

I wonder how many of them have ever tried to budget for themselves or for their spouse and child at \$31.50 per person for a week. It doesn't go too far. In fact, I ended up a little bit over because we miscalculated on weighing some apples. I had three apples, but I had to put one back and would have had to cut back a little bit more on the pasta to make the \$31.50 budget limit.

There are these incredible stereotypes out there about the SNAP program, the food assistance program formerly called food stamps, that all these people are on welfare. No. Actually, 92 percent of the people getting SNAP benefits are not on welfare. Half of them are children and 22 percent are on Social Security or Social Security Disability. So they're either seniors or disabled. The rest are unemployed or underemployed. And at \$31.50 a week—a benefit that the other side of the aisle wants to cut—many of these people now can't make it through the month. This is pretty paltry stuff if you look at it and you think about doing this week in and week out.

Most people in Oregon—and Oregon is a lower cost State than many for food—run out sometimes in the third week of their benefits and they have to get emergency food assistance. Our food banks provided 1 million boxes of emergency food assistance last year. Yet, those on that side of the aisle would begrudge these people, their children, these seniors, these disabled an adequate budget for a very minimal diet.

□ 1010

It's extraordinary to me.

My State—and most people don't think of us this way—we are the fourth highest per capita in terms of food stamp utilization. Fourth highest per capita, because outside of our major urban areas, the economy has not recovered from the collapse that Wall Street caused in housing and other areas. We had recreational vehicles; that industry is gone. We had some high tech; that's moved on. We had a lot of construction, home building, wood products—pretty well decimated. The rural areas I have in my rural counties—real unemployment of 20 percent. People are struggling to make ends meet, and we're going to cut their benefits? They want to work. Some of them are working, and we even have a higher minimum wage than most States, but it still won't get you through to the end of the month for your family. This is just outrageous.

There are ways to cut this bill. We're going to stop paying—finally, at last, we're going to stop paying people not to grow things. But now we're going to have a new program of crop insurance. And some estimates are that this program—which goes to anybody with an unlimited income in this bill, that is, if you're a corporate farm and you earn \$2 million a year, the government is going to pay for 80 percent of your crop insurance cost. Eighty percent subsidy from the taxpayers. Why is that?

We could cut back on the eligibility, and this would be a pretty big income for any farmer I know of. If you earn over a quarter-million dollars a year, go buy your own crop insurance. I think it even could be a little lower than that in my State and in most States. That would save as much money as they're going to save by eliminating food assistance to hungry kids, seniors, unemployed and underemployed, and disabled Americans. These are the cruelest cuts possible.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment later today which would restore these benefits.

U.S. ARMS SYRIAN REBELS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there is a war going on in Syria. Some call it a civil war. It may have started out as a civil war, but it has escalated. The Government of Syria, is ruled by the dictator Assad. He's a bad guy; no question about it. Several rebel groups, and we're still not sure who all these people are, are trying to remove him from power. World powers seem to be taking sides in this battle.

You have the Syrian Government supported by Iran and Russia. There's also this little terrorist group called Hezbollah supporting the regime. But on the other side, you've got the rebels, numerous groups, including al Qaeda, a terrorist group. You've got Saudi Arabia; Qatar; you've got the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt supporting the rebels. Turkey is concerned, and even Great Britain has weighed in on this, a former colonial power in the region. And so more and more groups and nations are lining up in this war in Syria that's been going on for 2 years; 100,000 people have been killed by both sides. Refugees are leaving the country and going to other countries.

I recently was in Turkey on the border of Turkey and Syria, and I saw a refugee camp that had 150,000 Syrians that had escaped the war in Syria. No question the U.S. should help with humanitarian aid.

And finally now the United States, after 2 years, we've decided we're going to take sides. The President has said we're going to give arms to the Syrian rebels and that they're going to be vetted so we make sure that we're not giving those to other terrorist groups. I don't know if we're going to do a universal background check on the rebels, or what; but small arms for the rebels? Here's what the President said:

We're not taking sides in this religious war between Shia and Sunni. Really, what we are trying to do is take sides against extremists of all sorts.

