

dependent, in fact independent from foreign sources of energy and oil and, and if we do that, the prospects for America's balance of trade, the prospects for the stability of our currency, the prospects for the future of the United States of America, of our children and grandchildren and each succeeding generation, gets greater and greater.

That is our responsibility, Madam Speaker. It is our responsibility to advance the American dream. Advance it for our children and advance it for our grandchildren. We need to do that with a comprehensive approach to the big picture in every way that we can. We cannot do it by increasing the cost of energy by making it more scarce and intimidating our energy-producing companies. That's the theme that the American people understand.

And I will submit, Madam Speaker, that the clearest thing for the American people to understand is drill ANWR. Drill in ANWR, drill now, drill as fast as we can. It doesn't take any 10 years to get that energy on the marketplace.

□ 2145

How can we, on the one hand, how can we say, well, there's only enough energy up there to last for 5 years and we can't get it into the marketplace for 10? That doesn't make sense to me, not in a Nation that can have a Manhattan Project that can, in a few very short years, produce an atom bomb and deliver it, or in a few very short years, from the time John F. Kennedy said we're going to the moon, by 1969 we were on the moon.

A Nation that can produce a nuclear weapon in the fashion that we did, a Nation that can go to the moon in the fashion that we did has got to get the regulations and the taxes out of the way so that we can produce the energy that we need in the form of ethanol and biodiesel and wind and solar and nuclear and hydroelectric. And the list goes on and on and on, including coal, gas, diesel fuel, et cetera.

Madam Speaker, it's commonsense to the American people. Let's first drill ANWR and send that message that this Nation is finally ready to produce energy. Let's do that, and let's take it a step at a time, or all at once if we can, but whatever we do, we owe it to our children and grandchildren to grow the size of the energy production pie in the United States of America.

With that, Madam Speaker, I appreciate your indulgence. It's a privilege to address you.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD CRISIS AND HAITI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker, moving from food for fuel to food for food, we come to the floor tonight to talk about the international food crisis. We're going to look at the causes and effects and possible solutions. We're also going to take a closer look at the situation in Haiti, a country that is only approximately 400 miles off our coast, our neighbor in the Western hemisphere, a country that is arguably one of the worst off in this global food crisis.

There are many causes of the food crisis that we face now. Some of the causes are recent developments and others have been developing for years.

This year we saw lower crop yields because of weather and global climate change. There is increased demand for processed foods from countries with growing middle classes like China and India. There's an increased demand for biofuels like ethanol, which is primarily made from corn. And in response to high commodity prices, a number of countries introduced export bans to preserve food for their own populations, while decreasing the world's supply.

This graph illustrates the record-high food prices that brought on this crisis: Wheat prices up 81 percent in 2007; soybean prices up 71 percent in 2007. Rice, which feeds almost one-half of the world's population, its price increased 144 percent since January of this year. Corn prices shot up 24 percent since January of 2008, and the rise came right after this Congress passed a landmark energy bill requiring increased use of ethanol.

The effects of this food crisis. We know that in the industrialized countries, food purchases accounts for 10 to 20 percent of consumer spending. However, in developing countries, that figure is more like 60 to 80 percent of consumer spending.

People in poor countries already spend a much greater percentage of their incomes on food, and now they are forced to spend even more on food.

This food crisis is pushing people into poverty and worsening the situation of those already living in poverty. The World Bank estimates that more than 100 million people will be pushed into poverty because of rising food prices.

Rising food prices have led to food riots around the world, across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. In Pakistan and Thailand, troops are guarding farmers' crops. In Egypt, troops are baking bread for the thousands of people waiting in bread lines.

The situation in Haiti. Haiti has the lowest, poorest standard of living in the Western hemisphere. About 80 percent of the Haitian population cur-

rently survives on less than \$2 a day and survives on one meal a day. Most of Haiti's basic food commodities are imported, leaving the country especially vulnerable to fluctuating world commodity prices.

Late last month, the perfect storm of high energy and oil costs and commodity expenses erupted in what has been described as food riots.

Haiti's poorest have resorted to selling mud cakes, a mixture of mud, oil and sugar that quiets rumbling, hungry stomachs.

Rising food prices threaten security in Haiti. Protests over the rising costs of food last month turned violent with six people killed, including a U.N. peacekeeper.

High food costs in Haiti in part also led to political unrest, with the dismissal of Prime Minister Jacques Edouard-Alexis just recently.

As we look at what is happening in Haiti today, it's a reminder to us that the economic climate of the United States, our ability and capacity to influence and impact commodities around the world have a ripple effect, and that what we do in the U.S. to secure ourselves, we must keep an eye to our neighbors in more vulnerable circumstances, such as the Nation of Haiti.

We here in the U.S. Congress recently had a codel sponsored in part by the CBC to Haiti, and while there, we had an opportunity to talk about what we need to do to be supportive of our neighbor in the Western hemisphere.

And one of the major concerns for me in this trip was just some of the issues and concerns that we as Americans have not been as educated about. For instance, were you aware that the average age in Haiti is under 50 years old; that the mortality rate is extremely high; that the age for mortality for most women is 56 years of age and for men, 52 years of age; that the average Haitian eats only one meal a day? These are issues that need to be of concern to us.

Why is that? It needs to be of concern to us because certainly, as one of our closest neighbors, one of the democratic allies of the Western hemisphere, these conditions, if sustained over a long period of time, speak to a humanitarian crisis, speak to destabilization, not only of Haiti but of the entire region, which includes a border that is 400 miles away from the U.S. border.

And so we here are looking at congressional action that will address this food crisis. One of the things that we have quickly moved to do in the Democratic Caucus is an emergency supplemental appropriation which was passed just last week which included \$1.86 billion in funding for food aid in PL 480 programs, administered by the U.S.D.A. and USAID; \$200 million in development assistance; \$400 million for disaster assistance; and \$20 million for the World Food Programme.

The farm bill passed just last week also included provisions allowing the

USAID to preposition more food overseas to respond to disaster faster; in addition, more money for non-emergency food aid, like development projects; increased discretionary funding for emergency food aid programs like Food for Peace and U.S. Agency for International Development to the tune of about \$2.5 billion have also been expended; extension and expansion of Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act, or the HOPE Act, which provides for duty-free preferences for imports from Haiti.

And then the Jubilee Act passed last month which would assist Haiti in its international debt load and recommends the immediate cancellation of Haiti's outstanding debts.

Solutions for the food crisis. With respect to Haiti, we need to extend temporary protected status to Haitians in our country, allowing them to work legally here, enabling them to send remittances home. This is the most inexpensive form of aid we can grant to Haiti. When remittances are sent home, it forms about a quarter of Haiti's GDP at this point, and so we would be doing not only ourselves a service but a service to the people of Haiti and Haitian Americans here in our hemisphere.

On the global level, we need to meet the immediate need including funding shortfalls of \$755 million at the World Food Programme and \$240 million at USAID, which this Congress has already begun to do.

We need to strengthen our social safety nets like nutrition programs and school feeding sites to prevent future food security issues from reaching the crisis level.

I've spoken to you already about the youth of Haiti and the fact that the population there is so very young. We need to be clear that malnutrition is running rampant, and if we really want to help Haiti to change course, we must start with their young, and we must be able to improve the opportunities for children to have access to nutritious meals.

We need to increase agriculture development aid to assist developing countries in establishing their own agriculture infrastructure, so countries won't be so dependent on foreign supplies in the future. And that's a pretty complex scenario, because when we look at the way that our farm system has been set up in the United States, it has really created a paradigm where, due to the subsidies that we make to our farmers, it is actually less expensive for Nations abroad to purchase our rice than to grow and compete against the subsidized market. So we will have to find a balance there to enable farmers in Haiti to expand and to be prepared to export to other Nations and be able to compete at real prices with the production of rice in our country and other countries around the world.

And finally, we need to significantly increase investments in agricultural

research so our scientists can develop better crops that can withstand disease, drought and produce higher yields, and then deliver those crops to farmers around the world.

I am just so honored to be joined this evening by a number of my colleagues who also attended the codel, some of whom are members of the CBC, some of whom are members of the Hunger Caucus here in Washington in the U.S. House of Representatives, and it is my pleasure at this time to yield to the gentlewoman from California, the Honorable BARBARA LEE.

□ 2200

Ms. LEE. First, let me thank my colleague from New York, a great American and a proud daughter of the Caribbean, for your leadership and for putting together this Special Order tonight.

And as I listen to you, I'm thinking, I hope everyone in the country is listening tonight because I get so many questions about the world food crisis, the whys, what is going on? Why, even in some of our communities, stores are stockpiling rice? And I think what you are doing tonight is allowing us to give the big picture, the explanation, talk about what is really talking place. And so thank you, Congresswoman CLARKE, for your leadership and your vision and for putting this all together tonight.

Let me just say a couple of things. First of all, Congresswoman CLARKE mentioned the congressional delegation. Congresswoman KILPATRICK and myself co-led it to Haiti to examine the current conditions on the ground.

Now, during our visit, we were joined by 10 members of the Congressional Black Caucus and one member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. I'd like to mention who these Members are because they reflect the broad concern, regionally, and just in terms of their deep commitment to address some of the humanitarian issues that we must address in the world. Congressman ANDRÉ CARSON, Congresswoman, of course, YVETTE CLARKE, Congressman KEITH ELLISON, Congressman AL GREEN, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, Congressman HANK JOHNSON, Congressman GREGORY MEEKS, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, Congresswoman DIANE WATSON, and Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD. We all have a longstanding interest and commitment to strengthen our ties with Haiti and the Haitian people.

Now, during this codel we met with Haitian President Rene Preval, our United States Ambassador Janet Sanderson, and representatives from humanitarian and development organizations in Haiti. Our goals were to examine the United States strategy to help alleviate the effects of the recent rise in food prices in Haiti. We were there to ensure that there is infrastructure, which we discussed with President Preval, to make sure there is

adequate infrastructure in place to help distribute aid to the Haitian people, and that there is a long-term plan in place to expand that infrastructure. Also, to take steps to ensure a safe and stable and promising future for Haiti and all Haitians by providing immediate relief to help the Haitian people.

So we want many, many short-term goals to be met, but also, we want these short-term goals and initiatives to lead to a more sustainable effort to make sure that the Haitian people begin to receive our assistance with regard to the infrastructure, health care, clean water, and all of the systems that people just deserve so that they can live decent lives.

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. And Haitians are particularly affected by soaring food prices, which have risen over 40 percent globally since mid 2007. Haiti produces 50 percent of the food it needs and imports the rest.

The rising cost of living has keenly affected the people of Haiti. Forty percent of Haiti's population is only able to eat one meal a day. Eighty percent of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. And the cost of staples, such as rice, beans, fruit, and condensed milk, have gone up 50 percent in the last year.

In terms of health aid organizations, they fear that the nutritional crisis will get worse in Haiti. Haiti has the highest rates in the Caribbean of HIV and AIDS. And in order to make sure that the anti-retroviral drugs are effective, good nutrition must be available. Food must be available for people to eat so that they can just take their medications, otherwise, it just won't work.

According to the World Food Program, malnutrition is particularly acute in Haiti, where the average Haitian diet contains just 1,640 calories, 460 calories short of the typical 2,100 daily requirement. Particularly, one in five children is chronically malnourished.

Now, anti-government protests and public looting in reaction to soaring food prices have really jeopardized Haiti's capacity to sustain and administer its government institutions effectively. Currently, Haiti's government is in a very precarious caretaker position, where they are unable to create and enforce new laws.

On April 12 of this year, Haitian Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis was forced out of office for failure to boost food production and lower food prices. In addition, the Haitian Parliament vetoed President Preval's recent replacement appointee for the Prime Minister position. With no head of government, Haiti is left in a very fragile state, and it's up to us to help fill the void in terms of just helping to feed the people of Haiti.

As a witness to these dire conditions in Haiti, we must take urgent steps to implement an effective strategy to help the Haitian people. Congresswoman CLARKE reviewed some of the

initiatives that have taken place here in terms of what we have done in the farm bill, what we are urging the President to do. Actually, he did announce we would release 200 million in emergency food aid, some of which would go to Haiti. He also called on Congress to approve the 770 million in food aid to help fight the food crisis. But we've learned now that there is \$1 million that has not been released yet, which would help reduce the cost of rice for the Haitian people. And so one of the initiatives that we talked about is how we could help facilitate this \$1 million so that the Haitian people will at least be able to afford to buy rice. We're working on that very diligently as I speak.

This crisis, though, let me just say, has opened the door to much needed innovation for long-term development solutions in Haiti. So as I said earlier, this crisis should be addressed with an immediate response, and it should be a strong and very aggressive and very robust response because this is a very dire situation. But we also need to make sure that we don't go backwards and that the crisis is contained, and that we move forward and look at how to help Haiti find some sustainable solutions in terms of agricultural development, the development of their infrastructure, and all of the other initiatives, debt relief, that are so desperately needed.

And so members of our delegation are working on a variety of bills which will be announced very shortly, and we're working on a variety of actions. And so I just hope that President Bush will make sure that everything is done on behalf of the people of the United States to just help Haiti live, help Haiti thrive, and help the Haitian people move on with their lives.

Thank you, Congresswoman CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. Let me thank you, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, for your leadership, along with Chairwoman KILPATRICK, for seeing how important it was for us to be on the ground in Haiti as a delegation with a presence to bring some comfort and some hope to the nation that our eyes are not shut to the crisis that is taking place there, and that they do have friends, allies, and supporters here in the United States that will not forsake them, that that nation can know now that the United States' eyes are wide open. And as we see their fate go down, we know that it is our responsibility not to let it happen, and that we will be vigilant around the resource and support that is required to help Haiti to stand up and to go forward in the 21st century boldly and stronger than ever before.

So I want to thank you again, BARBARA LEE from California, for your ongoing commitment. I've come to this Congress to meet you and to see the work that you have been doing and just to join my voice in synchronization with you so that we can sing a louder song for the causes that you have championed even before I arrived here. Thank you.

The gentleman from Texas, AL GREEN, you, too, were a part of our delegation. Thank you for joining us in this Special Order to talk about international hunger and the crises in Haiti.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Let me start by saying that the constituents that you have, Congresswoman CLARKE, can be exceedingly proud of you because you've been here a short time, but you've made a very significant difference. And I trust that they will understand the totality of the impact that you're making on the lives of people in this country, people who need help.

I was honored to go to Haiti with you and with my colleagues, and I will tell you that I was thunderstruck by what I saw. Probably the thing that stands out most in my mind is the notion that in the United States we have four seasons. In Haiti, there are five. There is a hunger season in Haiti, a time when it is prognosticated, it is predicted that people will go hungry, and they will need help that they probably will not receive.

Haiti is a country in crisis and needs help immediately, if not sooner. Haiti has an unemployment rate of 70 percent. Eighty percent of the people live in poverty. Seventy-six percent of the people live off of \$2 per day; 55 percent off of \$1 per day. The highest HIV/AIDS rate in the western hemisphere; infant mortality rate 10 times higher than that of the United States of America: Haiti is a country in crisis. When you go there and you see the density of population, people living in structures that in this country we would not house our animals in. Haiti needs help.

I'm not sure what the ultimate solution is, but I do know that if we do not act immediately, there will be a crisis right off of the coast of Florida comparable to what we have in Darfur.

And we talk consistently and continually about the things that are happening in Africa, and there are things there that necessitate our attention. We must do more to help in Darfur. But we have, right off the coast of Florida, some few hundred miles, a country that can benefit from much of what we have to offer.

It has been said that if you have the ability to do something and you cannot do enough, you have a duty to do all that you can do. The United States of America has a duty to do more in Haiti. I know that we have needs in this country, and we have to meet our needs. But we are the richest country in the world. And Haiti is a country that is our neighbor. It is an island. And people are trapped, they cannot leave. If they do leave and try to come here, we will return them.

There must be a way for us to have an infusion of capital, an infusion of help such that the people who are trapped on this island can extricate themselves from this most saddening circumstance.

There will be some who will say they should pull themselves up by their boot

straps. They don't have any. There will be some who will say rising tides will lift all boats, and if we can find a way to do better here, they will do better there. This is not true. They don't have any boats to be a part of the rising tide. TPS is a part of the solution because if we allow those who are here to stay and to prosper, they will send money back to their relatives at home.

We have not been able to pass TPS. I would invite any Member of the House to go to Haiti and come back and say you won't vote for TPS. I challenge any Member of the House to go there. I don't believe you will come back and say you won't vote for TPS.

So probably one of the great things that any of us can do, if we want to adjust our hearts and become a part of the solution, is just go to Haiti and see the circumstances under which human beings are not living, but existing. It is an existence that we can change.

So I challenge my colleagues and I beg my colleagues to please, if you can, go to Haiti and see for yourself. It will tug at your heart, it will cause you to understand that we have an obligation to our fellow human beings to help them out of this circumstance. That is my appeal.

I thank you for the time. And I thank Congresswoman LEE for all that she has done through the years on this question of Haiti. This is not something new to her. For me, it is new in that this was my first visit, I'm a neophyte. But she has been doing this year in and year out and she knows of what we speak and she understands the challenges that are before us.

So I thank you, Congresswoman CLARKE, for the time. I thank you, Madam Speaker. And I beg that my colleagues will see for themselves the human crisis that exists right off the coast of Florida.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Congressman AL GREEN. Thank you for your impassioned comments this evening.

I think it's important that when we speak of the need to build out our relationships around the world, that as we've travel to many regions around the globe, that we not neglect our own hemisphere, that we recognize that there are nations of people. And I think what's important to point out is that Haiti is a nation about the size of Maryland in terms of geographic size. It has 9.3 million people there. So when you hear the statistics quoted about the number of people in poverty, when you hear about the number of children in poverty, the percentage of people making \$1 or \$2 a day, put that in the context of a population of 9.3 million people, and then you get the sense of what we're talking about in terms of a humanitarian crisis.

□ 2015

Let me now turn to the gentlewoman from Illinois, who has joined us and has been a fighter and one who has stood up and has produced on behalf of the

Hunger Caucus and the people of Haiti, Ms. JAN SCHAKOWSKY.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman CLARKE, for convening us tonight for this Special Order dealing with our close friend and a great friend of the United States, and that's our neighbor Haiti.

