

FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I accepted the Food Stamp Challenge, living for the past week on the average food stamp benefit of \$1 per meal or \$21 for the entire week.

I did it in order to draw attention to the persistent problem of hunger in America. I didn't realize just how hard it would be, but on my first shopping trip to Safeway, I quickly found out. It was hard enough to buy basic staples, but once I got to the produce section, it was impossible to buy much of anything. There was no way to eat a nutritious diet. Fruits and vegetables were simply out of my price range.

For me, it was a learning experience. For 26 million Americans and 1.2 million Illinoisans, it is a way of life. I wonder how parents on food stamps can stretch their budgets so their children have enough to eat or how seniors with chronic illness afford both eating nutritious meals and purchasing adequate medication. The answer for many is they simply can't.

In the richest country in the world, the fact that families face these sort of trade-offs is unjust and I would say it's immoral. The United States is spending merely \$3 billion each week in Iraq, yet we expect hungry Americans to eat on \$3 a day?

We need to pass Representatives JIM McGOVERN's and JO ANN EMERSON's Feeding America's Families Act which would strengthen America's anti-hunger safety net programs, including food stamps, at a reasonable and affordable cost of about \$4 billion per year. These are the kinds of provisions that ought to be part of the farm bill which includes the food stamp program.

I just ended this challenge yesterday. I am looking forward to a big salad for lunch where I include all kinds of vegetables at the salad bar that's in the cafeteria, adding whatever I want to that salad rather than having to carefully pick and choose what I had last week, which was one head of lettuce and one tomato and a few carrots, and that was about it. My snacks were water and, on a good moment, ice water.

It was an interesting and instructive week for me, but imagining my children and grandchildren having to live that way made it very, very clear to me that this really ought not to be a forced option for so many millions of Americans.

We can do better. This is a matter of priorities. We can change those priorities. We can make sure that with pride we say that no one in this country goes hungry, that everyone in this country at least has the opportunity to make healthy choices about the food that they eat and the food that they serve their children.

How can a child learn in school when they come without an adequate breakfast? How can they achieve in life without the nutrition that they need as their bones are growing and as their minds are growing? I am very hopeful that the experiment that I did with Congressmen McGOVERN and EMERSON and TIM RYAN will prove to be helpful in making sure that we are able to pass more humane, and important to all Americans, legislation that will provide nutritious and affordable food for all of our residents in the United States.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLEAVER) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, guardian of our freedom and provider for all, as we approach Memorial Day, let us not forget the true meaning of this Nation's moment of memory. We shall not be mindless of all our blessings as Your people. Rather, in the leisure of the holiday weekend, we shall demonstrate our indebtedness to our brothers and sisters who serve in the military. With reverence, we shall call to mind those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in serving this Nation and protecting human freedom around the world.

Thus Your Holy Scriptures, Lord, shall be fulfilled in us as this holiday unfolds and names to be memorialized are brought on to our attention. The Bible says, "Every living person appreciates generosity. Do not withhold your gratitude, even when someone is dead. Do not turn your back on those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn." Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. CURTIS, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 254. An act to award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE TIED TO FUNDING IRAQ WAR

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the Associated Press reports that the latest Iraq supplemental funding plan incredibly will tie an increase in the minimum wage to funding the war through October. If this is true, and I hope it is not, it tells American workers that the only way they will get an increase in wages is to continue funding a war which is taking the lives of their sons and daughters. First, blood for oil; now a minimum wage for maximum blood? Aren't the American people giving enough blood for this war without having to give more to have a wage increase? What's happened to our country? We are losing our moral compass. We are losing our sense of justice. We are losing touch with the difference between right and wrong.

We do not have to fund this war. We must leave Iraq now. Support our troops. Bring them home. H.R. 1234 is a plan to end the war and stabilize Iraq and give Iraqis control of their oil. We must take a new path. We must take a path of truth and justice.

TAX REDUCTIONS BENEFIT FAMILIES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's The Hill features an advertisement by Merrill Lynch that praised the 2003 tax cuts, proclaiming, "Lower capital gains and dividend tax rates have produced major economic gains."

I was present 4 years ago this week when President Bush signed the tax reduction legislation. The results are some of the most successful ever. The economy has expanded \$1.6 trillion; 7.8 million new jobs have been created; unemployment rates are near historic lows. The stock market is at a record high, soaring 40 percent. Tax revenues are the highest ever because of private sector growth. Twenty-four million

families have received an average tax cut of \$950. The lower rate on savings and investments has helped our economy grow to benefit American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

DEMOCRATS COMPLETE A BUDGET, SOMETHING THAT ELUDED PAST REPUBLICAN CONGRESSES

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, last week, congressional Democrats accomplished something the Republican “do-nothing” Congress could not do. We passed a final budget through both the House and Senate.

