

bicommunal, bizonal federation. As a close ally of Turkey, the U.S. should use its influence to push Turkey to actively support the process and the reunification of the island as a bicommunal and bizonal federation. And the U.S. must also push Turkey to withdraw its occupational forces.

The Government of Cyprus continues to work for the genuine reunification of Cyprus and integration of its people and economy in the context of a functional and viable settlement, a solution which will bring peace, prosperity, and a better future for all of the citizens of a united Cyprus within the EU. A solution of the Cyprus problem that reunifies the island, its people, the economy, its institutions in a bizonal, bicommunal federation is in the best interest of all Cypriots.

□ 1920

Madam Speaker, I urge this body to pressure Turkey to remove its troops from Cyprus, remove its settlers, and come to the negotiating table in good faith to find a solution that is just for the Cypriot people. Let's hope we are not recognizing the 37th anniversary of the invasion this time next year.

EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to enter and extend remarks into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. The Congressional Black Caucus is incensed that some would choose to politicize the proposed extension of unemployment benefits. As the conscience of the Congress, the CBC will spend this Special Order hour reminding them of the Americans they seem to have forgotten. I will also be joined by a diverse cross section of Members from a variety of caucuses, all urging the Senate to act now.

Madam Speaker, I would yield to my friend and colleague from the State of Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Congresswoman FUDGE for taking leadership on this very, very important Special Order this evening on the subject of unemployment and the extension of unemployment benefits during this critical moment for our country.

I just got back to Washington after spending the weekend in my district, and I'm telling you that is the issue. People come up to you, whether you are in a parking lot, just leaving a food store, whether you're in a religious institution on Sunday, people are asking

what's wrong with Congress. It isn't the House. It's the other body that hasn't passed the extension of unemployment benefits.

I want to commend the Congressional Black Caucus for bringing this forward this evening.

By the end of this week, nearly 2.5 million Americans will have lost their unemployment benefits because our colleagues over on the other side of the Capitol chose to politicize with unemployed workers, trying to make some kind of political statement over there, rather than extending benefits for people who earn them.

You would think that work, as a value, would be undergirded by those that serve us at this level in our country, and I think they really undermine the value of work itself by not allowing people who have earned those benefits as a result of going to work every day to then, when times get hard, reap some of the benefits that they, in fact, have earned.

Just in Ohio, Congresswoman FUDGE and I know that 112,000 Ohioans will lose their unemployment benefits as we wait for the Senate to act. On July 12, the Toledo Blade ran the following letter to the editor, which I will summarize. It says, "Cutting off jobless was act of cruelty," and this writer, Darlene, from Perrysburg, Ohio, states: "I do not want to add to the Federal deficit. However, not to extend unemployment benefits to workers who have lost their jobs, most through no fault of their own, is cruel." She's right.

"These former workers may lose their homes," she says, "adding to the foreclosure dilemma." She's right.

"They paid taxes into the system for years." She's right.

"Now the government says they have used up their benefits. I wonder when the government will tell third- and fourth-generation welfare recipients that they have used up their benefits." And she was rather strident in her comments there, but she's asking what about people who have been employed.

Worse, a week before that, the Toledo Blade ran an article titled, "Toledoans battle to survive as aid for unemployed vanishes: Area agencies get more requests for help." I know I met with the head of Job and Family Services in Lucas County, and they said that immediately they expect an influx of 3,000 individuals that represented 3,000 families. You know how many people—that's over 10,000 people just for the first influx of those who had fallen off their benefits.

The article talked about Anita Fitch, a 42-year-old single mother who had gotten two extensions on her unemployment benefits but now she's on her own. Anita stated, "The unemployment money was not paying the bills, and I went to get food stamps because I have two kids in the house and everything is backing up—the food bill, the electric—and now I am trying to find a job," but "there just aren't any jobs out there."

So Anita's problem is like that of many Americans. We need to stop being partisan over there in the Senate and work together to support those who have lost their jobs while joining together to create jobs and stabilize our housing market.

I wanted to say to Congresswoman FUDGE that I have other examples I could give, but I don't want to not allow other Members who have come this evening to also state their piece. We know that we need to make things in America again, and Ms. Fitch was among those in our district who had a well-paying factory job, polishing automotive parts, a solid job that provided for her family, the kind of jobs that we need here in our country. We need less outsourcing. We need fewer bank bailouts—in fact, no bank bailouts—while we work to create jobs and to sustain our unemployed citizens.