Well, it seems to me what we are really doing is taking both sides and we're arming extremists at least on one side. And I ask the question: What is the national security interest of the United States to be involved in some-

body else's war? There isn't one. We don't have a national security interest to be involved in this war. The United States seems to have a habit of getting involved in other people's business; and once again, we have made the problem in Syria our problem by being involved and supporting the rebel groups.

What is the goal of the United States's involvement? This war is not going to be easily won by the rebels. Are we going to then add more military power to the rebels? What's the end game? What is the goal here, to put another rebel group in power in another country?

You know, we've kind of forgotten what we did in Libya. There's Muammar Qadhafi, the bad guy of Libya. No question about it, a horrible person. So what does the United States do? We support the rebels who overthrow the Libyan President, the Libyan dictator. We sent small arms. And you know, Mr. Speaker, those small arms are still in North Africa, and they've spread all over North Africa. We don't know what has happened to those weapons that the United States gave to those rebels. Only time will tell.

So this is not our war; yet we seem to be very interested in supporting this, as the President correctly said, a religious war. You've got the Shia's and you've got the Sunnis. They've been at each other since the year 630, and they haven't resolved their conflicts and yet here a century and a half later, another conflict is involved. It's a religious war between two groups in the Middle East. It is escalating. The United States' national interest is not at stake. What the United States should do and work toward is a political solution to this problem, not a military solution to this problem, and do what we can to resolve it politically and help really both sides resolve it.

This is not our war, Mr. Speaker. We have no national security interest. There's no American goal. We don't know the goal. We don't know the end result, and we don't even know who we are arming as those rebels. They could be made up of criminals, patriots, al Qaeda. We ought not be involved in this war that has no national security interest for the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

IN SUPPORT OF SUGAR REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express support for the Pitts-Davis-Goodlatte-Blumenauer amendment to the agriculture bill. Our amendment to H.R. 1947, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013, will not repeal the sugar program; it only seeks to reform it. We have farm programs for wheat, corn, cotton, and many other crops. These programs give direct assistance to farmers and allow market prices to

be set by supply and demand. Farmers receive help, but not at the expense of workers and consumers.

The sugar program is different. It helps sugar producers by hurting other people, and that's just not right. There are other ways sugar farmers who may need help could receive assistance without embracing an outdated system of strict government controls that cost consumers \$3.5 billion per year in higher prices and over 112,000 lost jobs in the sugar-using industries in the last decade.

During fiscal year 2011, the wholesale price for U.S.-refined beet sugar averaged 55.8 cents per pound. This is considerably higher than the average recorded cost during the 5-year period covered by the 2002 farm bill provisions for FY 2003 through FY 2007, which was 27.6 cents per pound. Last month, the average price for U.S.-refined beet sugar was 26.3 cents per pound, whereas the average world-refined sugar price was 21.9 cents per pound. Historically, our sugar program keeps our markets higher regardless of demand and/or supply compared to world prices for sugar.

The U.S. manufacturers who use sugar as an ingredient to produce processed foods and drinks are having to always pay more domestically than manufacturers overseas. This is the exact reason why candy companies are moving to countries like Canada, Mexico, and other offshore places.

□ 1020

We need an industry that is subject to capital market forces without government intrusion, that places quotas on the amount of sugar that can be grown in the United States, and restricts access to foreign-grown sugar.

The current sugar program benefits 4,714 sugar farmers in the United States, while threatening the jobs of 600,000 workers in sugar-using industries and, thus, imposing a hidden tax on every American consumer. The Pitts-Davis-Goodlatte-Blumenauer amendment would lower the price-support loan rate in accordance to historic levels and reduce taxpayers' liability for keeping prices high, save taxpayers money, allow more sugar imports, and provide the U.S. Department of Agriculture more flexibility to modify domestic marketing allotments.

