unconscionable for us to be cutting these vital programs at the same

time we're increasing the defense budget. That is why I joined with

Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) to offer an amendment to cut that $8

billion from the defense appropriations bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment and join

me in voting against this out of control defense spending bill.