in Maryland. President Johnson, as he landed his helicopter on what is now known as Presidential Field, used the dedication to mark the 50th anniversary of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided Federal support for vocational schools and helped form separate State boards for vocational education.

President Johnson stated during his dedication, ''Once we considered education a public expense. We know now that it is a public investment.'' I couldn't agree more.

The world we live in has never been more competitive. Other countries are making investments in their infrastructure, space agencies, and tax codes. We must do the same. We must have an education system that prepares our children for success in the 21st century, and we must do this with our community colleges and in conjunction with building and trade unions, beginning at vocational schools like Crossland Vocational Center.

From President Johnson's vision in 1967 to President Obama's commitment today, we have the future in our hands.

THE ''REAL'' VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, the original Violence Against Women Act was championed by then-Senator JOE BIDEN, who understood that all women must be protected from domestic abuse and violence. He understood that many women are afraid to come forward to report abuse. The Violence Against Women Act gave women a better chance to live their lives without that fear.

Again, the Senate has taken the lead. They already reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act and did it in a way that protects all women. It does not discriminate. It promises that America will stand by women; we will protect women, and we will prosecute their abusers.

The Republican bill that barely passed this House yesterday breaks our solemn promise. I call on leadership to allow a fair up-or-down vote on the ''real'' Violence Against Women Act and not some watered-down, weakened version. We owe it to our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our friends, and to the memory of those we have lost to abuse.

THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, we have begun the debate on the NDAA, and we all know that this is the legislation that's going to set forth our policy when it comes to the military for this upcoming fiscal year.

You've heard some of my colleagues and how they feel about portions of the NDAA. All points well taken, but I ask that we look at it from a different perspective.

Let us look at the NDAA in light of what the President said in November of 2011. When he addressed APEC, he said, The 21st century is for the Pacific; and we are pivoting to the Asia Pacific. And what does that mean? He went on to say, How the 21st century does and how it's defined—whether it's one in conflict or one in controversy—is going to be determined by the Asia Pacific region.

So what is it that we need in the Asia Pacific region? We need our allies and trade partners to feel safe and confident. And guess what. They look to our military for that. That is also something that the NDAA critically addresses. How the military is in the 21st century and our peace in the Pacific will be determined by them.

DEFENSE BUDGET

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today with great concern over our defense budget. Our crushing national debt looms, yet we continue to ignore the issue.

The National Defense Authorization Act came in at $8 billion over the Budget Control Act because the committee put back high-cost items that the Pentagon had not listed as their highest priority. How is that responsible spending? When the issue arises as to what to cut, what must make up that difference to make the numbers work, what will come first? Will our military personnel accounts be under the knife?

I do not believe that this is smart legislating, when we choose to ignore the current fiscal environment. And when we raised concerns on the plans to build a missile defense site on the east coast with money we do not have, the Rules Committee would not even allow it up for debate.

Shouldn't we be discussing these issues so that we can move forward, so that we can come to an agreement on how the Department of Defense and our servicemembers are best served?

DEBT CEILING ''GROUNDHOG DAY''

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, it seems like Groundhog Day all over again.

Earlier this week, GOP leaders laid down a new gambit on the old debate over whether to acknowledge our Nation's financial obligations. Those leaders have already abandoned the deal we made on the last debt ceiling package and are shifting all the cuts to education, infrastructure, and other vital domestic programs. Now they want another round of unsustainable cuts to these programs which will again bring us back to the brink of default.

We know the possible consequences: Market collapse, jobs lost, more than $1 trillion added to the deficit every year, interest rates will rise. Just getting close to this cliff threatens the U.S. credit rating. We know that from recent experience.

The Speaker has said, no, he doesn't want to abandon the debt ceiling, he doesn't want to violate the debt ceiling, he doesn't want to let the country go into default. But isn't this the same kind of uncertainty that our Republican friends say they are most concerned about? One day it's, Well, we're not going to raise the debt ceiling. The next day, No, I didn't mean that.

We need certainty; we need stability, and we need to recognize this Nation's obligations.

□ 1230

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112–110)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared on May 20, 1997, is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2012.

The Burmese government has made progress in a number of areas including releasing hundreds of political prisoners, pursuing cease-fire talks with several armed ethnic groups, and pursuing a substantive dialogue with Burma's leading pro-democracy opposition party. The United States is committed to supporting Burma's reform effort, but the situation in Burma continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Burma has made important strides, but the political opening is nascent, and we continue to have concerns, including remaining political prisoners, ongoing conflict, and serious human rights abuses in ethnic areas. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary