

even while they pass bills that slash affordable housing programs and cut nutrition funding for women and children, a program which is very important.

Americans know that the rich should pay their fair share and that working men and women of America deserve more. They don't want this generation to be the first generation of Americans who won't do better than the last one. Americans want to move ahead, and they want those who have benefited the most from our economy to pay what they owe to the 99 percent of the American people who are the real engines of our economy and the heart of our democracy. The generation that is marching in the streets right now is asking what went wrong in the pursuit of the American Dream.

So let's pass H.R. 589 and give Americans a little more time to land that job that gets their family back on their feet. You know, when you run out of unemployment benefits after 99 weeks, that's it. That's it. So we must extend unemployment benefits, but we also need to extend, as our bill says, at least an additional 14 weeks so that those who have hit the 99-week wall have some form of survival until we can figure out a way to create jobs.

So we must pass the American Jobs Act to reinvest in the future of this country and build up our roads and bridges, repair our sewer lines, and build 21st century schools for all of our students.

Let's put America back on track with American jobs, American manufacturing, American ingenuity, and American leadership toward a brighter tomorrow for all Americans.

We must build these ladders of opportunity. We have to remove these barriers and obstacles. And let me tell you, not having a job is a huge barrier and a huge obstacle to reigniting the American Dream.

And so we must extend unemployment benefits, but we must not forget that there are those who have had 99 weeks who are no longer even eligible for unemployment benefits. And as the AP article says, we now have over 2 million people who won't even be eligible for unemployment compensation. That's 2.2 million people that won't even be eligible even if we extend unemployment benefits.

So let's work to try to figure out how to, one, create jobs, but to provide some safety net for those who really do want to work. And people want to work.

[From the Associated Press, Nov. 6, 2011]

#### MOST UNEMPLOYED AMERICANS ARE NO LONGER RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

WASHINGTON, DC.—The jobs crisis has left so many people out of work for so long that most of America's unemployed are no longer receiving unemployment benefits.

Early last year, 75 percent were receiving checks. The figure is now 48 percent—a shift that points to a growing crisis of long-term unemployment. Nearly one-third of America's 14 million unemployed have had no job for a year or more.

Congress is expected to decide by year's end whether to continue providing emergency unemployment benefits for up to 99 weeks in the hardest-hit states. If the emergency benefits expire, the proportion of the unemployed receiving aid would fall further.

The ranks of the poor would also rise. The Census Bureau says unemployment benefits kept 3.2 million people from slipping into poverty last year. It defines poverty as annual income below \$22,314 for a family of four.

Yet for a growing share of the unemployed, a vote in Congress to extend the benefits to 99 weeks is irrelevant. They've had no job for more than 99 weeks. They're no longer eligible for benefits.

Their options include food stamps or other social programs. Nearly 46 million people received food stamps in August, a record total. That figure could grow as more people lose unemployment benefits.

So could the government's disability rolls. Applications for the disability insurance program have jumped about 50 percent since 2007.

"There's going to be increased hardship," said Wayne Vroman, an economist at the Urban Institute.

The number of unemployed has been roughly stable this year. Yet the number receiving benefits has plunged 30 percent.

Government unemployment benefits weren't designed to sustain people for long stretches without work. They usually don't have to. In the recoveries from the previous three recessions, the longest average duration of unemployment was 21 weeks, in July 1983.

By contrast, in the wake of the Great Recession, the figure reached 41 weeks in September. That's the longest on records dating to 1948. The figure is now 39 weeks.

"It was a good safety net for a shorter recession," said Carl Van Horn, an economist at Rutgers University. It assumes "the economy will experience short interruptions and then go back to normal."

Weekly unemployment checks average about \$300 nationwide. If the extended benefits aren't renewed, growth could slow by up to a half-percentage point next year, economists say.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that each \$1 spent on unemployment benefits generates up to \$1.90 in economic growth. The CBO has found that the program is the most effective government policy for increasing growth among 11 options it's analyzed.