Over 3 of the last 5 years, the Republican-led Congress failed to reach agreement on a final budget resolution, leading to unparalleled deficit spending. Unlike our Republican predecessors, this new Democratic Congress has produced a fiscally responsible budget that serves as a blueprint for investing in America’s priorities, providing tax cuts to middle-class families, and balances the budget in just 5 years without raising taxes. Not even the President’s proposed budget comes out of the red after 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, budgets serve as a blueprint of a Congress’ priorities. Our final budget strengthens our military readiness and invests in our troops and veterans. It also spurs innovation to boost our economy and expands investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce global warming and our dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Democrats vowed to run this Congress differently, and we have, by producing a final budget agreement.

SECOND VERSE SAME AS THE FIRST

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the new, reformed, inclusive, repackaged, politically motivated Senate immigration proposal is more of the same lip service we have heard for years about protecting our borders.

In the 1980s, the American public was promised, and Congress passed, legislation that was supposed to beef up the border, reform the troublesome immigration service, and grant amnesty to 3 million people. The result? Our borders are less secure now. The immigration service is overwhelmed with mismanagement and lack of resources. But that amnesty deal, it did happen. Now 20 years later, the amnesty gift has only increased illegal entry, not slowed it down. We now have 12- to 20 million people here without permission.

Why doesn’t the Federal Government enforce the existing law and secure the border? Because the Federal Govern-

ment doesn’t have the moral will to enforce current law, and if Congress tries to pass a similar bill like the 1980s: we will get more of the same: lax border security and an immigration service that is in confusion. But we’ll sure let those illegals stay in America. It’s another case of second verse, same as the first.

And that’s just the way it is.

GREEN JOBS—PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to opportunities of job growth and hopefully eradicating poverty through a green economy.

A major national investment in renewable energy could create potentially 3.5 million green-collar jobs over the next 10 years.

We must say to America’s workers, particularly those in urban and rural underserved communities, there is a place for you in the green economy. Investment should not only be improving infrastructure, but improving economic opportunities for all. That is why I am proud to be working with Congressman JOHN TIERNEY and others to create a green jobs bill that will create pathways out of poverty.

Job training can lead to self-sufficiency and prosperity through higher wages, access to benefits and more career choices. Other cities and States throughout the country have taken the lead to shape the new economy, which is creating demand for green products and services.

Under Speaker PELOSI’s leadership, Congress has taken steps to ensure our Nation has a secure energy future. I hope that ensuring underserved communities achieve economic security can be a part of this green future.

GIVE THE TROOPS THE FUNDS THEY NEED

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, over 100 days have passed since the President’s first request of additional monies for our troops, and still no money. As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure men and women in our military have the resources and tools necessary to succeed. Just 2 weeks ago, we heard from nearly 3,000 of those men and women asking for our support.

Mr. Speaker, politics should never interfere with wartime decisions. Unfortunately, some have taken this opportunity to score what they believe to be political points and undermine our Commander in Chief. Our troops deserve a clean supplemental that does not embolden the enemy with language of retreat and defeat.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrat leadership should stop the rhetoric of empty

promises of “we support our troops” by giving them the critical funds they need today so they can finish the mission we gave them and come home in victory.

PRESIDENT’S ENERGY PROPOSAL IS TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, it’s that time of year again. Just as families are preparing to hit the road for their summer vacations, the gas prices are once again hitting record highs. Drivers are paying a heavy price for the Bush administration’s failure to enact a comprehensive energy strategy. And just last week, the President attempted to show that he’s taking action by announcing an Executive Order that doesn’t call for any action until a few weeks before he leaves office. This is simply too little, too late. Where has he been for the last 6 years when prices were hitting record numbers each Memorial Day?

The Democratic Congress refuses to ignore this problem. We passed legislation that will roll back \$14 billion in taxpayer subsidies for Big Oil, and instead we would reinvest here at home in clean alternative fuels, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In the coming weeks we will bring legislation to the House floor that will crack down on price gouging by the big oil companies so we can provide immediate relief to consumers. Unlike the Bush administration, the Democratic Congress is not simply going to ignore this problem.

HOW EXACTLY IS BUSH SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS WHEN HE THREATENS A VETO OF DOD?

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, last week Democrats and Republicans came together in a strong bipartisan fashion to approve a defense authorization that prioritizes the immediate needs of our military personnel.

While the President believed that a 3 percent pay raise was suitable for our troops in combat, Democrats and Republicans in this House said our military personnel deserved more, and approved a bill that gives them a 3.5 percent raise. The President’s response, a threatened veto.

How exactly is the President supporting our troops when he threatens to veto a bill that he says gives our troops too large a pay raise? Has the President forgotten how much he’s asked them to sacrifice over the last 4 years? Troops were initially told that their stays in Iraq would last a year, only to be informed at the end of that year that those stays were being extended by several months as a result of the President’s troop escalation plan.