I first went to Haiti in January of 2003. And I went with the RFK Foundation, Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, and Ethel Kennedy was on that trip, to give an award to Partners in Health Clinic on the Central Plateau of Haiti. It's actually the one that was featured recently on "60 Minutes" where you saw Dr. David Walton, who actually comes from my district; Dr. PAUL Farmer; Loune Viaud, who is the director of that clinic, serving people on the very poor Central Plateau of Haiti. And I have to tell you I think it was Representative GREEN who said his first trip he was thunderstruck. That's a good word for it. You get on the plane in Miami and you start reading the newspaper, and before you've even finished reading it, you're landing in the poorest country in our hemisphere.

But let's be clear. This is a country with beautiful and brave and hard-working people. This is a country where some of our colleagues of a certain age may have even gone for their honeymoon. This is a tropical island in the Caribbean with so much potential and such beautiful people and such incredible poverty.

I went again to Haiti in 2006 with Wyclef Jean, a son of Haiti and a musical artist who has created a foundation called Yele Haiti, who's hard at work right now in providing food for the people of Haiti.

So we can talk about the crisis first. There is a horrible hunger crisis in Haiti. They started out poor. They started out malnourished when these food prices went up so high. And in fact, the average daily requirement for calories is about 2,100 calories per day. In Haiti it's 460 calories below that as the average. So you know some people are eating more than their 2,100 and lots of people are eating less.

I implore parents who may be listening to us tonight to think about what kind of desperation it might take to feed your child to quench the hunger in their belly a mud cake, a mud cake, a cake literally made out of mud with a little flour in it, because you can't stand to leave that tiny stomach hungry. It's just more than one can even bear to think how one gets to that point.

And so the high price of food and the hunger crisis has begun riots in Haiti. There have been some political ramifications, and the United States has to some important extent responded. We're sending money. We're sending food. And all of this is really, really important.

But the other thing I found out in Haiti is that it's not just oh, poor, Haiti, we need to do more. The fact of the matter is, and I am embarrassed to

say, is that the United States of America has had its heel on the neck of the country of Haiti and has actually been part of the problem that we are facing today.

Over the past 7 years, the Bush administration has absolutely turned a blind eye and has, in fact, actively stopped the Inter-American Development Bank from releasing loans to Haiti for projects on water and health and education and rural roads, the kinds of things that would actually make Haiti self-sustainable. Through the U.S. Treasury, the Bush administration officials, and this is all about ideology and politics, have repeatedly held back vital loans for Haiti in an attempt to force political change in Haiti, actions in direct violation of the Inter-American Development Bank charter, IDB.

In e-mails released in response to a Freedom of Information request, Treasury Department employees repeatedly discuss how to "slow" the release of loans to Haiti. In a Treasury Department e-mail in 2001, this employee stated that the loans would be released based on "our assessment of progress on reaching a comprehensive political settlement." That is, a settlement to the liking of the United States of America.

In another shocking e-mail, a Treasury lawyer reveals just how deliberately they were working to stop the loans from being released to Haiti, despite the great need. Bruce Juba, Special Counsel, wrote: "While this is not a 'bullet-proof' way to stop IDB disbursements, it certainly will put a few more large rocks in the road."

It is astounding and unacceptable that the entire time that the Bush administration has talked about helping poor Haiti, they have been working behind the scenes to put "rocks in the road" to Haiti's development. By 2002 the Bush administration's plan to block the loans to Haiti by slowing them down has succeeded. Haiti fell into arrears long enough to trigger an Inter-American Development Bank policy that prevents the bank from releasing the loans when arrears have accumulated for too long. Success.

Instead of receiving the vital loans for public projects, loans that could have helped bring thousands out of poverty, reduced water-borne diseases, and aided in long-term development, the Bush administration successfully cut off Haiti's IDB funding in an effort to push Aristide out of power.

The United States has been directly involved in Haiti's food crisis in another way. The U.S. has forced Haiti to open its market to our subsidized crops, decimating the ability of Haitian farmers to compete. Thirty years ago Haiti raised nearly all of the rice it needed. It was exporting sugar. But because of U.S. intervention, Haiti is now reliant on food imports for survival. The International Monetary Fund forced Haiti to open its market to U.S. rice first in 1986 as a condition for

loans, making it impossible for Haitian farmers to compete with subsidized U.S. rice. Then in 1994, as a condition for U.S. assistance in returning to Haiti to resume his elected presidency, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced by the U.S., the IMF, and the World Bank to open up the markets in Haiti even more.

So, look, if we want to do more than put a temporary Band-Aid on the developing food crisis in Haiti, we're going to have to do more than allocate money for emergency food relief. We're going to need to recognize how forcing poor countries to open their markets to our heavily subsidized crops cripples their ability to sustain themselves.

As President Lula of Brazil said when he was visiting Haiti recently, "Rich countries need to reduce farm subsidies and trade barriers to allow poor countries to generate income with food exports. Either the world solves the unfair trade system or every time there's unrest in Haiti, we adopt emergency measures and send a little bit of food to temporarily ease hunger."

You talked about the level of unemployment in Haiti. Well, a number of these people are rural people who are at least sustaining themselves. Even if they weren't exporting food, the country was able to provide the rice and the beans that it needed to sustain itself.

So we need to have a sane and rational policy when it comes to Haiti, a policy of friendship to this country in our hemisphere, not a policy that cripples Haiti's ability to actually flourish. We have a huge responsibility here for the hunger that's going on here now, and we should understand that and not just feel so good about our ourselves when we send food aid to Haiti, which, of course, we should do and we should do even more of.

So I appreciate the opportunity to join you tonight, Congresswoman CLARKE. I appreciate your leadership as a new Member of Congress. I so welcome your leadership on this issue and just want to offer my support in absolutely any way that I can so that we can be a good neighbor to Haiti and to the rest of the developing world.

Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight.

Ms. CLARKE. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for her breadth and depth of knowledge of the relationship that the United States has had with the Nation of Haiti and what we need to do to turn the tide around. It's a critical piece, and certainly as we look at our hemisphere going forward in the 21st century, what our expectations are for the development of not only the United States of America but our neighbors in the region, your words, your knowledge is going to be a critical part of what we are going to need going forward. And I thank you for taking the time to be a part of this Special Order. The people of the United States thank you for your commitment and certainly the people of my district who are really

concerned about their family and their relations in Haiti. Thank you for your commitment, and we look forward to further conversation and collaboration on the issue of hunger internationally and specifically the rebirth and the re-grooming of Haiti.