So I have voted to continue to extend unemployment benefits, and I think the important voices that we will add to the record tonight include those individuals from our district who have been contacting us, pleading with Congress to give them the benefits that they have earned, and if we had enough jobs in our country, people wouldn't be asking. This is a time when we need a little extra cushion inside this economy to help people transition as we begin producing more and more jobs per month, and we had to dig ourselves out of the huge hole that the last President left this President.

I think that we helped to turn the corner now, but we have millions of Americans who simply have not been able to find their footing in this economy.

One gentleman that wrote has sent out 400 resumes and applied for over 400 jobs in 10 States and has only gotten three interviews in 9 months and zero job offers, and he says it's aggravating that the people who caused this mess are still making several-figure incomes, and the average Joe is suffering. Who knows what is going to happen after August when this gentleman's unemployment benefits run out.

So, Congresswoman FUDGE, I want to thank you very much for holding this Special Order tonight to encourage our Senate colleagues to put partisanship and politics aside and to act to help those who need these unemployment benefits to put food on the table for their families. They're really not asking for very much.

"Sincerely,"

"Jennifer"

Jennifer is not alone. Debra also emailed me and she writes, "Dear Representative KAPTUR,"

"Our family is in dire need of an extension of unemployment benefits. My partner has been unemployed since July 15, 2008. Her unemployment expired June 25, 2010 without notice."

"She is over 60 years of age. We have 3 children, 2 elementary age and one high school age. I am self employed and my business is so slow that my adjusted gross income

last year was \$15,500 and it looks like my AGI will be similar for 2010. We've applied for food stamps but we're not sure how long it will take to get them. We need help."

"What can you do for us?"

"Debra"

Dennis emailed to share his situation and his frustration. He writes, "Just wanted to let you know what it's like in the real world. In September '09, I was laid-off. I went from \$32/hr to \$9/hr unemployment benefit. My u/b extension is due to run out in August '10. I have sold items at a loss to get rid of debt. My life is on hold."

"I have applied to almost 400 jobs in over 10 states and have only gotten 3 interviews in 9 months with zero job offers. It's aggravating that the people who caused this mess are still making 6/7 figure incomes and the average Joe is suffering. Who knows what is going to happen after August."

Tonight we gather to encourage our Senate colleagues to put partisanship and politics aside and act to help those who need these unemployment benefits to put food on the table for their families.

Sometimes it is too easy to get caught up in politics, and we need to remember that we are here for the people. Too many of the people in this country are suffering. They need our support to survive while we work to create jobs in our country for them.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, my friend. I just want to say that the gentlelady from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) has always been a voice for not just Ohioans but for all people in need, and I thank you very much for your work.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to yield to the majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for yielding, thank her for taking this Special Order, and rise in strong support, as the House has already done, saying that we remember those who are unemployed through no fault of their own.

Nearly 2.5 million out-of-work Americans are without unemployment insurance today. That means they don't have dollars to buy food, they won't have dollars to pay their mortgage, they won't have dollars to buy gas to even look for a job because of one reason: Republicans are blocking those benefits in the United States Senate, period. It's the only reason. We've passed it.

Several Republican Members of Congress and candidates have suggested that unemployment insurance makes Americans too lazy or uninterested in looking for work. This is at a time, frankly, when five unemployed Americans are looking for work for every one job that is available.

One Republican Member of the House even asked, "Is the government now creating hobos?" Is the government creating hobos for those, who through no fault of their own, are unemployed. Why? Because the economy was put into a deep spin in the latter part of the Bush administration. If you believe, as I do, that the unemployed are suffering from an economic crisis they did nothing to create, then we owe

them a strong policy on job creation. We owe them something better than the failed Bush policies Republicans want to return to, the same policies that resulted in the worst jobs record since Herbert Hoover.

□ 1930

We owe the unemployed a hand, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because economists agree that there are few more effective ways to stimulate local economies than extending unemployment insurance. Why is that? Because when somebody is unemployed and has no dollars and they get dollars, they spend them. They buy food. They buy prescription drugs, they buy other items for them and their families, they buy gasoline for their cars. As they do, they help the economy grow. Failing to give them the resources to support their families also undermines our economic situation.

My Republican friends claim that they are for extending unemployment insurance, but simply believe it needs to be paid for. However, frankly, such a claim rings hollow. Because, after decades of treating unemployment insurance as emergency spending, when they were in charge, when no Democrat could determine what came to the floor, they passed unemployment insurance when Bush's failing economy had large numbers of unemployed, and they didn't pay for it.

Both parties, dating back to President Reagan, have passed unemployment insurance unpaid for. Why? Because it's an emergency. It's an emergency not to have a job. It's an emergency not to be able to support yourself and feed your family. It's an emergency when through no fault of your own all of a sudden the boss says, I'm sorry, I can't keep you on the payroll because I can't afford to. That is an emergency.

But at the very same time they claim we can't afford \$34 billion for the unemployed, which will go right into the economy to stimulate and try to grow our economy and create jobs, they are pushing for a deficit-busting \$676 billion in extended tax cuts for the wealthiest in America. Think of that.

We cannot have \$34 billion for those who are unemployed and struggling in our society, but guess what? For those of us who are not struggling in our society, you get \$676 billion and, guess what, we don't have to pay for that. How does anybody think that makes sense? How does anybody think that's a moral judgment to make in our society.

Republican leaders are even claiming that tax cuts should never be paid for, and in the face of all evidence to the contrary, that tax cuts don't add to the deficit. Alan Greenspan, of course, put the lie to that. He probably shouldn't have testified that the tax cuts would save money. In fact, he has urged us not to cut taxes. My own view is that for middle-income Americans who are working now and struggling and trying

to keep their families afloat, we need to continue those tax cuts.

Why? So we could continue to grow our economy and not put them deeper in a hole. This is a political party, on the other side, that wants to reiterate and return to the Bush-era fiscal thinking that wiped out a record surplus of \$5.6 trillion and replaced it with deep debt, large annual deficits, lost jobs and the worst economy since the Depression.

Republicans have made their priorities crystal clear: Billions for the well off, but no help for the longtime unemployed.

Sixty-two percent of the American people reject that reasoning and the neglect of families in need through no fault of their own. As we have in the past, let's help those families and our economy at the same time. Let's extend the unemployment benefits.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for taking this time to focus on this issue. Hopefully, hopefully, the other body and the Republican Members of the other body will see their way clear to making sure that Americans who have worked hard, played by the rules, and through no fault of their own are unemployed, will get the help they deserve and need, and that will help our economy as well as help those families.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much. It is always a privilege to have the leader come and share some time with us. Thank you very much, Mr. Leader. I am as well pleased and proud that Congressman JIM MCDERMOTT, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, will bring his expertise on the topic.

I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE.

I was approached by one of the Members on the floor, actually, MARCY KAPTUR. She said, why don't we go out and tell the story of people? Why are we being quiet about this? So I was pleased when we presented this idea to you that you said, hey, come, I have got an hour, let's talk about it, because over the past 6 weeks we have fought to try to get these benefits extended.

We cite the statistic of 2.5 million people who have lost their benefits since early June, but we haven't heard much about these jobless workers themselves. I am really grateful for an opportunity to come out here and talk about what we are all going through in our districts, on the telephone, in the newspaper, and in the grocery store.

I picked up The New York Times on Sunday and there on page 13 was the story of a woman named Terri Sadler. Terri lost her job in an automotive parts plant in October of 2008. She used to make \$14.65 an hour and was able to make ends meet, but since she has been laid off she has had no luck in finding a job. She is like millions of people who have this same story who can't get anybody to pay attention in the United States Senate.

Now, there are five unemployed Americans competing for every job, and she told the newspaper, when they asked her, that she had three interviews, that's all she had in 18 months was three interviews for a job, and she spends as much as 12 hours a day looking on the Internet.

When Republicans in the other body blocked passage of the unemployment insurance, she lost her only lifeline on June 5. She has had no money since June 5, and she has been able to cobble together some help from her friends and the community in order to get by.

A county ministerial association paid her water bill. I mean, imagine not having water in your house because they shut it off because you didn't pay the bill. A local nonprofit pulled enough money together for her last two electric bills. Imagine sitting in the dark in a house with no water and no electricity through no fault of your own except the United States Senate won't pay attention to your problems.

Now, Americans who have worked hard and played by the rules and lost their jobs through no fault of their own are going through this all over this country. She is rattled by the daily fear of losing her home, of not being able to afford food, and she told the Times that she had contemplated suicide.

Republicans have forced Terri to live in purgatory for the last 2 months as they talk about the deficit. They now worry about the deficit. They spent like there was no end of money when it was for people at the top of the pile, but now we are talking about Terri Sadler and her problems.

The New York Times actually wrote in an editorial, "Deficits matter, but not more than economic recovery, and not more urgently than the economic survival of millions of Americans." Now, the question you have to ask is, what will it take to make the Republicans finally understand that? You would think an election might have something to draw their mind.

Today, we read a story in The Washington Post that Montgomery County, Maryland, one of the five richest counties in the United States, is now serving 15,000 free lunches a day for children who would otherwise not have food. That's an increase of nearly 15 percent over previous summers, and many of these families are unemployed families.

Our failure to get this bill passed has had very real and immediate consequences. Tonight, thousands of people in every corner of this country will suffer because Republicans in the other body have stonewalled against acting. I refuse to believe that we are going to tell Terri Sadler and the millions of Americans like her that we are going to let them fall through the cracks.

I wore this pin tonight because I believe that anybody who has lived in a home where somebody was out of a job, or has been out of a job, knows what it's really all about. I fail to believe

there is anybody in the Senate who has ever been without a job.

This is a cab medallion. When I was 21-years-old, my father lost his job for the second time, and there was no money to pay the rent. We were going to lose the house. There was no money for the food, for anything else, and I went to work driving a cab.

□ 1940

That's what happens in families, people do anything.

Terri said to the newspaper, she's sitting at home now. One of her interviews was for a company that will pay her \$7.65 an hour. Now remember, she was making \$14 before. They're paying less than half that, and she's sitting there waiting to hear if she gets a job. She knows that the money she gets from that lesser job won't even meet her bills, won't make it possible for her to pay her house payment and pay her utilities and pay gas and pay the Internet so she can stay on the computer and keep looking for a job.

That's the dilemma that Americans are sitting at home tonight living with, middle class people. It isn't people who haven't tried; it isn't people who haven't made an effort; it isn't people who have somehow tried to get by on the easy. They have been out there slogging along, and they suddenly can't do it, and the Senate says, well, we have to worry about the deficit. You know, we want to keep those tax cuts going for the wealthy in this country, that \$700 billion, but we haven't got \$30 billion for the unemployed.

There's something really wrong. It's really important that you brought this Special Order together today so that people can talk about it and talk about what they're hearing on the phone when they go home on the weekend.

It's no fun to go to the grocery store because people come up and tell you—and I don't live in a bad neighborhood, but people are telling me in my neighborhood what's going on. Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank you. You have painted a picture so clear that every single person in the Senate should understand that it's not just about deficits, it's not just about what they think is right or wrong. Government has a job, and it is to take care of its people. And if we don't do that, we have not done our work. I thank you for telling Terri's story, and I'm sure she does as well.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to recognize my friend and classmate, the gentlelady from Nevada, Ms. TITUS.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you very much for recognizing me. And thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, for bringing this issue to the attention of the country. We certainly need to be talking about it, and I appreciate bringing the Nevada perspective to the discussion. Extending these unemployment benefits is critical to the constituents in southern Nevada.

I represent the most populous district in the country. There are 1 mil-

lion people in the district compared to about 650,000 in most districts. We also have the highest unemployment rate in the country and the highest foreclosure rate, so it's a lot of people with a lot of problems. And we just heard today some rather dismal news that that rate is continuing to climb. Now the unemployment rate in southern Nevada is over 14 percent—it's probably higher than that, that's the official figure, and if you look at construction unemployment, I'm sure it's at least double that.

Our recovery lags behind the rest of the country because you have to have a job with money in your pocket in Iowa and Georgia and Vermont in order to be able to come to Las Vegas for a holiday.

The two economic main drivers in my State are tourism and construction, and they have been the hardest hit sectors during this recession. The fact is, many of these jobs are not going to come back right away. We know that already 38,000 people in Nevada have lost their benefits because of this Republican obstructionism that we've been talking about.

When I see Republicans stand in the way of this final extension of unemployment benefits and I hear them make statements that people are spoiled by unemployment benefits, or they aren't willing to take certain jobs, it just makes me angry. It makes me angry because nothing could be further from the truth, and it is an insult to the American people who are the hardest working people on this planet. These are the same people who build America, they keep it running, and they serve its citizens and its visitors every day.

We're talking about family members, friends, and neighbors who are worried and scared that their benefits will run out. They've got homes they can't afford to pay for, doctors they can't afford to see, children they can't afford to send to college now, and time they just cannot afford to waste.

Every weekend I'm in the district talking to people. We have housing workshops, Congress on the Corner. I'm just out in the district, and I repeatedly hear these same tragic stories from people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and they seem kind of at a loss of what to do. They can't really understand what's happening, and they cannot believe that the Republicans could be so cruel and insensitive to their needs. They have worked all their lives, they have paid their taxes, they have contributed to unemployment, they have followed the rules, and they just need a little bit of help right now, a little bridge until the economy turns around so they can get themselves back together. All they're asking for is just a little bit of help to kind of keep body and soul together until this economy turns around.

