

In my own State, the people who are living in poverty rose to 16.3 percent in 2007 and to 17.2 percent in 2009—and we happen to be the second largest State in the Nation. Those are large numbers of individuals. We have the highest number of soldiers in the State of Texas who have come back from Iraq and Afghanistan, some of whom have had to access food stamps. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that there are currently 5.6 million Texans living in poverty. 2.2 million of them are children.

So I stand here today.

Let our eyes rest upon what poverty truly is.

This little one is a symbol of what poverty really is. It is the innocent and those who cannot speak for themselves.

Over 50 percent of the children who are in foster care in Harris County—that is in Texas—happen to be minority children, African American children. I remember my late colleague Mickey Leland was so overwhelmed by the depth of children who were in crisis and in need that he organized something called the “crisis cradles” so that, when babies had to be taken out of a distressed home in the middle of the night, they could come to a comforting place. Those babies were in poverty, were in crisis, and they became part of the foster care system. That is a system that needs money, not because they’re deadbeats, but because they are innocent children who have come into home situations where women are impoverished, where there may be abuse.

Poverty comes in all forms. 3.9 million residents of Texas rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program. This is all discretionary funding which the \$6 trillion would devastate—again, tap dancing around lifting the debt ceiling. President Reagan said to Majority Leader Baker that it would be an incalculable devastating result if, at the time that he was President, the debt ceiling was not raised. By the way, it was raised 17 times.

Does anyone understand that, constitutionally, the debt ceiling may be unconstitutional? The 14th Amendment, section 4—read your Constitution—says that all debt of the United States, public debt, should be recognized.

So just to conclude, Mr. Speaker, we come today to let America know: Should we let this little baby be part of the losers’ club or should we let our soldiers and their families and grandmothers and grandfathers be part of the losers’ club?

We are standing here today for the impoverished, and we are committed to fighting for them.

I would like to thank my friend from California for managing this time and drawing attention to the millions of Americans living in poverty.

In the coming weeks and months, this Congress will continue to debate the debt ceiling and budget. However, as we discuss cuts, it is imperative that we not lose sight of how funding reductions affect the American people.

CFPB regulations enacted by the bureau are designed to protect the average consumer from fraud and abuse, and prevent financial institutions from employing unfair practices.

In 2009, there were 43.6 million Americans throughout the nation living in poverty. The 2010 Federal poverty threshold, determined by the U.S. Census, is that a family of four is considered impoverished if they are living on less than \$22,314 per year.

Children represent a disproportionate amount of the United States’ poor population. In 2008, there were 15.45 million impoverished children in the Nation, 20.7 percent of America’s youth.

In my home state of Texas, where I represent the 18th Congressional District, the percentage of people living in poverty rose from 16.3 percent in 2007 to 17.2 percent in 2009. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that there are currently 5.6 million Texans living in poverty, 2.2 million of them children, and that 17.4 percent of households in the state struggle with food insecurity.

We must not, we cannot, at a time when the Census Bureau places the number of Americans living in poverty at the highest rate in over 50 years, cut vital social services, not when in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and persistent unemployment so many rely on Federal benefits to survive.

In April 2011, 3.9 million residents of Texas relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program (SNAP) and other food stamp programs to feed their families.

The Republican budget reforms SNAP benefits into block grants, and caps the amount of Federal funding available to the program, with no guarantee that the allocated funding will be sufficient to meet the demand of low income families struggling with hunger.

The Republican budget also cuts \$504 million from the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program, which provides nutritious food to struggling mothers and children. The USDA reports that more than 990,000 Texas families rely on WIC for essential nutrition to keep mothers and their children healthy.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates changes to Medicare under the Republican budget plan will triple the cost for new beneficiaries by 2030 and increase costs for current recipients, including the 2.9 million people in Texas who received Medicare in 2010.

The Republican proposal will enact damaging changes to Medicaid, threatening healthcare resources for the 60 million people, half of them children, that rely on this program to stay healthy. A block grant for funding or a cap on federal Medicaid spending would increase the cost for states and the low income families who benefit from the program.

