

While 48.8 million hungry Americans is a daunting figure, it's important to realize that these figures would be much worse if it weren't for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Formerly known as Food Stamps, SNAP is a true safety net program that helps low-income individuals and families buy groceries. The added benefit of SNAP is that it is also an economic stimulus that benefits local economies. It's a simple concept—for every SNAP dollar spent, \$1.84 goes into the economy.

But despite what SNAP critics may claim, SNAP prevented millions of Americans from going without food. Without a doubt, yesterday's food insecurity numbers would have been much worse if it weren't for SNAP.

Mr. Speaker, hunger is a political condition. We have the means to solve hunger if we muster the political will to do so. SNAP is a proven program, one that prevents hunger while stimulating the economy. It's for both the moral reason and the economic reason that any deficit reduction proposal considered by the Select Committee on Deficit Reduction—the so-called supercommittee—must not cut SNAP or do anything that increases hunger and poverty.

Cutting SNAP or similar antihunger programs will increase hunger, an action which I believe is morally indefensible. That's why I will be circulating a letter urging the 12 members of the select committee not to approve any deficit reduction policies that will increase hunger or poverty in this country. I urge my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to join with me in this important letter.

A responsibility of government is to protect the most vulnerable people in our country while doing everything we can to ensure that we pass on the strongest country possible to our children and our grandchildren. Cutting SNAP, the program that literally prevents millions of Americans from going hungry, would be wrong. And collectively, we must do everything we can to prevent any actions that increase hunger in America.

These food insecurity numbers are sad and disheartening, but they are also a call to action. We can do better. We must do better.

TAX ON MEDICAL INNOVATION

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, last year, as part of the new health care reform law, a new \$20 billion tax on medical devices was put in place. Since the day this ill-conceived tax was first proposed on medical innovation, I have said it would reduce access to new life-saving technologies and put American jobs on the line. Yesterday, a study was released that confirms just that. According to the report, this new tax on

medical innovation, which goes into effect in January 2013, could cost America as many as 43,000 jobs in just the next several years.

Mr. Speaker, there is still time to repeal this tax. There is still time to pass my bill to prevent this job-crushing tax from being implemented and ensuring that we do everything possible to retain these high paying, high-tech manufacturing jobs here in the United States.

Made in America innovation of medical devices is an American success story. But if we don't stop this new innovation tax, we could see more jobs go overseas and the decline of one of our leading U.S. industries.

PROVEN POLICIES RATHER THAN POLITICAL POSTURING

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, America needs jobs, and it's time we focused on proven policies rather than political rhetoric and posturing.

We need a real jobs program that builds on actual successes. The President tonight will be putting forward his job creation proposal. Unfortunately, some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have already decided that they are not even going to come and respect the President's joint appearance tonight. Talk about closed minds.

According to reports, he will call for infrastructure investments and middle class tax relief through an extension of the payroll tax cut, policies we know can create jobs. I look forward to working with the President and those who are willing to work with us on the other side to jump-start our economy and create American jobs.

To that end, I have introduced two bills to incentivize private sector job creation. They include tax cuts and private sector tax incentives, ideas that work, ideas that Republicans traditionally have supported.

I introduced H.R. 11 to extend the successful Build America Bonds program to leverage private sector investment to facilitate needed infrastructure improvements. Repairing bridges, building hospitals, renovating schools create jobs now. During the last 2 years under the Build America Bonds program, for every Federal dollar we invested, we leveraged \$41 of private sector support for more than 2,000 projects in every State and created hundreds of thousands of jobs. Build America Bonds is the kind of public-private partnership that Republicans generally support, and we know from the Recovery Act that they create jobs.

I have also introduced legislation to expand the tax deduction for business startups. Lending and venture capital investments in small businesses, especially startups, continue to lag significantly behind traditional levels. Ex-

tending this tax deduction for startup expenses gives entrepreneurs greater certainty for their financial planning and greater incentives to start creating jobs. These tax cuts and small business startups will enable the private sector to do what it does best—create jobs.