Just this weekend, I heard from one family, a young couple, Matt and his

wife from Henderson, with their young children. They had worked very hard to get out of kind of a rough neighborhood, to move to a better area away from some gangs so their children could grow up in a safer environment, lost his job. We're trying to help him with a loan modification. If he can't get these unemployment benefits, he's not going to qualify for that loan modification, he's going to lose his house. He is worried to death that he may have to move into his car with his two small children. He is relying on these unemployment benefits just to help him scrape by just for a short time so he can make those payments and stay in that house so that his family will be safe.

Those are the kinds of stories that we hear, and that's why the opposition's obstructionism is just so insulting and so hard to believe and understand. We've got to stand up and fight for these people who are at the risk of losing these important benefits.

It's bad enough that the Republican economic policies from the last administration, policies of lax regulation of Wall Street bankers, policies that incentivize companies to take jobs overseas, policies that gave tax breaks to the wealthy, the very wealthiest, but now won't help working people, it's a shame that those policies—and it's bad enough that they got us into the situation we're in now, but when those same people turn their back on the American folks who need a little help at this point, it's just unbelievable, it is disgraceful. I say to them, have you no shame? Have you no shame?

Thank you for letting me join you tonight.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, and thank you for staying in the fight. This really is a battle, and we are going to win it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield now to my friend, my colleague, the person in this Congress who really, indeed, is the conscience of the Congress, the gentlelady from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I thank my colleague from Ohio for keeping our focus on working people and on the struggles of working people, particularly this environment, this recession, coming out of this recession, people who have lost their jobs, people who need unemployment.

Last week, Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of meeting Louise Strong. She's one of these women who represents workers all across this country. She's a constituent in my congressional district in Maryland. She is unjustly suffering from the loss of her unemployment benefits. Louise told me that after 28 years she lost her full-time job with the Marriott Corporation in October 2008. She was then offered a temporary position, but it only lasted 4 months. For the first time in almost 30 years—I think since she was a teenager—Louise was unemployed and began receiving unemployment insurance. Since then, Louise has fought

tirelessly to get a job, sending out hundreds of resumes, filling out countless job applications, and over a year later she's still without work. And since June, she is no longer receiving her unemployment benefits, benefits that she is entitled to as a working person.

Mr. Speaker, as of six o'clock this evening, I looked at the counter, like Americans can do across this country, just go online, 2,645,088 Americans as of 6 o'clock this evening, including more than 12,000 from my home State of Maryland, joined Louise in losing their unemployment benefits.

□ 1950

Right now, 16 million Americans are out of work, and almost 50 percent have been out of work for 6 months. These are Americans who have spent their entire lives working. They are Americans who want to work, who are out every single day, looking for opportunities to work. They are not lazy. They are not shiftless, and they won't become lazy by receiving unemployment benefits. The misperception about unemployment is great, but unemployment is insurance.

Take Louise. Louise paid into the Unemployment Insurance Compensation Fund for 28 years, and now she wants to draw on the insurance that she has paid into. Americans understand that. It is an insurance fund. People draw on it.

Do you know what they're doing with that unemployment, Mr. Speaker?

They are buying eggs and bread and cereal. They are paying their rents and their mortgages. They are taking care of their children. They are paying their utility bills. It is money that is going directly back into the economy.

Now, Republicans in both Chambers, I mean especially these days in the United States Senate, are keeping busy by arguing that we neither have the resources nor sufficient reason to extend unemployment benefits to these hardworking Americans like Louise Strong. The fiscal resources, they argue, would contribute to the deficit, and that is something they ideologically cannot allow.

Well, I'll tell you. When you have to put food on the table, it is not about ideology. It is about being able to go to the grocery store. They'd know this if they went into the grocery store. Like Mr. McDERMOTT, our colleague from Washington, mentioned, when you go into the grocery store, people are stopping us, and they're asking, "Why can't you just extend unemployment benefits? I worked for this."

Yet, if you believe the quotes from Members of the Republican Party, they're willing to support tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans regardless of their budget impact. They argue, "Congress has the authority, and if we decide we want to cut taxes," we don't have to "offset those costs" for extending tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. They won't offset \$680 million in tax cuts for people with incomes over \$1.5 million a year.

This is really shameful that they can't find the heart or the will to extend unemployment benefits for the 2,644,088 Americans who are seeking unemployment benefits. Shame on them. Shame on them for not extending unemployment benefits. Americans are smart enough to realize the duplicity in these kinds of tactics. They understand the difference between providing meaningful economic solutions and playing off of fears about a rising deficit.

