

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS:
HUNGER IN AMERICA

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the stance of the Congressional Black Caucus in their daily fight to preserve, support and increase funding for initiatives to end hunger in America. The Congressional Black Caucus has proposed a fiscally sound and morally responsible budget that protects the SNAP program as well as other programs that are vital to vulnerable communities.

As a member of the House Hunger Caucus, Out of Poverty Caucus, and proud co-sponsor of H.R. 3353, the "Extend Not Cut SNAP Benefits Act" I am dedicated to educating my fellow Members on hunger-related issues as I understand the devastating impact hunger has on millions of children and families in our country.

The cuts in SNAP benefits implemented on November 1, 2013, reduce the amount per meal that beneficiaries receive to \$1.40, affecting not only the families that rely on SNAP but also straining the resources of local food pantries that will be pressed to fill the gap, to keep people from going hungry. Together, the SNAP meals lost in 2014 from the scheduled cuts—nearly 3.4 billion meals—would exceed the projected annual meal distribution by Feeding America food banks around the country.

Further, a family of 4 will receive \$36 less each month which translates into a week of groceries that will be taken away from poor working families, disabled persons, the elderly and children.

This reduction in benefits is the largest wholesale cut in the program since Congress passed the first Food Stamps Act in 1964 and affects nearly one in seven Americans or more than 47 million people. The cut is equivalent to 16 meals a month for a family of three.

SNAP programs lifted 4.7 million Americans above the poverty line in 2011, including 2.1 million children. Approximately 91% of SNAP benefits go to households with incomes below the poverty line. SNAP is also a win for the economy because every \$1 in benefits generates \$1.70 in economic activity.

In the 18th Congressional District of Texas, my constituency, there are 154,741 persons who will suffer because of the reduction in food assistance to an average of \$1.40 meal. Studies have documented the inadequacy of this level of funding to meet the minimal nutrition requirements for children and families. Hundreds of thousands of Texans may go hungry if the cuts to the SNAP programs are not restored.

As I stated earlier I am a strong advocate for H.R. 3353, the "Extend Not Cut SNAP Benefits Act", which maintains SNAP benefits at the pre-November 1, 2013 levels and allows the House and Senate to work to reach agreement on the Fiscal Year 2014 budget for food programs.

Congress has the power to enact supporting legislation for the individuals, families, and communities that struggle with food security in our country. I encourage the collaboration of both sides of the aisle to work for this common good.

FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND
ENERGY SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1965, a bill that would unnecessarily and irresponsibly give away public lands to Big Oil, even as U.S. oil production is at a 24-year high and the oil industry receives billions of dollars in tax breaks per year.

H.R. 1965 would remove the safeguards that protect taxpayers and public lands by requiring the Interior Department to grant leases on 25 percent of the land requested by oil companies every year and imposing strict deadlines on application review, automatically approving leases after just 60 days even if safety and environmental reviews are not yet complete. It would also enact barriers to public review—if a community wanted to challenge a leasing decision, it would have to pay a \$5,000 fee to be heard. If a case took more than 60 days to adjudicate, it would be automatically denied.

Mr. Chairman, under this Administration, domestic oil production has increased by 35 percent on Western public and Indian lands. Oil and gas companies are currently only developing about a third of the public lands they already lease. This bill, which would prioritize energy production over hunting, fishing, grazing, conservation, and every other use of public lands, will not reduce energy prices or increase energy security. It would simply cede control of natural resources held in public trust to already-profitable big oil companies. I urge a no vote.

PROTECTING STATES' RIGHTS TO
PROMOTE AMERICAN ENERGY
SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2728) to recognize States' authority to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2728, which would prevent the federal government from ever implementing a uniform baseline level of safety and environmental protection in hydraulic fracturing operations across the country.

Today's bill would preempt a rulemaking process that is not yet completed and require the federal government to defer to state regulations of fracking on public lands, no matter

what those regulations may be. Moreover, because the bill forbids the Department of the Interior from exercising oversight over "any component of the fracking process, it could prevent application of basic protections under a variety of existing environmental laws.

States vary widely in their efforts to manage the expanded use of hydraulic fracturing and the federal government has a responsibility to provide a minimum baseline of oversight to protect our public lands, public safety, and public health. H.R. 2728 would block any proposed standards and impede existing law, and I urge a no vote.

FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND
ENERGY SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes:

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1965, the so-called Federal Lands, Jobs, and Energy Security Act. This bill would fundamentally undermine the way our public lands are managed by forcing us to prioritize oil drilling over all other land uses. Current law requires the federal government to manage public lands by taking into account a variety of uses, including recreation, wildlife habitats, and indeed, oil exploration. This bill would throw this successful historical precedent out the window and put the destructive practice of oil drilling at the top of the list. If this would happen in my home state of Florida, we would see devastating effects to the Florida panther—an iconic symbol of our state and also one of the most threatened species in the world. Panthers play a critical role in our ecosystem, but their habitat has been greatly diminished and now there are only 160 panthers. Fortunately, the government recognizes that we need to consider important species like the Florida panther when making land-use decisions. Today's legislation could destroy efforts to protect endangered species like the beloved Florida panther. That's why I urge a "no" vote and yield back my time.

RECOGNIZING THE 90TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. George Greek Orthodox Church during their 90th Year Anniversary.

The Valley's Greek population has roots dating back to the late 1800s. Weekly religious services were not available at the time, so a

Greek Orthodox priest would visit periodically to perform required services such as marriages, baptisms, and funerals. The infrequent visits by the priest prompted several individuals to consider establishing a church. In 1923, "The Greek Community of Fresno" was incorporated, and a priest from San Francisco began to visit regularly.

The first St. George Greek Orthodox Church was built in "Greek Town," where most of the Greek families had settled. The building served the Greek community for 50 years, and still stands today.

When World War II ended, families grew and began to move into other areas of Fresno. Businesses were expanding throughout the city, and a new church was built in 1955. In the years that followed, many new traditions such as the Greek Food Festival started. Not only is the festival an annual fundraiser for the church, but residents from all over the Central Valley attend the celebration so they can enjoy dancing, food, and rich Greek culture.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 90th Year Anniversary of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church. Their mission to provide an infinite amount of faith, hope, and love to the public is highly respected and praised.

RECOGNIZING OF THE ACHIEVEMENT WEEK BANQUET FOR THE PI LAMBDA LAMBDA CHAPTER OF THE OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY, INC.

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Achievement Week Banquet for the Pi Lambda Lambda Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. The chapter includes the communities of Prince William County, the City of Manassas, the City of Manassas Park and Stafford County.

The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was founded on Friday evening, November 17, 1911 by three Howard University undergraduate students, Edgar A. Love, Oscar J. Cooper, and Frank Coleman, and their faculty adviser, Professor Ernest E. Just. Together they laid the foundation of an organization based on the core principles of manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift. For one hundred years, the membership has upheld a strong tradition of friendship and civic engagement.

At this year's Annual Achievement Week Banquet, the Pi Lambda Lambda Chapter honors the Achievement Week Award recipients. These awards are given to the men and women who, through their character and actions, preserve Omega Psi Phi's four founding principles. I congratulate the following individuals on being awarded these honors:

The Citizen of the Year Award: Congressman GERALD E. CONNOLLY

The Colonel Charles Young Military Leadership Award: Brother Colonel Drefus Lane

Omega Man of the Year: Brother Albert Woods

Founders Award: Brother Dr. Bryon Cherry, Sr.

Basileus Awards: Brother Lee Bennett, Jr. and Brother Erik Noel

Special Basileus Award: Leonard and Susie Gillespie and Gregory Scroggins: K2 Restaurant and Lounge

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in conveying our appreciation for years of civic service by the Pi Lambda Lambda Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. It is civic groups like the Pi Lambda Lambda Chapter that define the character of our communities and give measure to our generosity of spirit.

