

I voted Yes on H.R. 5652, the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act of 2012.

The Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act would protect our national security, armed forces, and veterans by replacing \$78 billion in across the board "sequestration" cuts to defense and domestic spending scheduled to take effect next year with targeted, common-sense savings from federal programs desperately needing reform.

Sequestration is the result of the Super Committee's unfortunate failure last year to identify savings required by the Budget Control Act. There is bipartisan agreement that sequestration would undercut key responsibilities of the federal government and damage our armed forces and national defense. The Obama Administration agrees that sequestration would be a "devastating policy," and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has said that sequestration "would hollow out the force and inflict serious damage to the national defense" and called such a prospect "the most dangerous risk of all" and an "unacceptable risk."

Unless prevented, sequestration consequences would include 200,000 soldiers and Marines being separated from service, two base closure (BRAC) rounds, and a 20 percent defense civilian personnel cut. The local effects would be felt immediately and negatively at Rome Lab, DFAS, and EADS — which would hamstring the surrounding Upstate economy. That's why this legislation is supported by groups like the Association of the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Not only defense spending would be impacted by sequestration. It would also mean cutting Head Start, resulting in 75,000 fewer slots for children in the program, slashing the National Institutes of Health by \$2.4 billion, and almost 2,000 fewer Border Patrol agents on the job.

We can find better ways to save the money required under the Budget Control Act. That's why this bill saves a total of \$316 billion over ten years by reforming programs that have been subject to waste, fraud and abuse. For example, the bill closes a tax loophole that allows individuals to claim refundable tax checks from the government without providing a Social Security number. The IRS Inspector General found that non-US citizens are receiving \$4 billion annually through this loophole. The bill takes other commonsense steps like reforming the National Flood Insurance Program and medical liability system, and it eliminates the government's "too big to fail" bank bailout fund.

This bill is a decent proposal to keep our government functioning at a responsible level that upholds our national defense, while also addressing our national debt to lift the burden that has been placed on Upstate families and businesses. I look forward to continue working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to resolve the sequestration threat before the end of the year so it does not devastate our armed forces and important priorities here at home.

The bill was approved by a vote of 218 – 199 – 1.