The budget impacts of extending tax cuts far outweigh the costs of extending unemployment benefits. Unemployment benefits go right back into the economy. Senate Republicans aren't concerned at all about the deficit. That is just their shameful politics, and it needs to stop because it is being done off the backs of hardworking Americans.

So there is a fundamental difference that we are fighting for, and it is one that is worth fighting for. We are fighting for working Americans, and Democrats in Congress know that, for every dollar invested in unemployment benefits, the economy gets \$1.50 back. That's a 150 percent return on our investment for extending unemployment benefits. This is smart, especially at this time when so many Americans are out of work.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop holding hostage workers who have been laid off in this recession and the political tactics. We must do what is right for the middle class and not the wealthiest of Americans. It is time to stop blocking emergency relief for those who are out of work, and it is time to extend unemployment benefits so that Americans who have worked all of their lives, like Louise Strong, can get the benefit of the doubt, the benefit of the bargain of what they put into the Unemployment Compensation Fund. People want to work. Unemployment insurance is the bridge that gets them there while our country gets strong, and it is time to extend that bridge to help Americans get back to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for making sure that we keep our eyes on the prize for working Americans.

With that, I yield.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.

I just want to say to my colleague that the point you made is so very important. These are people who have been tax-paying, law-abiding citizens of this country. I just wonder:

How do people sleep at night? If they want to pull the safety net, the rug, out from under people who have always been a part of this Nation's wealth, why do they now say that they are hobos or that they are lazy when they have worked for and have earned everything they have ever received? I just don't understand how we can now say to these same people whom we applauded when they had jobs every day that "we no longer care about you anymore."

I just thank you for making clear that these are people who have paid into this fund. It is not a gift. It is something they have earned, and I thank you so much for that.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield to my colleague, to someone who joins me almost every Monday night and who brings a wealth of information to this body—the honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE from the State of Texas, the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be with you this evening, and I thank you for your leadership as we discuss with our colleagues a very important crisis that is now approaching to which, I hope, our message tonight really provides the stopgap, the finger in the dike, if you will, that is about to overrun itself, which is the numbers of Americans who are crying out to this Congress to do the right thing.

I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her persistent leadership and for her timeliness, because this is a very, very important need that needs action, and it needs action now.

I guess I would like to add to this definition of what “unemployment benefits” are and what it means to extend them and the numbers of Americans who are now waiting, between 2 and 15 million Americans who are now waiting for those benefits to be extended, and the extension is simply adding to the 26 weeks that are now expiring. You mentioned that it was not a gift, and I’d like to suggest something even more.

I wonder if we have read recently the story of the good samaritan. That story has traveled with me throughout my public life. In fact, I believe that we on this floor and we in this body are really public servants. We work for the people, and we are to do the right thing—their bidding—as relates to the enhancement of the quality of life that they have been promised under our Constitution. In fact, the Declaration of Independence really says that we are created with the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That pursuit of happiness has a lot to do with prosperity and with the ability to provide for one’s family. So, in this instance, the good samaritan is the Federal Government, but it is not in a position of handing out something. As the story goes, the good samaritan helps those who have been violated by others, and they could not help themselves. It’s not that they purposely were laying alongside the road. They had been violated by others.

In this instance, the individuals who are on unemployment now and who are looking for an unemployment benefit extension did not create the atmosphere in which they were not working. The very fact that they have ownership to unemployment benefits is the fact that they worked and that they created a trust with the Federal Government. They put their money in a trust while they were working. In addition, they

made a contract. “I will work, and under the present laws, you will help me when I am out of work” when there is evidence, of course, that there is no work for these individuals to secure at this time.

We have made great strides. Under the Bush administration, we were losing 750,000 jobs a month. We have gained jobs because of the stimulus package that the Democratic leadership and Members had voted for, and I am grateful that we took the risk under much accusations and criticism. In that process, we have elevated some to work, but, even with that effort, we find ourselves struggling because there are more people out of work than there are jobs at this time.

So what we are asking the obstructionists to not do is to not block the bridge that these unemployed Americans need. Do not dissolve the trust. Do not breach the contract that we have made with Americans who have invested in their trust funds or in unemployment benefits by their taxes so that, if they were unemployed through no fault of their own, they could secure resources for what all the many stories of Americans will tell you.