Make no mistake: The challenge is daunting. The Great Recession was the worst economic collapse in 80 years. At its height, America was losing 700,000 jobs a month; so Democrats in the last Congress took action. We passed the Recovery Act, which cut taxes for 95 percent of all Americans and increased infrastructure investment, saving and creating hundreds of thousands of construction jobs. We provided educational support to train a more highly skilled workforce. We enacted a hiring tax credit to spur private sector hiring of recently laid off workers, and we saw results. After months of horrific job losses, America began more than 1 year of monthly private sector net job growth, peaking earlier this year with 3 straight months of more than 200,000 private sector jobs created. In fact, in the last 18 months, we created 2.4 million private sector jobs. The public sector, however, has lost jobs every single month this year. Isn't this the result for which the Republicans actually advocated?

□ 1020

Didn't they tell us that cutting government will free up the private sector? Then why did we have just 17,000 private sector jobs created in August? In fact, the job results this August, with the Republican economic plan in action, continued cutting and zero net jobs created.

It's time we acknowledge that the Republican "cut to create" philosophy cuts the job market and creates only uncertainty. The choice is simple: Politics versus job creation. We're all going to be listening with great attention tonight to the President, and I hope all of us attend.

FINDING COMMON GROUND FOR JOB CREATION

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

Mr. DOLD. Over the past several weeks, I've had the privilege to meet with people from all over Illinois's 10th Congressional District. Whether I was at a senior center or holding a town hall meeting, one thing was clear: The people are concerned about the economy, and they want Congress to work together to find solutions. Throughout August I toured several factories, held town hall meetings, hosted a job fair where over 600 people attended, and organized meetings with manufacturers and entrepreneurs. At each and every one of these events people eagerly shared their ideas about how to spur the economy. And one thing also was clear, that they were fed up with Washington's politics as usual.

Mr. Speaker, we know Washington doesn't create jobs. Small businesses and entrepreneurs do. But Congress does have the responsibility to create an environment that fosters job creation and removes barriers that stifle innovation and economic growth.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, we're going to hear from the President. I'm looking forward to finding common ground so that we can put people before politics and progress, before partisanship so we can get America back to work.

WE NEED A BOLD VISION FOR THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. We have the economy the tax cuts will give us. Eight years of Bush tax cuts, 2 years of Bush-Obama tax cuts, and now the individual Obama tax cut proposals. We have \$5 trillion borrowed, distributed generally with the Bush tax cuts, principally to the job creators, as the Republicans call them—millionaires and billionaires—and in little bits to working Americans. It's not working. So why would we do more of the same?

Apparently, the President tonight is going to propose again to extend the Social Security tax holiday. Two things wrong with that, maybe three. One, it's not putting anybody back to work. Two, we borrowed \$110 billion this year to put into the Social Security trust fund because we cut the income of Social Security by \$110 billion. And now we're being told perhaps we should double down. Let's give both the employers and the employees a little bit of a Social Security tax holiday.

That's \$20 a week to someone who earns \$50,000 a year. Not bad. They can use it. It's probably about the difference they pay for filling up their car to get to work. But ExxonMobil isn't hiring. Or maybe they use it to put food on the table for the kids or maybe buy junk from China. It's an old economic theory: Put money in the pockets of Americans and the idle plant capacity in America will rev up and hire Americans to make things in America. We don't make things any more because of failed trade policies. Apparently, failed trade policies are going to be part of this jobs proposal.

Three more Bush free trade proposals now adopted by Obama. That would be a disaster if that's a part of this so-called package. It would be a travesty.

Let's forget about the tax cuts. Let's not just have a little dribble or drab of infrastructure investment. People say, Oh, the stimulus failed. What happened? All your infrastructure investment, 40 percent of that stimulus was tax cuts; 7 percent was investment in infrastructure. Yes, it worked, but it was a pathetically small part of the package in a country that has a \$3 trillion infrastructure deficit, with dams that are failing, levees that are failing, highways that are crumbling, bridges

that are falling, transit systems that are based in 19th- and early 20th-century technology; and our competitors are building out a 21st-century infrastructure.

