

continue to maximize our opportunities for intervening in ways that fit individual victims' needs. We need culturally competent services. We need services for children. And we must make the most of every opportunity for education and advocacy and prevention services. I sure hope my colleagues will join me this month and every month in the fight to support victims of domestic violence through funding more programming.

THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the millions of Americans who woke up this morning facing a separate and unequal America, a separate and unequal America marked not by the American Dream and limitless opportunities, but an America of the unemployed and poverty stricken, an America marked by struggle and fear of the future—the struggle just to find a job, the struggle to keep their home, the struggle to put enough food on the table.

Americans all across the country are struggling and believe that their government is not looking out for their best interests and instead is working just for rich bankers and massive corporations. People across the Nation are losing faith in our democratic processes and, thank goodness, are taking to the streets to tell their friends, neighbors, and their government that much more must be done for the American people and not just for the super rich. They are saying very loudly that the obstacles to achieving the American Dream must be removed. Too many families across our great Nation are wondering for the first time if our children's generation will be left worse off than the generation before it.

I urge the Republican leadership of the House to quickly pass the President's American Jobs Act to restore the American economy and bring some relief to the millions of Americans who are struggling every day just to get by.

Mr. Speaker, more than 46 million Americans will apply for food stamps this month. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, previously known to many as food stamps, provides the average person a benefit of about \$133 a month—that's \$4.50 a day, \$1.50 a meal. There is a Member of the Senate, however, who seems to believe that there might be millions of Americans who are getting rich by applying for food stamps. Let me assure the good Senator from Alabama that it is not fraud that is causing the rising demand for nutrition assistance in America, but the years of failed economic policies that have lined the pockets of corporate billionaires and left average Americans behind. A program with one of the lowest fraud rates of any program in our entire government is not out of control.

But let me state as clearly as I can, having to apply for food stamps to put enough food on the table to keep your children from going hungry is not like winning the lottery. One in seven Americans do receive food stamps, but millions more are eligible but don't apply. And I'm certain that each and every family would be willing to trade in their book of food stamps for a decent job with livable wages and benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I'm taking part in the Fourth Annual Food Stamp Challenge, along with several other Members on this side of the aisle—Congressman TIM RYAN of Ohio, Congressman JOE COURTNEY of Connecticut, Chairman EMANUEL CLEAVER of Missouri, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE of Ohio, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ of Florida, Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois, and Congresswoman GWEN MOORE of Wisconsin. And I invite every Member of Congress to join us in living for a few days or a week on what a family on food stamps will face every day of the year. I hope that the challenge will open our eyes to the challenges and the struggles of the millions of Americans who face hunger each and every day. Living in poverty and facing food insecurity means missed meals, poor health, and lost productivity.

Even if you choose not to join the Food Stamp Challenge, I encourage you all to stop and consider what it means to have \$31.50 to spend on food for the entire week. Stop for a moment and consider that there are over 46 million Americans who have to swallow their pride and ask for help just to put food on the table. As a former recipient of food stamps myself as a single young mom, I know how difficult this is. I did it because I had to do it just to get over some very difficult times. Forty-six million Americans who reached out to their fellow Americans during their time of need—and I thank the American people during my time of need—they were glad to be there to lend a helping hand. We cannot make cuts to SNAP or Medicaid or Social Security right when children and senior citizens need them the most. So I hope that my colleagues take up the Food Stamp Challenge.

I also encourage each Member to join me and the 43 other Members of the Congressional Out-of-Poverty Caucus in ending poverty in America to ensure that no family in our country needs to ever face hunger again. The Out-of-Poverty Caucus is working to reignite the American Dream so that every man, woman, and child is provided the opportunities to achieve the American Dream. But right now, these 47 million people living in poverty and on food stamps need us to protect the safety net.

And for those individuals and persons of faith, we have to remember that this is a moral issue also. I want to remind you of the Scripture, "To whom much is given, much is expected." It's also an

economic issue though; for every \$1 spent on food stamps, \$1.79 is placed into the economy.

THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. On Thursday, I will join my colleague Representative BARBARA LEE, Catholic Charities USA, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the National Council of Churches, and several other Congress Members that my colleague mentioned to participate in the Food Stamp Challenge, an effort to draw attention to the crisis of hunger in America.

□ 1100

As part of the challenge, participants will eat on the average SNAP allotment. That's what we call it now. There's no more food stamps. Now people get a card that they can actually use to charge the food. But we'll eat on the average SNAP allotment of \$1.50 per meal for a week.

Having participated in this event in the past, I know it is extremely difficult to eat a healthy diet under such strict budgetary guidelines. Nevertheless, SNAP is the difference between chronic hunger and a basic meal for 45 million Americans.

Now, obviously, that means I'm going to give up any Starbucks coffee. But even the \$1 coffee that I was able to buy in the cloakroom just before I came out here is something that will be just too precious to spend. That's almost a whole meal's worth just to buy that cup of coffee.

In 2010, 14.5 percent of American households were food insecure, meaning they lacked the capacity to put enough food on their tables. They relied on nutrition programs like SNAP to make ends meet.

In this, the wealthiest country in the world, one out of four American children is now food insecure, meaning there are nights that they go to sleep hungry. It really is a moral issue, as my colleague pointed out.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—that's SNAP—provides an essential safety net for American families. More than half of SNAP recipients are children.

The Republican budget passed in the House—with no Democratic support, I might add—would cut \$127 billion from SNAP over the next decade, a 20 percent cut. The House Agriculture appropriations bill—passed, again, with no Democratic support—would also cut the SNAP program.

You know, these may be just numbers, \$127 billion here and several billion dollars there, but their effects are very real for people across the country. I recently received dozens of messages on paper plates from EZRA Multi-Service Center in Chicago. They rely on SNAP to make ends meet, and they

fear the repercussions of further cuts. The plates answer the question: What would happen to you if SNAP benefits are cut?