These are not resources for vacations. These are not resources for recreation. These are not resources just to stay home and to have an easy day. These people are taking these dollars to keep roofs over their heads, to pay their next mortgage payments, their health care bills, and their utility bills in the heat of the summer. We’re having one of the hottest summers that you could ever imagine—high utility bills. For some families who have children with asthma or respiratory illnesses, they need air conditioning. Their bills are high. Certainly, they simply need to provide food on the table for children, who are innocent, for seniors who may be living with families, who are innocent, for single parent heads of households, who are innocent, who literally have worked.

□ 2000

A story I heard today at a hearing in Memphis on foreclosure about a woman with a number of children who worked as hard as she could, but the industry that she was in, furniture sales, obviously, home sales are down, furniture sales are down, she finds herself upon hard times. She needs unemployment insurance to make sure that she doesn’t lose the small condominium that she has.

These are painful stories. Sixty-two percent of Americans agree that we should extend the unemployment benefits. The Congressional Budget Office policies that could be implemented relatively quickly are targeted toward people whose consumption tends to be restricted by their income, such as reducing payroll taxes for firms that increase payroll or increasing aid to the unemployed, would have the largest effects on output and employment per dollar of budgetary cost; meaning that

extending unemployment benefits is one of the most cost-effective ways of churning the economy but preventing people from collapsing under the weight and the burden of having nothing.

It also speaks to the mental state of people who are struggling. They need to know that there is an out; there’s a way that they can be provided for. And so, we, the Democrats, would provide for up to 99 weekly unemployment checks, averaging about \$300, to people whose 26 weeks of State-paid benefits have run out. The benefits would be extended toward the end of November.

What can I say? It’s a simple request.

I ask the Senate Republicans to stop now from blocking hardworking Americans from being able to provide for their families. I ask you to accept the Democratic proposal of extending these benefits for 99 weeks, up to 99 weeks, and to do what we did in this House.

I’m appreciative of the gentlelady’s leadership and grateful that our leadership came to the floor tonight. Majority Leader STENY HOYER wanted our colleagues to know that the leadership stands firmly behind doing the right thing.

As I close, I want to remind our colleagues of some stories that we heard early on. We were discussing another issue. Some may not be aware that some of our young soldiers have had to be on food stamps in the past. Democrats, of course, have corrected some of that by increasing their wages.

But never let it be said that we are here making tomfoolery out of the budget of this Nation. We’re here standing for people who are truly in need. And tomorrow will be the SOS day, the emergency day, the call day for action. And I hope that colleagues will remember the story of the Good Samaritan and provide and reinforce the trust and the contract made with the American people, that if you work, you invest, that when you need the rainy day umbrella of unemployment benefits extended, we will be there for you.

I yield back to the gentlelady.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much. It’s always enlightening to hear how you approach a subject. I thank you so much for always sharing Monday evenings with me.

I would now like to yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU).

Ms. CHU. Thank you so much. And I truly appreciate the gentlelady from Ohio for her leadership in putting this Special Order together on such a critical topic.

I rise today to call attention to the plight of millions of American families. Across the country, men, women, and children are caught in the crosshairs of Republican political calculations. Instead of providing emergency relief to Americans laid off during this latest recession, a partisan Senate minority is blocking this vital aid.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle should be ashamed. Time and

time again, when asked to solve our Nation's problems, they've instead shown why they've been known as the party of "no," and it couldn't come at a worse time. Throughout our country, we face the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. It's the legacy of 8 years of the Bush administration.

My hometown of Los Angeles lost over 84,000 jobs this past year. That's the greatest decrease for any metropolitan area in America.

Congressional Democrats want to confront this problem head on. That's why a majority of Senators have tried not once, not twice, but three times to temporarily extend unemployment benefits, because any economist will tell you that, in addition to helping individual families, the program stimulates the entire economy.

But the obstructionists just don't care. They don't care about the 368,000 Californians who've lost benefits since their filibuster began a month ago. They don't care about the 2.1 million Americans in other States who've also been cut off. They don't care about people like Marcelo and Maria Gonzalez.

For 34 years, Marcelo worked for the same credit card manufacturing company. The job provided a paycheck and peace of mind. But 16 months ago, his facility cut back production and Marcelo lost his job. Fortunately, unemployment benefits kept food on the table for the Gonzalez's and their two children, that is, until Republicans cut off the program and its aid to families like Marcelo's.

Now, this obstruction doesn't just keep food off American tables. It keeps American people out of work. People like Annette Tornberg. Last summer, Annette lost her job at a Sacramento book bindery, and last month, she lost her weekly \$270 in unemployment benefits. This means that Annette can no longer buy the gas she needs to drive to job interviews. You see, Annette, like the vast majority of those on unemployment, use these funds as a bridge to their next job, not a replacement for it. The notion that emergency relief somehow discourages people from looking for work is not only misguided, it reflects a lack of faith in hardworking Americans like Annette.