SHARING STORIES IN SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

HON. JOE GARCIA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the following are stories of individuals affected by our nation's broken immigration system:

Story 1: I have been in this country for five years. I came from my country, Honduras, because I was a victim of domestic violence from my father. When I reported the abuses I was in danger because there were gangs that threatened me, and I was very scared. I was able to leave my country with no problems, thank God. I sought the opportunity to continue studying but I was asked for papers and they required me to have legal status. I waited for the Dream Act because, at the time, I was hearing a lot of talk about it. But, unfortunately, I didn't qualify for deferred action. I got desperate because I didn't want to spend much time without continuing my studies. A friend of mine suggested I go to Canada. When I was crossing through Buffalo, six immigration officials stopped me and treated me very badly. I told them that I was not a criminal and asked them not to treat me like that. I didn't resist, behave violently, or do anything for them to treat me like that. They made me feel like the worst person in this country, just because I didn't have documents. I just wanted the opportunity to continue my studies and I wanted for them to help me. I entered a jail with criminals, with women I had never seen in my life, that scared me just by looking at them. I could not sleep, could not eat in peace. I just kept thinking that at any moment there could be violence. Thank God my fiancé's family and church members raised the money to pay \$10,000, and now I'm waiting for the court because I have been given a deportation order. I don't want to continue living in the shadows. We are not criminals. We are people with dreams, with the same heart, the same blood that runs through our veins. We are people just like the citizens here. We are also part of this country, this is our home. Despite everything I've always considered it my home because I'm thankful I am here and that I'm still alive. If I would have stay in my country I would've died a long time ago. I only ask for immigration reform to take place soon, because the future of so many people is at stake. Update: Her deportation order has been postponed until 2014. Her child is due in September of 2013.

Story 2. I support a roadmap to citizenship, as a woman that came to this country 18 years ago and that have been through some hard times. Thank the Lord, today I am a U.S. citizen, and my children are U.S.-born citizens. I support a roadmap to citizenship for all the people that are suffering, that don't have a driver's license, that don't have documents and are afraid to lose their

families. I have an uncle who I adore and who is always afraid just with the thought that he could be deported one day, that's why I say yes to a roadmap to citizenship for all the people who are contributing to this country.

Story 3: I say yes to citizenship. I am Cuban, even though I was not [undocumented] when I came to this country I understand the need for the sisters and brother that are undocumented. I just heard the stories and what people feel when they have to drive, these are honest men and women that come to this country to give everything for their life. This is the land where honey and milk flow we are all immigrants and we need citizenship. Every person that does not have a criminal record should have citizenship. All those honest men and women, parents, grandparents, children without documents to go to school and who are getting behind because of not having their documents.

Respond, Obama, and all members of Congress. We say yes to citizenship. I am involved even though I am already a citizen. We have to support our brothers and sisters in the name of Jesus. May God bless and grant them with great wisdom. In the name of Jesus.

Story 4: I came to the United States in 1991. I planned to stay here for three years to finish my law degree. In 1994 I had an accident. That was my first battle. One can face many injustices in this country. I was denied medical attention at a hospital in Michigan. I did not have money, and since I wasn't covered by insurance I had to leave.

I stayed in the state of Michigan with this issue until February 1995. Then I moved to New York. In New York I was diagnosed with a torn knee ligament (MCL) on my right knee. The cost of the surgery was \$65,000. Therefore, I didn't have any other option than to go to Mexico. I had the surgery done after six months. I suffered a lot. Can you imagine? My right knee meniscus and ligaments were torn and the pain was unbearable. The hospital's policy of no discrimination posted on the walls in big bold letters is completely false.

I had another accident in 2006 here in Immokalee, Florida. The lawyers of Azteca Supermarket tried to blackmail me with threats of calling immigration and many other threats of this kind. Then, I basically dropped the case after writing a letter to the judge in which I called the lawyers cannibals and the fact that they were lawyers didn't mean I couldn't press charges against them. The lawyers of Azteca Supermarket dropped the case as well.

I have witnessed situations in which workers have been hit by their employers. In fact, I have experienced that same situation myself. When I was living in New York, I used to work at a store where a [Korean] hit me. I have witnessed many injustices in this country. We need comprehensive immigration reform so that employers stop abusing undocumented workers. Today I am diabetic, perhaps because I didn't get treatment on time. After my first accident I went through a period of depression and much suffering, watching how apathetic people were. I didn't comprehend how even though I was working, the hospitals here in United States wouldn't treat me. I was contributing to the economy of this country and the hospitals denied me the right to medical attention. There are many things I would like talk about, but time is short. I'd like to talk to Congress. I'd like to talk to the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and I'd like to tell them myself why it is important to have immigration reform.

If we are contributing to this economy on a daily basis with our work and sweat, it is inhumane deny us medical attention, education and the opportunity to prepare ourselves to be better. I want to reiterate that