Just so you know, and I want the chairman and the

ranking member to know, in offering this amendment, it's not my

intention to wipe out military recruiting. It's very important for

people to be able to serve our country. It's an honorable profession.

It's essential to America.

What this amendment is about really is about upholding the right of

parents to be able to determine whether or not their young person

should have to take a test that would be given to them under the

auspices of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Test. This is a test

that is administered annually to 1 million military applicants, high

school and postsecondary students.

But it's more than just a test. Here's the kind of information that

students who take this test divulge: Social Security number, gender,

race, ethnicity, birth date, statement of future plans, and most

significantly, their aptitude on a battery of subcritical tests.

Now, if you ever wanted to make a case for the danger of Big

Government being able to reach into schools, think about this. You've

got the largest organization in the government administering tests to

high school kids and basically getting all the information they want

about these young people, and without their parents' consent. I have a

problem with that, and we all should have a problem with that.

Now, if someone can tell me that you'll fix this and provide for an

opt-in or opt-out, or tell me that, you know, Dennis, you're right; any

young person who could end up in military service, their parents ought

to consent to whether or not they should be able to take the test and/

or whether the results of the test should be released.

This is about privacy. It's about parental rights, and it's also

about not letting Big Government become Big Brother, gathering

information about our children at a very early age in order to have

some higher purpose.

It might be very altruistic here. We've got to be very careful about

this system we've set up. This Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Test

is administered in recruiting centers. That's true. Fine. But it's also

offered to high schools and postsecondary students. And according to

the Pentagon, the Career Exploration Program is designed to help

students explore civilian and military careers.

But the rise of this test in high schools has led countless students

and parents to feel that they're being unfairly, potentially illegally,

and oftentimes unknowingly recruited.

The Department of Defense claims it's just a tool to screen students'

enlistment eligibility and determine their interests and skills for

nonmilitary careers, but Mr. Chairman, more than 90 percent of the

scores being sent are sent directly to military recruiters. So it's

obvious this is a recruiting tool. Fine.

How about letting the parents know about it? How about giving parents

a choice, because most of the times you're talking about somebody

that's under 18 years old?

So I don't oppose military recruitment. I want that understood. But I

am concerned that this test is being administered to kids in our public

schools in a way that circumvents parental consent. The vast majority

of students think they're taking the test and that it's required by

their high school. Parents aren't informed that children are given the

test. Why? Because their consent isn't required.

Let's get the parents in on this.

Now, my dad encouraged me to be in the military. I had a heart

murmur. I couldn't serve. All my brothers and my sister did. But you

know what? We had some feedback with our parents about this.

You give a kid a test, that puts that child on a track to military

service, parents don't know about it? Are you kidding me?

Parents have a right here, and we have to restrain the impulse of a

big government organization to gather information about these kids that

ordinarily the government would never be entitled to.

So I want to make sure that my friends in the majority and my friend,

who's the ranking member, understand that my amendment in no way stops

consenting adults from pursuing a career in the military or from taking

the test at a recruiting station or processing station. It doesn't

prohibit military recruiter presence in our schools.

We dealt with that in No Child Left Behind. I was on the other side on

that, but my amendment doesn't stop that.

But it stops the administration of this test in schools, so it can't

be used as a recruiting tool disguised as a test that targets children

who are legally too young, too young to consent to a career in the

Armed Forces.

I yield back the balance of my time.

I rise in support of the amendment.

There's a news report out today that suggests that very soon the

United States will have over 1,000 bases of various kinds around the

world, and it raises the question as to whether or not we're

overextending. As the budget keeps growing, the tendency is to keep

overextending.

We already know that our basic force is being taxed with an

overextension of duty. So if you introduce a notion of fiscal

discipline here that will not in any way undermine the Air Force, the

Army, the Navy, but fiscal discipline that will send a message to this

administration: Don't go overextending. We know what our core mission

is. We know that we have the ability to defend this country. Be careful

you don't overextend.

This amendment, which has bipartisan support, is something that is an

important moment for this House because, on one hand, the budget that

is being prepared through DOD appropriations is sufficient enough for a

strong defense, and, on the other hand, we're saying part of a strong

defense is fiscal accountability. The two actually go hand in hand.

I yield back the balance of my time.

My amendment is simple. It says, if you seek to be a

Department of Defense contractor and you have previously defrauded the

Federal Government, you shouldn't be able to receive a contract from

the DOD.

According to the Congressional Research Service, in fiscal 2010, the

Department of Defense obligated $366 billion to contracts, which is 54

percent, more than half of the total of Department of Defense

obligations. There are rules and regulations in place that prevent

Federal contracts from going to entities that have broken the law.

Under the Federal acquisitions regulation, Federal agencies are

required to

award contracts only to responsible sources. And Federal acquisition

regulation subpart 9104-1 states that a satisfactory record of

integrity and business ethics is one of the general standards of

responsibility. But the term ``responsible'' is not explicitly defined

anywhere in the law, and I know that we cannot try to define new terms

using the amendment process, and that's not what we're trying to do

here.

The fact is that someone could commit fraud against the government

and still get a contract with the Department of Defense, and that's

wrong. We have to make clear that companies who've defrauded the

taxpayers should not be able to get more DOD contracts.

I'd like to point out that the underlying bill being debated here

contains a specific prohibition against the use of Department of

Defense funds in contracts with anyone who has an unpaid tax liability.

Again, a party bidding on government contracts is supposed to affirm

that they have no unpaid tax liability.

So the point of this amendment is to make it absolutely clear that

contract fraud against the American taxpayer will not be tolerated.

According to groups like the Project on Government Oversight, which is

only able to track the number of known and disclosed settlements, there

have been dozens of instances of contractors committing government

contract fraud since 1995. And of those dozens that are known to have

committed this fraud, a total of $544 million in fines was paid. That's

a tiny amount, really, when you're talking about in terms of fines,

compared to the billions appropriated for Department of Defense

contracts in the last decade.

Bottom line, if you defraud the taxpayer, you should lose your

privilege to receive more taxpayer money. So I would urge the adoption

of this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.