

Hispanics and Asians also saw much higher rates of poverty, 28 percent and 16.9 percent, respectively, compared with rates of 25.4 percent and 12.3 percent under the official formula. Their poverty levels rose after the government took into account safety-net programs such as food stamps and housing, which have lower participation among immigrants and non-English speakers.

In contrast, African-Americans saw a modest decrease in poverty, from 27.8 percent under the official rate to 25.7 percent based on the revised numbers. Among non-Hispanic whites, poverty rose from 9.9 percent to 11 percent.

Economists long have criticized the official poverty rate as inadequate. Based on a half-century-old government formula, the official rate continues to assume the average family spends one-third of its income on food. Those costs have actually shrunk to a much smaller share, more like one-seventh.

The official formula also fails to account for other expenses such as out-of-pocket medical care, child care and commuting, and it does not consider noncash government aid, such as food stamps and tax credits, when calculating income.

In reaction to some of the criticism, the government in 2010 asked the Census Bureau to develop a new measure, based partly on recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences. It released national numbers based on that formula for the first time last year. This year's release features a 50-state breakdown on poverty, prompted in part by local officials such as New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg who have argued that the official measure does not take into account urban costs of living and that larger cities may get less federal money as a result.

The goal is to help lawmakers to better gauge the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs, although it does not replace the Census Bureau's official poverty formula.

Among the findings:

—If it weren't for Social Security payments, the poverty rate would rise to 54.1 percent for people 65 and older and 24.4 percent for all age groups.

—Without refundable tax credits such as the earned income tax credit, child poverty would rise from 18.1 percent to 24.4 percent.

—Without food stamps, the overall poverty rate would increase from 16.1 percent to 17.6 percent.

"These figures are timely given the looming expiration of two key measures that account for part of these programs' large anti-poverty impact: federal emergency unemployment insurance and improvements in refundable tax credits" such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, said Arloc Sherman, a senior researcher at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal-leaning think-tank. "Letting these measures expire at year's end could push large numbers of families into poverty."

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 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Alan Keiran, Office of the United States Senate, offered the following prayer:

Father God, as the Psalmist says, "I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together." (Psalm 34:1-3)

We depend on You, King of Heaven's armies, to reveal to our Nation's leaders Your plans to prosper our Nation and its people, Your plans to give us hope and a bright future. Inspire every public servant to seek Your wisdom and pray for Your daily favor to fall upon our country and our world.

And may You, Lord, be with those who are in harm's way and their families. This I ask in the Name above every name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BIGGERT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

ISRAEL TO THE RESCUE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as waves crashed across the east coast a few weeks ago, taxpayer dollars were still being funneled as foreign aid around the globe. And while families watched as superstorm Sandy washed away their homes and the livelihoods they had built for many years, over 158 countries were still busy cashing checks from America.

Mr. Speaker, out of all the countries we give aid to, I understand Israel was the only country to send a lifeboat in the wind and rain and flood to help our victims in America. Israel took the initiative to help the victims during this natural disaster. The Israel Flying Aid

organization has been giving gas to hospitals and batteries, food, and generators to superstorm Sandy victims.

We've been there for many countries in the world. We send them our money, but it's no secret that many of them hate us. They betray us, and yet we still write them checks. While the United States needs to reevaluate giving foreign aid to nations that hate us, thanks should be given to our faithful ally Israel.

And that's just the way it is.

COMBAT DRONE PROGRAMS

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. American drones in Pakistan have killed as many as 3,378 people. Drones in Yemen have killed as many as 1,952 people. Drones in Somalia have killed as many as 170 people. We've not declared war on any of these nations, but our weapons have killed innocent civilians in all of them. Highly reputable research shows that the number of high-level targets killed as a percentage of total casualties is estimated at about 2 percent.

According to The Washington Post, the Obama administration is working on efforts to institutionalize the practice of targeted killings by unmanned drones abroad. The volume of these killings challenges the morality and the legality of the attacks. We are creating a precedent for other nations that are developing the same technology. China has just unveiled a new drone.

The drone program has thus far been conducted with no oversight from Congress or any judicial body. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that programs that are being conducted in the name of our Nation are legal, transparent, and accountable. We are holding a briefing tomorrow about this exact matter.

NICHOLAS DOMINGUEZ, A TRUE HOMETOWN HERO

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to applaud a true hometown hero—Nicholas Dominguez of Lockport, Illinois—for saving a woman who nearly drowned in Lake Michigan.

Earlier this year, Nicholas was enjoying time with his mother on a beach on the Indiana shore when he noticed an empty raft and swimmers in distress. Thanks to his quick thinking and selfless instincts, Nicholas was able to rescue Evelyn Hernandez, pulling her safely to a sandbar.

Several years ago, I had the privilege of nominating Nicholas to the U.S. Naval Academy, and I was pleased to congratulate him on his recent graduation. Today, as a second lieutenant in the Marines, he has already put on full

display his commitment and dedication as a U.S. officer. His actions in Lake Michigan reflect the marine motto "Semper Paratus"—or "always faithful." I applaud Lieutenant Dominguez for making his country and his Corps proud.

ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO DEFEND HERSELF

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, in the past 24 hours alone, terrorists along the Gaza Strip have launched more than 250 rockets into southern Israel. That's 250 rockets in 1 day since Hamas began its strikes.

Imagine 250 rockets raining down in 1 day on your community anywhere in the United States. We would expect our government to act to protect our citizens. Israel is acting to protect her citizens. Israel has the right to protect her citizens from terrorist attacks. In the early hours of this morning, three Israeli civilians died when a rocket from Gaza struck the top floor of an apartment building. Later in the day, a rocket hit just 10 miles from Tel Aviv.

The United States mourns the loss of life at the hands of Hamas terrorists. We will not waver in our support of Israel's right to defend herself against these and other attacks. The right of any nation to defend its citizens can never be called into question. Mr. Speaker, at this challenging time for our great ally, the United States stands with Israel.

ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOLD. I rise today to address the recent events in the Middle East. Our ally Israel, like every nation, must have the right to defend itself and its citizens against ongoing acts of terror.

We know now that the international community frequently looks for opportunities to delegitimize Israel's actions, which is why it is essential that we here in the United States of America loudly and publicly express our support for Israel's right to defend itself in the face of Hamas' terror.

Hamas is responsible for over 800 rocket attacks on Israel in 2012—with over 250 rockets indiscriminantly fired on Israel's citizens in the past 5 days alone. Because of this escalation, 1 million men, women and children in southern Israel have been forced to live under the threat of attacks and must now know where the nearest rocket shelter is located. As I speak, thousands of Israelis are sleeping in bomb shelters out of fear for their lives and the lives of their children.

Mr. Speaker, no nation would sit back and tolerate its population living

under such threatening conditions. Certainly, we here in the United States would not.

PASS THE FARM BILL

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, it's time to get to work. When Congress recessed for the election, we left much undone, including the farm bill, which is critical to the economy of my district and to our country.

Just this weekend, The Fresno Bee got it right when they wrote:

There are some in Congress who suggest delaying the farm bill until after new Members begin serving in January. That's the easy way out, but it does not serve the interests of the Nation's farmers.

It also doesn't serve the families in need and children who depend upon the nutrition programs in the farm bill. It's time to get back to representing the interests of our constituents, not partisan politics. Dairymen are having a tough time in California. Our farmers need certainty, and only a 5-year farm bill can provide that. Both versions of the farm bill also save billions of dollars.

We have bipartisan agreement on this bill. We need to pass this bill so that we can go to conference committee to resolve the differences.

□ 1210

WE CAN AVOID THE FISCAL CLIFF

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, the American people are breathing a cautious sigh of relief now that the long election season is finally over. The House and Senate are both in session, and the American people are watching. We have much work to do and not much time to do it.

With unemployment hovering near 8 percent, our economy is still struggling. To get America back on track, we must work together, Democrats and Republicans, to find solutions to our economic challenges.

We all know it's not until small businesses begin growing and creating jobs that our economy will recover. The key to our future lies in new start-ups, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

Working together in a bipartisan way, we can avoid the fiscal cliff, provide certainty to these small businesses, remove barriers to success, and help renew the prosperity of the American people.

Last week our constituents spoke, and the mandate they gave us was a mandate to work together. We must listen to them and work with open ears and open minds to arrive at bipartisan solutions to the very serious issues facing our country.

THE COUNTRY NEEDS TAX RELIEF

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, we are indeed back here in a lame-duck session with the most important issue facing us, which is a deadline on taxes and revenue. By previous action, we have to act or certain conditions will be created that will cause us to lose jobs and hurt our economy and raise taxes on everybody.

The President, the Senate, the Democrats, and the House are all in agreement that 98 percent of the country needs tax relief that has been given through the Bush tax cuts, and they should be extended.

I think everybody agrees that we don't need to make draconian cuts to services for people, Social Security or Medicare, or defense. The only issue is my colleagues on the other side, the Republicans in the House, who seem to continue to want to give tax relief to the upper 2 percent. That's what divides this Nation and this Congress right now, tax cuts for the richest 2 percent.

I call on my Republican colleagues to work with Speaker BOEHNER and allow him to lead this country in working with President Obama and to resolve this situation.

RECOGNITION OF DAVE WHITE, CHIEF OF THE NATURAL RE- SOURCE CONSERVATION SER- VICE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Dave White, chief of the Natural Resource Conservation Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. After a career with NRCS that spanned nearly four decades, this week he announced his plans to retire.

Chief White has spent his career working to improve the Nation's land management policies and practices. Over the years, Dave has been an indispensable resource of experience and knowledge, from helping to craft the 2008 farm bill conservation title, to his leadership in implementing and improving these programs at NRCS.

Dave's work has helped the Nation achieve our shared objectives for sustaining agriculture and the natural resources upon which we all depend.

One area in particular is voluntary incentive-based conservation programs where Chief White has delivered a demonstrated track record in leveraging resources to maximize limited resources. In my home State of Pennsylvania, these efforts are helping to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, while also keeping farms profitable and ensuring that these farms remain in agriculture over the long term.