We need a bold vision. We don't need another little dribble or drab in infrastructure. We sure as heck don't need another one of these stupid shovel-ready project things. We need long-term investment. When you do long-term investment, the private companies who build all these projects—these aren't government projects. Taxpayers fund them. The private sector builds them. Many small businesses, they will go out and buy equipment. When they buy equipment, especially if we put Buy America requirements on all these proposals, they'll buy things that will be made in America that will put people back to work in manufacturing.

So this isn't just about construction jobs. It's about manufacturing jobs, it's about engineering jobs, it's about small business jobs. But it needs to be a major, bold, long-term vision on building a 21st-century infrastructure for America to make us more competitive in the world.

Enough with the tax cuts. They don't work. They don't put people back to work. Guess what? If you don't have a job, you don't get a tax cut, do you? Let's do something for the people who need jobs and for the future of the country and for our kids with a grand long-term vision tonight, not more of the same.

PURPLE HEART HOMES HELPS WOUNDED VETERANS LIVE WITH DIGNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, over the district work period, I had the chance to attend a celebration sponsored by the Statesville Chamber of Commerce to honor the founders of a remarkable organization called Purple Heart Homes, based in Statesville, North Carolina. John Gallina and Dale Beatty, both combat-wounded disabled veterans, founded Purple Heart Homes in 2008 to help other disabled veterans live with dignity.

Beatty and Gallina were severely injured in Iraq in 2004 when their Humvee was blown up by an anti-tank mine. As a result of their injuries, these two friends discovered a new passion—helping other service-disabled veterans of all ages. Their mission is to provide appropriate housing solutions to disabled veterans at little or no cost. They know firsthand the value of returning home after serving America while deployed, and they understand just how much it means for service-disabled veterans to have a usable and accessible home.

Their leadership, hard work, and commitment to honoring those who have sacrificed so much for their Na-

tion has not gone unnoticed. Last month, Time magazine featured them on its front cover as examples of a new generation of emerging leaders. The people of Statesville and North Carolina could not be more proud of these veterans and their exemplary dedication to serving others.

John Gallina and Dale Beatty have overcome great odds to succeed in their mission of serving others. Their stirring example gives me confidence that they have only just begun to accomplish great things. I hope that many others follow in their footsteps and are inspired to serve those in need.

MEMO TO THE SUPERCOMMITTEE: CUT WAR SPENDING, NOT THE SAFETY NET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, today the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction holds its first organizational meeting; and it does this as it begins its work on reaching the spending cut benchmarks called for in the debt ceiling compromise.

I have a suggestion for the 12 members who have been entrusted with this responsibility. I know exactly the place they should identify for their savings. It's a government program that's been notorious for waste and cost overruns. It's been cited many times over by neutral experts for its excess and inefficiency. It hasn't achieved its stated goals and it is deeply unpopular with the American people.

I'll give you a hint. It's not Medicare or Social Security. It's not food stamps or unemployment benefits or Pell Grants or WIC. It's not any of the programs that comprise the safety net for our Nation. It's not any initiative designed to lift up the American people and giving them a chance to rise above difficult economic times.

No. It's a decade-long effort that has been fiscally irresponsible, eroded our moral authority around the world, and cost our Nation more than 6,000 precious lives.

□ 1030

That's right, Mr. Speaker, our ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are the perfect target for the spending cuts our country needs to restore fiscal balance.

I have written a letter to the supercommittee, cosigned by 23 of my colleagues—so far, they're still signing on—strongly urging the committee to take a hard look at the overwhelming crippling costs of these wars. Afghanistan alone is costing the American people at least \$10 billion a month, and to date, Iraq and Afghanistan combined have sucked the Treasury dry to the tune of a staggering \$2.3 trillion—not million, not billion, \$2.3 trillion. Frankly, this would be a rip-off at a fraction of the cost. If these wars were