

Ellmers Statement on Budget and Veterans

February 5, 2014

Our national debt is out of control – currently around 18 trillion dollars and growing by the second. Allowing our debt to continue growing at an unchecked pace is something we simply cannot afford.

The country has been on a dangerous spending spree. We have been operating without a budget and funded through a continuing resolution, which allowed the White House to direct and control spending.

After 5 years of having the White House dictate our spending, it was time for Congress to take control of the purse strings again. When I was finally presented with the opportunity to vote for a budget and fulfill my Constitutional duty as a member of congress, I voted in favor of it.

The budget we passed restores the constitutional ability of Congress—not the White House—to control spending. We now have a budget that funds the government for two years, and therefore have the opportunity to restore economic certainty to our country.

Two years ago, sequester cuts were implemented due to our failure to agree on mandatory spending. This new budget replaces harmful sequestration cuts, which have caused a great deal of pain to our state—including the furlough of hard working civilians supporting our military. While I disagree with the decrease in our veterans' cost of living adjustment detailed in the budget deal negotiated by Congressman Ryan and Senator Murray, the alternative would have hurt the military and our veterans even more.

The budget we passed last month addresses some of the proposed cuts that were included in the original deal. It ensures that medically retired and disabled veterans receive their full COLA adjustment and specifically allots funds to address the backlog of VA disability claims. Our veterans who have bravely served our nation should not bear the brunt of budget cuts.

To address some of the other areas of concern in the budget, I became a cosponsor of H.R. 3789, a bipartisan piece of legislation introduced by Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller. This measure reverses cuts to COLA for:

- veterans who are medically retired
- veterans who are eligible for combat-related special compensation
- veterans who are entitled to concurrent payment of retired pay and veterans' disability compensation
- and military families utilizing the Survivor Benefit Plan

This legislation ensures that our military members receive the benefits they have earned.

It is an incredible honor to serve one of the largest military bases in the country and represent over 70,000 veterans in the Second Congressional District. I will continue the fight to make sure veterans receive the rights and benefits they have earned.