And I would like to just point out life expectancy, again, for women in Haiti is 56 years old. Life expectancy for men in Haiti, 53 years old. It's amazing in the 21st century that less than 400 miles away from the United States of America, we have people dying in the prime of their life due to a lack of food, due to lack of opportunity. They can stand on the edge of their shores and see the bright lights of Florida shining across the seas, but they can't reach for that level of potential within their own boundaries and their own nation. And when we look at the relationships that we establish with other nations around the globe, one has to wonder why, with a nation the size of Maryland and the population of 9.3 million people, we haven't seen fit yet to establish the type of relationship that creates a symbiotic relationship, fertile land on a fertile island; yet people are starving.

At this time I would like to acknowledge my cohost for this evening's Special Order. She is no stranger to most of us, to all of us. She has been an outstanding leader in this Congress and has been an outspoken leader, the most knowledgeable person that I have had an opportunity to interact with on international affairs, on homeland security, and has been a true mentor to me, and that's none other than the Congresswoman and the gentlewoman from Texas, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON-LEE.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. It is a special privilege to be on the floor tonight with a very distinguished Member of Congress and my coleader and cosponsor of this Special Order tonight, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE.

Might I note the special presence, if you will, of a number of Members from the Congress who have already spoken and pay tribute to their presence here, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congressman AL GREEN, Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY, for their passion and commitment and take note and pay special tribute to our speaker tonight, who rounds out the circle. And we appreciate her for her attentiveness to this very important discussion and debate. And, likewise, let me add an appreciation for the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the officers and members, who have seen fit to be the conscience of this Congress.

□ 2230

We have been particularly blessed by Congresswoman CLARKE's presence because I think she represents really a particularly unique congressional district. It has a history of Shirley Chisolm, and of course her predecessor, Mr. Owens. But as the district has grown, I guess because of the initial

history of Congresswoman Chisolm from the Caribbean. As the district has grown, it really exemplifies the tentacles of America. It is really, I guess, the cornerstone of what North and South America are about in the Caribbean because your district has this array of constituencies who represent South and Central America, the Caribbean, and other parts. It shows this unique place called America because when I say America, I am talking about South America, Central America, the Caribbean, this whole part of the world. For that reason, your insight is crucial.

We have seen the neglect of the Caribbean over the last 8 years, frankly. And I don't think there would be any debate on that question. I do know that there are concerned persons in the administration. But, Congresswoman CLARKE, I have sat in meetings at the White House, I have sat in meetings, frankly, with representatives or Assistant Secretary of the State Department that sit in hearings and, frankly, you had to argue with them about the circumstances.

I guess one comes to mind, and I am going to focus on this food crisis, but I think I relayed to you one meeting in the White House that really required members of our caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, frankly, that song, I shall not be moved. It required persons not to be moved until we had an opportunity to speak to the President of the United States. Of course, that was the time of crisis in the removal of then-President Aristide. Of course, President Preval worked with him as a prime minister. Then we had an Assistant Secretary for Western Affairs who was in fact, how shall I call it, an outright argument about the rightness of what we were doing for Haiti.

Frankly, I think as Americans representing such a diverse Nation, we should have a better attitude about allies, and Haiti is an ally. As you know your history, Haitians fought alongside of us. It is the oldest Democratic Nation in the Caribbean. Its independence was quick, was immediate almost, because of their great and wonderful founder, revolutionary that, of course, we saw many of his pictures, Toussaint Louverture, that we saw many of his pictures in Haiti.

So I say all this to say why do we come to this? Why are we at this point? Why do we need to be on the floor of the House? Although these are not exactly pictures taken recently in Haiti, the children symbolize what we left in Haiti, because we had an urgent mission. We had to meet with President Preval. Certainly the rural areas were there, but because it was an urgent mission, we had to focus our trip on that.

I can imagine when the President told us that 40 percent of the people in Haiti are eating one meal, and the word people, that means children, and everyone knows the results that occur

when children go hungry. They are stunted in growth. They are certainly victims of malnutrition. They are stunted mentally. Who can go to school on a hungry stomach? One of the reasons we had the breakfast program and the lunch program here in the United States of America is the fact that we have studies that show the distinction between children who eat, nourished, and how they learn, versus a hungry child. See a quiet child, inattentive in a classroom, you can go to the source most likely. Can you imagine a country of children who are hungry?

Of course, these faces, for all we know, represent children in Haiti, of which on this particular trip we were not able to see who may be huddled in the various mountains and hills looking for food. And so if I might just share with you that right now we know that there are 850 million people who are chronically or acutely malnourished. That includes the people of Haiti. Over 300 million of these individuals are children.

Malnutrition caused by chronic hunger leads to the death of an estimated 5,600,000 children under 5 years old. According to UNICEF, an estimated 146 million children, roughly one in four children under 5 years old are underweight. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 45 percent of children who died after contracting measles were malnourished, as were 60 percent of children who died after contracting severe diarrhea. An estimate 168 million children under age 5 in developing countries face potential growth retardation, also known as stunting, as a result of chronic hunger and malnutrition. Approximately 42 percent of children under 5 years old are stunted in the world's least developed countries.

So I lay the framework out for what we are facing in the country of Haiti and what President Preval has to deal with. You have a wonderful poster that indicates how high food is going. And so even now, where we used to be a high food donor country, but look what countries are having to pay for corn now, for soybeans, for wheat, and for rice. What a dilemma. And then, add insult to injure, if you would, as President Preval has indicated, infrastructure is needed and work is needed.

All of us were moved by the mother who stood up, and didn't look 48 years old, and according to your numbers, she has only 8 more years to live. She had 10 children. In cultures like that, they are very dependent on families. Children then go out to work and give back to families, and parents, because they age quickly, I guess, can retire back or can sit back with the hope of their children supporting them. What did she say? She managed to send her children to school, and the two that are now out and ready, no work. No work.

The food fight, the food riot, as the President indicated, or as we saw in

the news, was really because people had no money and no work to buy food. And so people were rioting because of that. President Preval wants us to help. What is this administration doing? Not releasing money the way it should; fighting against TPS, which really makes a difference. Temporary protective status allows people to stay and work, Haitians who have suffered this unequal wet foot-dry foot scenario between our friends from Cuba, and they are our friends. It wasn't a law that they wrote. But it was written, and I must say this, all of our Cuban representatives that are here in the United States Congress have supported equalizing the Haitian disparity issue. We just can't get it passed; which is to say I have an immigration bill that would create parity. If you were Haiti, because of the political crisis, you get your foot on our soil, you too can say.