Harris County has one of the highest Medicaid enrollment records in Texas. Limits and cuts to Medicaid funds would significantly hurt the citizens of Texas’s 18th District. Harris County averages between 500,000 and 600,000 Medicaid recipients monthly, thousands of people who may not have access to healthcare under this budget.

Yes, we must take steps to balance the budget and reduce the national debt, but not at the expense of vital social programs. It is unconscionable that in our Nation of vast resources, my Republican colleagues would pass a budget that cuts funding for essential social programs benefitting children and the elderly in order to finance \$800 billion in new tax cuts for the wealthiest among us.

Perhaps my friends on the other side of the aisle are content to conclude that life simply is not fair, equality is not accessible to everyone, and the less advantaged among us are condemned to remain as they are, but I do not accept that. That kind of complacency is not fitting for America.

I firmly believe that all Americans can come together to protect the most vulnerable citizens in the Nation, to provide relief for the poor and the hungry, because 43 million of our fellow countrymen living in poverty, 15 million of them children, is simply unacceptable. Finally, where are the jobs—cutting \$6 trillion will not create jobs. I am here to create jobs for the poor and our American families.

I urge every Member in this Chamber to look at what unites us rather than what divides us. We are linked by our compassion, and bound by the fundamental edict of the American dream that says we will strive to provide our children with a better life than we had. We can, and we must reach a compromise that will not cut valuable services from those who need government the most.

I thank my friend, the gentle lady from California.

#### COMPROMISING AMERICA FOR THE SAKE OF A DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LANDRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANDRY. Mr. Speaker, when I ran for this office, I didn’t run to get a job. I ran to create jobs.

I know that there is a new poll out there, supposedly, that tells us that a vast majority of Independents wants us to compromise for a deal; but the question which all of the Members of this House should poll their constituents and the American people on is whether or not they want this Congress to compromise their country for a deal.

Do we compromise our country for the sake of simply getting a deal?

I also ran to uphold the Constitution. I supported Cut, Cap, and Balance. It is the compromise that I came here to make. I compromised in agreeing to raise the debt ceiling if we get real cuts, if we cap our spending and if we do what a vast majority of the States in this country do—and that is to have a balanced budget amendment.

What is so wrong with this balanced budget amendment? It’s hard for me to understand, Mr. Speaker.

Then along comes the Gang of Six. Let’s see what the Gang of Six has.

Part one is that they cut \$500 billion in gimmicks compared to our real cuts. How do they cut \$500 billion? Part of it is by changing the CPI formula and indexing for Social Security. Only in this city does the law of mathematics not work. You see, when I was in the second grade, I was taught that  $2 + 2$  is 4 and that  $2 \times 2$  is 4. That hasn’t changed. It’s still that today. But in this town, when you get inside this Beltway, mathematics is different. You can get a different outcome based upon a different formula.

Then the second part is they used the reconciliation process in order to control our spending. Let’s see. The last

time we used the reconciliation process, we got ObamaCare. That's how they passed ObamaCare. Mr. Speaker, they used the reconciliation process to pass ObamaCare; and I have a feeling that what we're going to get out of this Gang of Six is a bill that they're going to ask us to vote for before we know what's in it.

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Thirdly, if through this reconciliation process they come out with the cuts that are necessary to bring them within the amount that they allocate that we need to cut and save, then if that reconciliation process produces a supermajority in the Senate, only after they produce a supermajority of votes in the Senate will they move to shoring up our Social Security system.

What they should be doing is working on getting a supermajority so we can pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. What is so wrong with giving the American people the opportunity to speak, to say, Congress, you have been out of control. You need to balance your books like all of the American families in this country do.

In closing, I want to warn our Members in this Chamber that the Gang of Six proposal cedes the power of the House to the Senate. Now, I came here to uphold that Constitution. The power of the purse, article I, section 7, clause 1, gives the power of the purse to this House. Regardless of whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, you should care about that. Those committees in the Senate should not be dealing with our tax laws or they should only deal with them after we have had a chance to send it to them.