Jon Polis lives in East Greenwich, R.I., one of the 20 states where 99 weeks of benefits are available. He used them all up after losing his job as a warehouse worker in 2008. His benefits paid for groceries, car maintenance and health insurance.

Now, Polis, 55, receives disability insurance payments, food stamps and lives in government-subsidized housing. He's been unable to find work because employers in his field want computer skills he doesn't have.

"Employers are crying that they can't find qualified help," he said. But the ones he interviewed with "weren't willing to train anybody."

From late 2007, when the recession began, to early 2010, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits rose more than fourfold, to 11.5 million.

But the economy has remained so weak that an analysis of long-term unemployment data suggests that about 2 million people have used up 99 weeks of checks and still can't find work.

Contributing to the smaller share of the unemployed who are receiving benefits: Some of them are college graduates or others seeking jobs for the first time. They aren't

eligible. Only those who have lost a job through no fault of their own qualify.

The proportion of the unemployed receiving benefits usually falls below 50 percent during an economic recovery. Many have either quit jobs or are new to the job market and don't qualify.

Today, the proportion is falling for a very different reason: Jobs remain scarce. So more of the unemployed are exhausting their benefits.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has noted that the long-term unemployed increasingly find it hard to find work as their skills and professional networks erode. In a speech last month, Bernanke called long-term unemployment a "national crisis" that should be a top priority for Congress.

Lawmakers will have to decide whether to continue the extended benefits by the end of this year. If the program ends, nearly 2.2 million people will be cut off by February.

Congress has extended the program nine times. But it might balk at the \$45 billion cost. It will be the first time the Republican-led House will vote on the issue.

#### BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I again will keep coming to the floor twice a week when we're in session to talk about bringing our troops out of Afghanistan. Bin Laden is dead, and we need to start thinking about, as the lady said before me, let's think about what America needs and not what Afghanistan needs. And that brings me to this point of the talk I want to give today, Mr. Speaker.

On February 16, 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Gates testified before the House Armed Services Committee, which I serve on, and I'd like to read his comments:

"By the end of this calendar year, we expect less than 100,000 troops to be deployed in both of the major post-9/11 combat theaters, virtually all of those forces being in Afghanistan. That is why we believe that, beginning in fiscal year 2015"—and that's important, Mr. Speaker. "That is why we believe that, beginning in fiscal year 2015, the United States can, with minimal risk, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by the end of 2014, in accordance with the President's strategy."

Mr. Speaker, I read that because I read the same statement to the new Secretary of Defense, Mr. Panetta, whom I have great respect for, and I asked him, Do you have the authority to change those timelines? He said no, because this is what the President has agreed to.

Well, Mr. President, I'm calling on you to reconsider. Because beside me is a poster, and beside that poster is a flag-draped coffin coming off of a plane at Dover. And the headlines in the

Greensboro paper said, "Get Out." It is time to bring our troops home. They've done everything they've been asked to do.

And that reminds me, a few weeks ago, I went to Walter Reed at Bethesda—it's the new consolidated military hospital here in Washington—and I saw four marines from my district, Camp Lejeune. Three of the four had lost both legs. The one that had not lost both legs was a lance corporal who asked me, with his mom in the room, Congressman, why are we still in Afghanistan? And I looked into the young man's face and I said, I don't know why we're still there. You all have won many, many battles, and it's time to bring you home. And the only thing he said, Mr. Speaker, was, Thank you.

That brings me to a letter that I received from a retired marine down in my district about a year ago. He said, "I am writing this letter to express my concern over the current Afghanistan war. I am a retired marine officer with 31-plus years of active duty."

Let me go down in the letter because there is another point I want to make.

"Our senior military leaders in Afghanistan continue to say that we are making progress, but at what cost to our country? This war is costing the United States billions of dollars a month to wage and we still continue to get more young Americans killed. The Afghanistan war has no end state for us. I urge you to make contact with all the current and newly elected men and women in Congress and ask them to end this war and bring our young men and women home."

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"If any of my comments will assist you in this effort, you are welcome to use them and my name."