But putting that aside, we don't have that. But TPS, the President begged us, President Preval. That would help the food crisis. Why? Because it would allow people who are here, sending back remittances, what, a fourth of their economy, to at least be able to send back to momma, grandma, somebody, so they can eke out a survival.

So to the Congresswoman, so he asked us for infrastructure, clean-running water that helps you be able to at least cook decent food, creation of jobs, and if you were to put money in for infrastructure, people could work. Even though these prices are outrageous, they could at least minimally begin to bring food in.

One of our colleagues said something that we heard, and that was the dumbing down of the rice industry, or dumbing down the traditional foods. President Preval said he would like to get Haitians back to traditional food, not because he wants to keep them from buying from us but because what we did is when rice was cheap, we dumbed them down from raising rice, meaning, Oh, I don't have to worry about raising rice. Let me raise something else. I don't know what the decision was because I am going to get what he called "Miami rice." Look what happened. They stopped growing. I assume Miami rice has gotten way, way, way expensive. They are not growing the traditional foods. And look where we are.

So, Congresswoman, I want to thank you for raising or giving us the opportunity. I am delighted to be your co-leader and cosponsor because out of these discussions I hope it comes the finger on the phone, the finger on the e-mail, Haitians around the country pressing their phone buttons and calling Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to join us in our fight for the TPS.

We know a number of our colleagues have been working on this issue, from Congressman HASTINGS, myself, you, Congressman KENDRICK MEEK from Florida, Congresswoman CORRINE BROWN. I may have left off someone.

There's a number of people that understand the realities of that. So press your button wherever you are, get your e-mail out. We have to get relief with a temporary reprieve on TPS.

The second thing is that the administration needs to make an immediate commitment for food relief and the releasing of dollars for Haiti, a country whose singular—who could have only one reason for us helping them is the blood they shed from our Freedom Fight, for our Revolution, the blood they shed when they stood alongside of us in the Revolutionary War. No one can take that away from them in terms of relationship with the United States.

So I want to join you, and as I close yield to the gentlelady, just engage her in a question, because I would like to ask a question. I would commit our colleagues as well to H. Con. Res. 344. You are an original cosponsor. It is to say in any food aid, we need to prioritize children. Certainly I believe we can add pregnant women and mothers, nursing mothers, a vulnerable population. I think that would be an excellent addition. But I do think what happens to our children dictates what happens to the future of the country because if you have stunted children with inability to learn, what do you have in the future.

I would ask the gentlelady, and so I hope people will come on the bill H. Con. Res. 344. I hope we can mark it up soon, get it to the floor of the House, and maybe expand on some aspects of it.

I rise tonight, together with my colleagues Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE, as well as the House Hunger Caucus, to address a grave and growing humanitarian crisis. With rising food prices threatening the health of millions of people throughout the world, it is vital that we look for both short-term responses to the crisis and long-term solutions to ongoing food instability.

As my colleagues are aware, according to the United Nations, over 850,000,000 people in the world are chronically or acutely malnourished, and over 300,000,000 of these are children. The statistics are both shocking and tragic: Malnutrition caused by chronic hunger leads to the death of an estimated 5,600,000 children under 5 years old; according to UNICEF, an estimated 146,000,000 children, or roughly one in every four children under 5 years old, are underweight; according to a study conducted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 45 percent of children who died after contracting measles were malnourished, as were 60 percent of children who died after contracting severe diarrhea; an estimated 168,000,000 children under age five in developing countries face potential growth retardation, also known as stunting, as a result of chronic hunger and undernutrition; approximately 42 percent of children under 5 years old are stunted in the world's least developed countries.

Rising food prices have precipitated a crisis situation. On March 20th of this year, the U.N. World Food Program made an urgent appeal to the United States and other food aid donors for an additional \$500 million to fill a funding gap caused by rising food and fuel prices.

Since then, this gap has expanded, and is now an estimated \$755 million. As food prices rise, children are the first to suffer.

Earlier this month, with the support of 46 of my colleagues, I introduced H. Con. Res. 344. This resolution recognizes that we face a global food crisis, and that children will be disproportionately affected by rising food prices. The bill states that:

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) in emergency situations, children have different needs than those of adults, and nutritional deficiencies disproportionately affect children; and

(B) in the context of the current global food crisis, the nutritional needs of children must be a humanitarian priority; and

(2) Congress—

(A) recognizes that we are facing a global food crisis caused by, among other things, rising fuel prices, increased diversion of land to biofuel production, drought, and increases in population;

(B) recognizes that lack of adequate nutrition is particularly damaging to children, as it stunts their growth, leaves them more vulnerable to numerous diseases, and hunger affects children's ability to learn; and

(C) calls for a world forum to be held, on the issue of rising food prices and international response, and for the United States to play an active role in alleviating the crisis.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.

This issue has drawn the attention of the Congressional Children's Caucus, which I chair, because hunger and malnutrition have a particularly devastating effect on children. On May 8th together with Global Health Caucus Co-Chair BETTY MCCOLLUM and DONALD PAYNE, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, I hosted a briefing on the global food crisis and its impact on the world's children. Members, staff, and the public heard from expert panelists from UNICEF, WFP, World Vision, Save the Children, Christian Children's Fund, and the Congressional Hunger Center, as well as Danny Glover, actor, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the TransAfrica Forum.

Lack of adequate nutrition stunts children's growth, leaves them more vulnerable to numerous diseases, and affects their ability to learn. Even temporary deprivation of essential nutrients can have a lasting impact on children's physical growth and intellectual potential, and, under current conditions, more and more children face the prospect of growing up malnourished.

As a result of rising food prices, families throughout the world, particularly in developing nations but also here, in the United States, are increasingly facing a decision between quantity and quality when buying food. With incomes stretched thinner by the day, many families must either buy significantly smaller quantities of food, or purchase less nutritious food. In times of food crisis, families face cuts in expensive foods, such as meat, fruit, and vegetables. The loss of these nutritious foods, in favor of cheaper staples such as rice and maize, is extremely detrimental to children's development, putting them at greater risk of disease or stunted growth. The full extent of the consequences of deprivation of vital nutrients during essential stages of growth is not known. However, it is clear that once children's growth is stunted by malnutrition, they

do not catch up to their peers. The effects will be lifelong.

