agreements with foreign governments. Through loopholes and questionable recruitment activities, people whose incomes exceeds the SNAP threshold, illegal immigrants, and even the deceased are counted among those receiving taxpayer benefits. Able-bodied adults, too, are receiving food stamp assistance at record levels.

In a down economy, heightened demand makes sense, but with the President's 2009 waiver of work requirements for SNAP recipients, the percentage of able-bodied Americans receiving aid has increased 163%. By comparison, total participants in the SNAP program, including the able-bodied population, increased 70.3%.

This week in the House of Representatives, we voted to make America's food stamp program stronger and more accountable to the American people.

The Nutrition Reform & Work Opportunity Act is designed to preserve the integrity of the SNAP program for families, and especially children, who rely on food stamps. Reforms in this legislation put stronger protections in place to ensure that SNAP money is reserved only for those who qualify for food stamps and isn't wasted on government public relations campaigns, medical marijuana purchases, or lottery winners. Questionable loopholes and recruitment activities which extend assistance to those who make too much money are also ended.

Further, consistent with the bipartisan belief that the solution to poverty is found through work, not just aid, the Nutrition Reform & Work Opportunity Act reinstates Clinton-era SNAP work requirements. These rules stipulate that able-bodied adults, with no dependents, must be looking for work, developing job skills, volunteering for community service, or obtain employment to draw food stamp benefits. Not only will this provision ensure that the truly needy continue to receive aid, it will help beneficiaries compete and prepare for jobs.

An unchecked SNAP program that wastes its limited resources on publicity campaigns or subsidizing those who do not qualify is unable to provide the best service to the people it is designed to help. It is the job of this Congress to ensure the program is held accountable as a steward of taxpayer dollars and as a safety net of last resort for the needy.

Nothing in this legislation adds to SNAP's eligibility requirements, so not one law-abiding beneficiary who today meets SNAP's income and asset tests, and who is willing to comply with applicable, bi-partisan work requirements, will lose their benefits.

Yet this legislation has its critics on the right and on the left.

Many on the left are crying foul because enforcing eligibility rules, requiring work or job search from the able-bodied and eliminating loopholes will lead to some current SNAP beneficiaries being dropped. Although that is true, it is because there are people today drawing benefits who should not be.

One of America's greatest strengths is that we are a nation of laws. Regardless of the example set by this White House, the government cannot operate outside of the law. We cannot pick and choose which to obey. If our laws set forth a standard for eligibility, recipients must meet the standard.

On the right, some are asking whether the savings and reforms in this legislation go far enough. I echo those concerns, and agree that even $40 billion in SNAP savings seems a small sum compared to Washington's vast mandatory overspending machine.

Do we need to find more savings? Absolutely. But the Nutrition Reform & Work Opportunity Act improves the existing SNAP system and gives our country a unique chance to reform a mandatory spending program and rid it of inexcusable waste, fraud, and abuse.

The Nutrition Reform & Work Opportunity Act is a step in the right direction toward ensuring the integrity of the SNAP program and that benefits are reserved for those who qualify and for those working to get back on their feet. Supporting this legislation is the responsible and conservative choice.

IN SUPPORT OF FISHING GUIDES IN THE EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the government shutdown, middle class and working poor Americans all across this country are suffering, including fishing guides whose livelihood depends on tourism in Florida's Everglades National Park.

On October 9, 2013, nine days into the government shutdown, more than 100 boats gathered outside the shuttered Everglades National Park to rally support for re-opening park waters. I wholeheartedly support the efforts of these hardworking fishing guides.

One guide stated that he has lost $10,000 in revenue since the waters were closed. There are around 350 such licensed guides in the area alone, not to mention the hundreds of employees who work in and around the park. It is time that Speaker BOEHNER and his Republican colleagues stop this charade, end the government shutdown, and let people get back to work.

This shutdown exemplifies government at its worst. American families should not fall victim to Washington's dysfunction. Wrong-headed cynical politics is interrupting the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of American workers who have done nothing wrong. Government is supposed to help its citizens, not make it harder for them to put food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that Congress must re-open the government. South Florida's fishing guides are ready to work. It is absolutely outrageous that politics is standing in their way.

RECOGNIZING MYKE REID

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Myke Reid for his distinguished service and commemorate his retirement from the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). From the beginning of his postal career as a clerk in 1976, through serving as the Legislative Director of the APWO since 2004, Mr. Reid has tirelessly fought for and proudly represented our Nation's postal workers.

Since arriving in Washington, DC in 1984, Mr. Reid played a major role in shaping important legislation and worked tirelessly as a strong and effective advocate for postal workers across the country. As first the Assistant Legislative Director of the APWU, then the Legislative Director, he played a key role in the development and passage of many bills that made life better for people everywhere. His accomplishments can be seen in the bills he fought for, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, reform of the Hatch Act, and the Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act. His career was dedicated to serving our nation's postal workers and strengthening our nation's postal system.

Mr. Reid's accomplishments and dedication to serving others extended far beyond the halls of Congress and the legislative arena. While working, he remained very involved and active in his community. His energy and enthusiasm also carried into his love of golf and photography. He also was a great fan of jazz music and the great New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Myke Reid on his retirement and commending him for his years of service to our nation's postal workers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 11, 2013

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for the following votes on October 8, 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on H.J. Res 84, rollcall vote 530; "nay" on rollcall vote 531, and "nay" on rollcall vote 532.

While I am a strong supporter of the Head Start program, I oppose the Republican piecemeal bills to fund the government. Vulnerable children and their families need and deserve critical government services that this legislation does not fund. I continue to stand ready to vote for a clean continuing resolution to end the Republican Shutdown and fund the entire Federal Government, including Head Start, the Community Services Block Grants, Child Care aid, and nutrition programs.