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why we are—we've got this debt crisis facing our country, and yet we've got a corrupt leader in Afghanistan named Karzai that one day likes America, and the next day he hates America; and we send him \$10 billion a month, and it's borrowed money from the Chinese.

And yet we're going to say to the American people we're going to cut the programs for little children; we're going to cut the programs for senior citizens. But Mr. Karzai, you'll get your \$10 billion.

And that brings me toward the end of my comments, Mr. Speaker. I contacted a marine general who's been a very dear friend of mine for a number of years, and he sends me questions to ask in committees to the Secretary of Defense and others who might be testifying.

But something that has always stuck with me is what he closes this email with—and I have many emails—"What do we say to the mother and father or the wife of the last marine killed to support a corrupt government and a corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?"

That is the question. And I hope the American people will call on Congress,

both parties, to bring our troops home before 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people, and I ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people.

And three times I ask, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

Let's bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived audience.

#### SMART SECURITY: PROTECTING AMERICA BY RELYING ON THE VERY BEST OF AMERICAN VALUES

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this Congress believes that keeping the Nation safe, as well as providing benefits to our veterans as promised, is our very top priority. It's a question, however, of just how do we do that. And a decade of war and military occupation is not the best way.

Whenever spending cuts are on the agenda, as they are right now with the supercommittee racing to meet its deadline, military and defense programs continue to get a pass. Why should the Pentagon get a blank check while safety-net programs have to look for "change in the couch cushions" to keep their programs going?

It's time for the Pentagon to share in the sacrifice, especially since it's been so generously funded over the years, a 50 percent increase in the DOD budget over the last decade, bigger in real dollars today than it was at the height of the Cold War.

Ending the war in Afghanistan would save at least \$10 billion a month—actually, it's more like 12 now—to say nothing of the lives we would save and the injuries that would be avoided.

But I think we should go further in cutting the base Pentagon budget. Just to give a few examples, I'm a longtime advocate of eliminating the V-22 Osprey aircraft. It's a program that, if we eliminated it, would save \$10 billion, and it's a program that is notorious for cost overruns and for huge safety concerns.

And we can dramatically reduce the Nation's nuclear arsenal. Why do we need—I ask you this—why do we need 5,000 warheads when just one is enough to destroy life on Earth?

We can wring huge savings out of the system by fundamentally changing how we think and how we deal with national security. For pennies on the dollar we can keep America safe by implementing a smarter security policy, by supporting a civilian surge over a military surge.

My SMART Security platform, which is H. Res. 19, would make war a very last resort and adopt a different posture toward the rest of the world. It's not isolationism. When I say I want to bring our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, I'm not saying we abandon those countries. I'm saying we must engage them in a different way. That means investing in their people and their capacity to lead lives free of deprivation and despair.

So instead of weapons systems, let's invest more on development in humanitarian aid, more on maternal health programs, more on mosquito nets to prevent malaria, more on education, health care, microlending, et cetera, et cetera.

You know what would promote our national security, Mr. Speaker, like nothing else is a genuine, well-funded commitment to eradicating poverty and malnutrition in the developing world. Instead of invasions and occupations, SMART Security emphasizes diplomacy. It emphasizes the civilian surge, multilateralism, and peaceful conflict resolution.

It also calls for more investment in energy independence, nuclear non-proliferation, democracy promotion, and civil society programs abroad. Isn't that a better way to combat terrorism than sending 100,000 troops to a part of the world known for widespread anti-American sentiment?

We must stop equating national security with armed aggression because that's how we ended up with out-of-control Pentagon budgets and an ever more dangerous world. In fact, Mr. Speaker, military force has been proven to oftentimes undermine our security instead of enhancing it.

SMART Security protects America because it relies on the very best of American values, moral leadership, compassion, our commitment to peace and freedom. It costs pennies on the dollar. It is efficient and fiscally responsible.

So let's bring our troops home, cut the Pentagon budget, and implement SMART Security now. Then we can have real cost savings in the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

#### PFC CODY NORRIS—TEXAS SOLDIER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, halfway around the world, in the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, the American warrior stands fighting the forces of the enemy.