We now are facing a crisis of epic proportions. The World Food Programme, which fed over 19 million children in schools last year, finds its budget stretched to the limit, and now needs an estimated \$755 million to cover the increased cost of food and fuel. To cite one example, WFP's Kenya programme faces having to cut food to 550,000 children in schools this year. And this is just one example, in one country.

Rising food prices have caused riots in nations including Haiti, Bangladesh, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Senegal. In April, a week of unrest in Haiti began with violence in Les Cayes and spread to Port-au-Prince and other cities, in which at least six people were killed. Though the violence has ended, slum leaders in a nation where many people live on less than \$2 a day have expressed their willingness to take to the streets if the crisis is not alleviated. Families are particularly affected. One woman, Jacqueline Emile, stated, "I have 10 children. I cannot send them to school and I cannot feed them because I am not working. I would like the government to help me." A school in Port-au-Prince, the Saint Vincent de Paul primary school, which provides lunches of beans and rice supplemented with vitamins, reports that it can now only feed 1,300 of its 2,100 students.

The crisis is also deeply felt across much of Africa. According to the NGO Action Against Hunger, nearly 20 percent of children tested in Monrovia, Liberia were suffering from acute malnutrition. Brenda Kerubo, a housewife in Kisumu, Kenya, spoke of the need to cut back family meals, stating, "the best thing to do for my family is to reduce meals taken in a day. I may give them a cup of tea with a piece of pancake for breakfast and two cups of porridge for lunch and then I cook beans and maize for supper. We hope prices will soon come down." Her family, like so many others, is substituting cheap starches for more nutritious (and more expensive) meat, fruits, and vegetables.

The scope of this crisis spans the globe. In the wake of the devastating cyclone in Myanmar, children face risks from lack of clean water and poor sanitation, as well as inadequate nutrition. Under these conditions, children are increasingly susceptible to diarrhea, as well as mosquito borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Women and children, who make up more than 60 percent of Myanmar's population, and are likely to be gravely affected. Food aid to the children caught up in the midst of this terrifying situation must be a priority.

According to the United Nations, the cyclone in Myanmar has damaged that nation's fragile ecosystem, with far-reaching effects on food production. Myanmar is currently a rice exporting nation, and farmers in the devastated Irrawaddy Delta region produce two-thirds of the nation's rice supply. The U.N. has warned that if farmers in the cyclone-affected areas do not receive rice seed by June, Burma's rice harvest will fail.

Another nation suffering is Cambodia. In the Sun Sun primary school, for example, teacher Taoch Champa says that "Most students come to school for the breakfast," and principle Yim Soeurn adds that "Students brought their brothers and sisters, 2, 3, and 4 years

old" for the WFP-provided free breakfast. Teachers also note that providing this free meal has vastly increased attendance, particularly by girls, and they fear that if the program ended, "poor students would not come to school." However, 1,343 schools across Cambodia are within 1 month of running out of rice stocks, and soaring food prices have placed WFP's future activity in the country in severe doubt.

According to comments made by Pakistani officials in recent days, that nation's production of wheat is expected to fall short of needs by a million tons. Authorities have issued warnings that people hoarding wheat will have their stocks confiscated if they refuse to sell it to government agencies.

The United Nations has made ending global poverty a long term goal, included in the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the U.N. has recognized the scope of the current food crisis, and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has proposed a task force, to be composed of the heads of United Nations agencies and the World Bank, to address the problem caused by soaring food prices. Ban Ki-Moon has also made closing the WFP funding gap a priority.

Likewise, we are gathered here today in recognition of the looming crisis. Tackling worldwide hunger is a moral imperative which threatens the political and economic stability of a multitude of developing nations. The dramatic increase in food prices will continue to have a destabilizing affect in already unstable regions of the world where so many young lives are already vulnerable to ongoing conflicts and political turmoil.

But I want to yield to the gentlelady and ask her and pose this question to her, and that is what have you seen, living in your great congressional district, listening to Haitians firsthand, have been the results of the unequal treatment of Haitians and Haiti? What are the results that are here in the United States, what do you see in your own constituents, what kind of questions are they asking the United States Congress on why we have not acted, and what does that say about America?

Ms. CLARKE. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding and for posing that question because certainly Haitian Americans are very aware of the history, the role that they played in helping the United States acquire what was then called the Louisiana Territory that completed our United States and the side-by-side battle in the Revolutionary War. And they wonder why the relationship has not been a much more prosperous one between the two nations, why they have been forsaken over so long.

Haiti has been an independent Nation for over 200 years, 205 years, to be exact, and certainly have been worthy of being a partner in the development in this hemisphere. And they are concerned. They are concerned that perhaps there is some bias involved, there's some discrimination because they're a Nation 95 percent of African descent, and they have been used during different times in our history to halt the spread of Communism. But they have never reaped any real reward or collaboration.

I think we are all open now, understanding that we are connected. We are in a global economy, we are in a global world. As our prices spike, the impact has a ripple effect around the world, as we talk about food for fuel versus food for food, what the impact has been around the world. I think that is most demonstrably shown with the Nation of Haiti. And none of us can turn a blind eye to that.

So I want to thank the gentlelady for raising that question. We are winding down now. To my cohort, thank you very much for, again, being a mentor and someone who provides guidance and understanding around some very complex issues with regard to why we do or do not do the things that we need to do, that are imperative for us to do in terms of our international relations, in terms of our hemisphere, in terms of just getting information permeated throughout the body to get a consensus on a way to go.

□ 2245

I think we are well on the way. We have got some commitments so far. We want to be vigilant in our oversight and seeing them go through. But we do want to press for TPS. We know that that can be a real part of the economic sustainability of the Nation, which is critical, and while we come in with other strategies for immediate relief for the hunger that takes place.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. If the gentlewoman would yield for just a moment, on that very note, this is the People's House, and what I would like to encourage right now on the floor of the House is let us call for Haitian-Americans who are here in the United States to come to Washington. Some are as close as your congressional district.

Let us collectively merge our bills, or maybe reintroduce all of our bills or portions of our bills that we have and make that push. I would never use the term ultimatum, but make the urgent push that we need to move forward on hearings dealing with TPS.