This is what the American people demand. They demand that our Constitution work. And for it to work, revenue and spending starts here in the House. Let's not cede the power of the House over to the Senate.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

H.R. 2055. An act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2055) "An Act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes" and requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. JOHNSON (SD), Mr. INOUE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED (RI), Mr. NELSON (NE), Mr. PRYOR, Mr. TESTER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr.

KIRK, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. COATS, and Mr. COCHRAN to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

#### IMPACT OF CUTS ON POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) for 2 minutes.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it is very easy for some Members of Congress to blindly advocate across-the-board cuts to our investments in people. But I join those today to ask my colleagues to open their eyes to what these cuts really mean. They aren't abstract numbers. For the many people living in poverty, they mean lives irreparably damaged and critical opportunities lost.

My home State, the great Hoosier State of Indiana, suffers from an average unemployment rate of 10 percent. Among veterans, that number is higher. And for wounded vets and others with physical limitations, the numbers are staggeringly higher.

As a result of these economic times, Mr. Speaker, more families live in poverty and rely critically on your and my help. Valuable health care, education, housing, and job-training programs are necessary to provide them with the tools for survival.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, when most of our communities are struggling to recover, we must not turn our backs on the people who are trying to overcome extreme poverty.

I ask my colleagues to remember these vulnerable Americans. They're not burdens. They're our children, our working mothers, our police officers, our firefighters, our neighbors, our vets. They are our fellow Americans.

#### TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT NATHAN BEYERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice and laid down his life for our freedoms, United States Army Sergeant Nathan Ryan Beyers.

Sergeant Beyers, a 2006 graduate of Thunder Ridge High School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, volunteered to serve in the Idaho Army National Guard. In the Army, he served with the 145th Brigade Support Battalion of the 116th Cavalry Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

He deployed with his unit in support of Operation New Dawn in Iraq. On July 7, 2011, he gave his life in the line of duty on a convoy security mission.

Nathan is remembered not only for his heroics on the battlefield, but for the tremendous impact he had on his family, friends, and community.

He was absolutely devoted to his family and his fellow soldiers. As his

wife recalls, Nathan was proud of his job and serving our country. He died doing something he loved and was such a brave person.

Sergeant Nathan Ryan Beyers personifies the honor and selflessness of service as a citizen soldier. His bravery and dedication to duty will not be forgotten. As a Marine Corps combat veteran, my deepest sympathies go out to his family, his fellow soldiers, and all who knew him.

#### OUT OF POVERTY CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) for 2 minutes.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, let me just sort of set the record straight and explain things.

When President Obama came into office, we were in debt, and we were also involved in two wars. And when President Clinton left office, there was a surplus. So we need to make certain that we keep our facts in line.

So I stand here this morning with the Out of Poverty Caucus to voice my opposition to the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act passed by this body yesterday.

Furthermore, I'm very disturbed that many of the policies being promoted by some of my colleagues are unjust and they are just plain wrong. Cutting back on Medicare and Social Security is unfair to the senior citizens who have worked hard all of their lives and should not have to worry at this point whether they can afford to go to the doctor or buy the medicine that they need.

Let me add, I am baffled at times by the fact that many of my colleagues refuse to even consider how unjust their proposals are. Yes, we must reduce our debt burden. I agree with that. But it is unjust to balance the budget on the backs of the poor and most vulnerable citizens in our Nation.

The wealthy must join in the sacrifice. They must be included. According to a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, two-thirds of the income gains in the United States from 2002 to 2007 went to the top 1 percent of the income earners. Many of my colleagues are saying give them more tax breaks. They're not even asking for more. But they're saying give them more.

Many of the Members of this body believe it's all right to balance the budget by taking food out of the mouths of babies, by cutting WIC programs. Imagine how terrible it must be for a mother or father to send their kid to bed hungry at night.

That is why I stand for the Out of Poverty Caucus and say enough is enough.

#### SLASHING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) for 3 minutes.