This Republican opposition, however, goes beyond a lack of faith. It is a deliberate means of allowing millions to suffer, worrying about whether they can put food on the table, and we cannot let this happen.

It's time for this stonewalling to end. Senate Republicans need to get out of the way so Annette Tornberg can get that new job, so Marcelo Gonzalez can start putting food on the table again, and so that millions of Americans who are out of work, through no fault of their own, can once again get the emergency relief and peace of mind they need to make it through these tough times.

So, tonight, I'm calling on Republicans to stop hurting American fami-

lies, stop playing politics with this problem, and start letting the Senate and millions of Americans get back to work.

And again, I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for this very, very important Special Order and allowing us to say what we need to on this very important issue.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I would now yield to my friend and classmate, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

Mr. GRAYSON. My grandfather, in the 1930s, spent several years of his life, every single day, going to the dump looking for things there that he could sell, looking for things that he could take to the market and sell, because there was no other way for him to survive the 1930s and the Great Depression.

There was no unemployment insurance back then. There was no State benefits back then. There was no help for the people who had no jobs. All they could do, like my grandfather, in desperate straits, supporting a family of seven, was to go to the dump and desperately try to find something he could sell.

□ 2010

That, my friends, is the America that the Republicans are trying to revive. The America of desperate straits, and for them cheap labor. The America where people have nothing, hope for nothing, and are desperate to live to the next day. That is what the Republicans are trying to resurrect by blocking unemployment insurance day after day, week after week, and now month after month.

I've got news for my Republican friends. Every single person who's going to receive unemployment insurance under this bill is unemployed. Every single one of them doesn't have a job. And that's why they need this money.

Now, I know what the Republicans are thinking. They're thinking why don't they just sell some stock. If they're in really dire straits, maybe they could take some of their art collection and send it off to the auctioneer. And if they're in deep, deep trouble maybe these unemployed can sell one of their yachts. That's what the Republicans are thinking right now. But that's not the life of ordinary people, the 99 percent of America that actually has to work for a living, that doesn't just clip coupons and live off of interest and dividends like my Republican friends do.

That's why we need this bill to pass, because of the 99 percent of America that deals with reality every day, the people who will lose their homes if this bill doesn't pass, the people who will be living in their cars if this bill doesn't pass. That's why we need this to pass.

And I will say this to the Republicans who have blocked this bill now for months and kept food out of the mouths of children, I will say to them

now, may God have mercy on your souls.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, we've heard but a few stories of the millions of Americans who stand in need in this country today. The wealthiest Nation in the world has people who are hungry, has people who are homeless.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the question earlier to those who would fight and try to block this legislation. How do you sleep at night? Now I want to say to those same people who would oppose this bill, I hope you don't sleep. I hope you don't get a wink of sleep until you decide that it is important to do what is right for the people of this country. I hope you can't sleep until you understand that our former coworkers, our neighbors, our friends, our family are hurting. And if you can't figure it out as you lay awake, get up and walk to the drugstore, to the grocery store, to the barber shop, any place where people are gathered, and you will find someone who needs your help.

So I would just hope that you stay awake all night tonight so that when the vote comes down tomorrow you will do the right thing.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my strong support for the passage of an extension for Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits. Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits have expired as of June 1st, leaving millions of Americans without the financial lifeline they rely upon. Each week that Congress fails to pass this extension, another 200,000 Americans lose their benefits.

These are not people freeloading off the government. They had jobs, and the years that they worked are reflected in the weeks of benefits they receive. They are also required to look for work in order to receive benefits. With a 9.9% unemployment rate, job prospects remain dismal for the unemployed. With hundreds of applicants for each opening, some hiring managers have even gone so far to exclude the unemployed from applying within their job advertisements.

Without this extension hundreds of thousands of Americans will fall into poverty. Many more will have to make the excruciating choice between basic needs for their family; choices such as going without food or medicine in order to pay the rent or mortgage.

Economists have pointed to the economic value of unemployment insurance benefits. These are dollars that are going back into the market, raising consumption and creating jobs. If we allow millions of Americans to slip into economic peril, it will only serve to hurt the economy and stall the recovery.

This is economically important and ethically important, and I fully support the immediate passage of the restoration of Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits.

TOPICS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRITZ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as always, I'm privileged and honored to address you here on the floor of the