That is the first step of moving toward a markup of some component thereof of a TPS. Temporary. It could be a TPS for a year. That is what we did with El Salvador, and then it was renewed. We did it with Liberia, that was deferred, DED, I believe. So we have had these moments when there is a crisis. There is clearly a crisis in Haiti. And I would like to join with the gentlewoman to organize that and call that session in and make the point that we need to move on that issue as quickly as possible.

Ms. CLARKE. Our time has expired, my colleague. I just wanted to thank the Speaker for this Special Order on the international food crisis, subject Haiti.

I would just acknowledge that we have received statements to this Special Order from Congressman JAMES MCGOVERN of Massachusetts to be entered into the RECORD, as well as Representative POMEROY to be entered into the RECORD.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Congress and to the American people the plight of the western hemisphere's second oldest republic, Haiti. The Haitian people are being negatively affected by market forces out of their control that have driven food prices up drastically. Haiti, where about 4 out of 5 people live at or below poverty, is an island nation that consists of approximately 8.7 million people. To put this in perspective, imagine the city of New York; now imagine that same city with 80 percent of its citizens in poverty.

The American people and Congress have already assisted Haiti with the HOPE and HOPE II (Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement) Acts. HOPE was the tip of the iceberg. It provided jobs to allow Haitians to overcome poverty. HOPE II will create even more gainful employment and more sustainable jobs for Haitians and create a self-sustaining infrastructure. These acts will provide jobs needed to help more Haitian citizens emerge from poverty and gain employment which will lead to a more prosperous Haiti.

However, there is much more work to be done Madam Speaker. Right now the World Food Program is in need of \$755 million to meet immediate demands and USAID also needs an additional \$240 million. Increases in these programs will ensure that school food programs in the developing world are not eliminated due to current food price inflation. The food price escalation is also affecting the region as a whole.

Due to escalating market prices, in rural El Salvador, with the same amount of money today, people can purchase 50 percent less food than they did 18 months ago. This means that, in principle, their nutritional intake, on an already poor diet, is being cut by half.

In Nicaragua the price of tortilla went up 54 percent between January 2007 and January 2008.

We cannot let our neighbors suffer due to circumstances out of their control. We have taken small steps but now the government of the United States must be an active agent in the development of the third world. We must follow the lead of our philanthropic and non-profit sectors.

Too often those in government see aid to developing nations as a waste of money, throwing taxpayers dollars down a well. India is a great example of the benefits of foreign aid. In the 1960s American dollars funded fertilizer subsidies and high yield seed varieties led India out of poverty and famine into self-subsistence. India is now entering the developing world, so much so that their demand for processed foods is now decreasing the supply of food aid available to countries such as Haiti.

This can happen in Haiti if the United States focuses on delivering basic goods to the hemisphere's poorest people. By increasing vaccines, textbooks, water pipes, and medical care we will not make countries dependent, we will be giving Haitians the basic inputs they need to improve their lives. We must invest in high-yield, proven, and scalable strategies to empower the Haitian people and those suffering throughout the world.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, we are in the midst of a global food crisis. Rising food prices are negatively affecting the world's poorest people, who frequently spend 80 per-

cent of their income on food. As a result, the world's most vulnerable populations, including an entire generation of children, are fighting malnutrition every day. Riots and social unrest all over the world over food prices are indicative of the acute nature of this problem. The time to act is now.

Over the last 50 years, the United States has been the leader in international food aid. We have been able to sustain this role even during eras that were extremely tough on foreign aid. This doesn't mean that the structure can't be improved, but I do believe it is a strong testament to the current structure.

Through the Food, Conservation and Security Act of 2008, also known as the farm bill, we look to address this global crisis by helping to fight hunger and provide food assistance around the world. The farm bill does this by increasing oversight and monitoring of food aid programs. It requires the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to increase the use of program monitors, conduct more evaluations of food aid impact, and implement best practices for food aid delivery. The farm bill will also allow USAID to pre-position more food overseas to respond to disasters more quickly. With greater attention toward identifying food shortages earlier, the food aid programs can reach people in need and respond before crises worsen.

I am also very proud to say that the farm bill establishes a \$60 million pilot program for local or regional purchases of food aid. This pilot program provides the opportunity for local purchases of food aid commodities while ensuring that the purchases do not cause dramatic price increases or exacerbate shortages overseas.

While I am extremely proud of what we have been able to accomplish through the farm bill, this is a serious situation that we must continue to address. As a member of the House Hunger Caucus, I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the issue of world hunger.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, every five seconds, a child dies from hunger-related causes. That's the equivalent of 21 school busses full of children being killed every day. With the current food crisis, even more people are being put at risk of starvation as the prices of daily food staples move out of reach. This is not just tragic; it is shameful. We have the resources necessary to end hunger. What we need is the political will to do so.

Madam Speaker, I've never heard any Member of Congress declare that he or she is pro-hunger. But regrettably, too few are actively working to rid our Nation and the world of this terrible scourge. I am very proud of the members of the bipartisan House Hunger Caucus who have taken up the task of raising the profile of this domestic and global issue and helping to educate their colleagues about how we can address and end not just the crisis caused by rising food costs, but hunger itself.

As the world faces a crisis of hunger, it is increasingly more important that Members of Congress speak out against hunger and take action to ensure that action is taken to truly address the crisis. Thank you to YVETTE CLARKE and SHEILA JACKSON-LEE for their leadership in organizing this Special Order Hour and for all those participating tonight. The time to end hunger is now. We cannot wait while more children and families go without food, or even starve to death.

Tonight, in the aftermath of the earthquake in China and the cyclone in Burma, we hold the victims of these disasters in our thoughts. We see, once again, the generosity of the world in reaching out to these victims of natural catastrophe.

But the children of Haiti, the urban poor of Manila, the refugees in Darfur—and, literally, the hundreds of millions of people around the world and in our own country who do not know whether there will be food on the table tonight or tomorrow—our thoughts and our prayers are with them, too. But more importantly, we send to them our commitment to take action on their behalf, and to take action in support of their own efforts to help themselves. Together we can overcome this current crisis, and together we can end hunger in our lifetime.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GILCHREST (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of a family commitment.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SCOTT of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ALLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today and May 21.

Mr. TANCREDO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TIAHRT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FLAKE, for 5 minutes, today and May 21.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KUHL of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2419. An act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.