Heather C. in Chicago said that it's already hard enough to feed her children as it is, and cutting SNAP would mean her kids would suffer. She says, "My food stamps stretch out for about 2 weeks out of the month, so if I didn't have them, then it would cost me an extra \$250 a month to feed my children. Food these days is so expensive, and the more help we can get to feed our kids the better."

And, by the way, most of the people on the SNAP program are on just for a temporary amount of time, just like the Congresswoman said, to bridge a gap when they're really in need.

Jack K. worked for decades as a taxicab driver but retired with very little wealth. He says now, "I now live in subsidized housing and depend upon soup kitchens and food pantries for food."

An anonymous client from Chicago writes that if SNAP benefits are cut, "it would be impossible for me to feed my four children every day. It's bad enough that because of this recession there's a lack of jobs. That alone makes it difficult to provide for them. These programs give people the temporary help they need to be okay until a job is obtained. Please take into consideration the children who depend on their parents for survival."

One commenter said she needs the program because she lost her life savings to cover medical costs which continue to this day. "Instead of being middle class, I am now living below the poverty level," she says. "Without assistance, I would be back in a homeless shelter. As it is now, I am unable to afford utilities, between my rent and medical expenses."

And Robert B. in Chicago said the bad economy has left him in long-term unemployment. "I lost everything. If my benefits were cut, I wouldn't eat for awhile."

We have options in this wealthiest country in the world. For example, I've introduced H.R. 1124, the Fairness in Taxation Act, which would raise revenues by increasing tax rates on the 1 percent richest Americans. Income over \$1 million a year would be taxed at 45 percent, moving up to 49 percent for income over \$1 billion. And, by the way, that's lower than during the Reagan years.

So I invite my colleagues to join me in the Food Stamp Challenge and learn, just even for a week, what it's like to live on \$1.50 a meal.

IT'S TIME TO THANK OUR WARRIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's really a pleasure to have the opportunity to

speak this morning and to congratulate President Obama for keeping his promise and keeping his promise to the American people.

I've had the privilege of traveling to Iraq on many occasions, the privilege of greeting our soldiers coming from Texas, Houston, and all over America. I've had the sadness of attending the memorials and funeral services of fallen soldiers, the sadness of talking to parents and relatives asking the question: "Why?" I've even gone and mourned with mothers around the issue of convincing Presidents, in this instance, President Bush, to end the war.

I've been amidst tiny white crosses that have symbolized the numbers of those who died in Iraq; and in my office, for a period of time, we accounted for the numbers of individuals who died in Iraq, in particular, from the State of Texas.

I cochair the Afghan Caucus. In times that I have gone to Iraq in the Green Zone that is familiar to many, I've even taken enemy fire; and that is, of course, enemy fire attempting to hit those in the Green Zone, nothing in comparison to our soldiers and certainly never experienced the heinous act of an IED.

It is time to bring those warriors home and to say thank you, spending almost \$900 billion, close to \$1 trillion. And I'd like to see the amendment that I passed in the Defense authorization bill utilized. It was a national proclamation, a day to welcome home all of our combat veterans. It would include those who have fought wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other wars in times past and other incidents around the world.

It's time to have a celebration and a response to our soldiers like we've never had before. It's time to place ribbons; it's time to stand in streets; it's time to celebrate through parades. And I would commend those who have served and continue to serve and our veterans. It seems that that is the appropriate response.

And how silly it seems that in the State of Texas we have to be fighting the potential implementation of a Confederate flag. We had a press conference in my district with persons from around the State and around the county standing up against the State-issued Confederate flag. In fact, we announced for the State of Texas: Why couldn't we put the American flag on our plates, our license plates, to symbolize our commitment to our soldiers and our respect for the unity of this Nation?

But yet, under Governor Perry, we are fooling around with the idea, with his appointees, of a Confederate flag license plate, one that does not honor the Confederate soldier. For those who wish to honor them, there are places and museums in your home. But to put on the State license plate a flag that symbolized fear, intimidation, oppressive actions, brutality, slavery, and the

death of slaves, some 20 million that came over, many that were thrown overboard, and the brutality of Jim Crowism is an outrage and will not be tolerated.

While there is continued growth of millions of millionaires and the average salary in the United States is \$26,000, it seems that we should stay focused on job creation and not be distracted in a State as large as Texas, with the largest majority minority community of Latinos and African Americans and the largest number of uninsured, that the government of the State of Texas would take time to fool around with a Confederate flag, a hostile symbol that is so egregious to many in this country.

□ 1110

And so, Mr. Speaker, I hope that Congress will focus on passing the jobs bill, recognizing the need of the American people. I hope my colleagues will look toward States that would create a hostile atmosphere such as a Confederate license plate in a way that would show that many times they're not worthy of receiving Federal funds if they want to spend their time spending money on something as dastardly as that—and I come from the State—because there are so many needs, such as was mentioned earlier by my colleagues, in the limitations in the SNAP and food stamps where children are starving.

Why don't we focus on the goodness of bringing us together such as my earlier comment of welcoming home our troops with a national proclamation pursuant to the amendment that I passed on this floor of the House 419-0? Why don't we get rid of things like Confederate flag symbols that represent oppression? And why don't we come together in this Congress to pass the President's American Jobs Act so salaries are not going down? And why don't we hold States accountable when they get Federal dollars that if they don't hire small businesses and those who are unemployed, Mr. Speaker, that we cut their Federal funds? And I truly mean that.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence. Again, let's get rid of the bad things in the United States, such as symbols of Confederate flags insulting much of the American people, let's support SNAP, let's support people going to work, and let's make sure that there are people earning more than \$26,000 by getting them back to work.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.