Making changes to the sugar program will help level the playing field and provide sugar-based manufacturers much-needed resources to keep people employed and modernize their production facilities.

Let's not help the few at the expense of the many. Vote "yes" for the Pitts-Davis-Goodlatte-Blumenauer amendment.

THE FARRM BILL

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the FARRM Bill is now before us. It's a

measure originating in the House of Representatives, whose majority was elected on a clear mandate to stop wasting money. Yet all this bill does is continue to waste money.

Yes, it tightens up a little on automatic eligibility for food stamps, and that's a good thing. Yet this modest reform is a poor substitute for the complete overhaul that is desperately needed.

The food stamp program, now called SNAP, was originally intended to provide basic commodities to the truly needy. Yet I cannot count the number of constituents who have complained to me over the last several years about standing in a grocery line and watching the person in front of them use SNAP cards to buy luxuries that these hardworking taxpayers could not themselves afford.

But it is the corporate welfare provisions that this bill continues, and in some case expands, that I find the most offensive.

Yes, the bill shifts us away from direct payments to farmers; but it, instead, grossly expands taxpayer-subsidized crop insurance programs, eating up about three-quarters of the savings the supporters purport to achieve. The practical effect is to guarantee profits to farmers, while shifting their losses to taxpayers.

We're told that if the bill fails, these wasteful programs will continue with no reform. Well, actually, many of the most wasteful programs would expire, like the \$150 million to advertise farmers markets.

But the fine point of it is this: If this bill is defeated, the House can take up real reform at any time. If it is passed, we kick that can another 5 years down the road.

To those who say this is a small step in the right direction, I would agree, it is a very small step. It makes tiny and modest changes to an utterly atrocious program. According to the CBO, it would save all of 3.4 percent from the baseline over the next 5 years, hardly a crowning achievement for fiscal reform.

But there's no blinking at the fact that these programs are fundamentally unfair and grossly wasteful, and this bill locks them into law for another 5 years. If the supporters of this bill were actually serious about incremental reform, this would be a 1-year authorization with additional reforms planned next year. It most decidedly is not.

Let me explain clearly what this bill means to an average, hardworking, taxpaying family in my district. That family must struggle and scrimp to keep their shop open. They bear the entire financial risk of failure; and their profits, if there are any, are heavily taxed.

A portion of that family's taxes goes to the agriculture industry for the express purpose of inflating the prices that that family must pay at the grocery store. As a result, when the family goes grocery shopping, it must scrimp

again in order to bear these artificially higher prices that have been forced up by their own high taxes.

As that family stands in the checkout line with their ground chuck for the barbecue tonight, they watch SNAP cards used by others to pay for premium steaks that family can't afford for itself, but paid for by that family's own high taxes.

If the economy sours, that family bears its own losses, while it also pays to cover the losses of the same agricultural interests responsible for their pain at the grocery store.

The bill before us continues this travesty for another 5 years, with soothing assurances from its supporters to cheer up, things could be worse. Well, actually, things couldn't be much worse, and they could be a whole lot better.

This bill, for example, could be defeated and replaced with genuine reform. The government could be withdrawn from its corrupt interventions in agricultural markets. The food stamp program could be restored to its original purpose, to provide basic commodities to the truly needy, and individual consumers could be free to determine the price of their groceries by the decisions that they make every day over what to spend at the grocery store, and not on the basis of what deals were cut in Congress.

The Roman writer Phaedrus summed up this bill rather neatly 20 centuries ago. He said:

A mountain was in labor, sending forth dreadful groans, and there was in the region the highest expectation. After all that, it brought forth a mouse.

THE IMPACTS OF CONGRESSIONAL DYSFUNCTION

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the damage from Congress' inability to do its job and pass a budget, and the unreasonable lengths that folks have to go to cover for the reckless policy of sequestration.

As I said the very first time I spoke in this Chamber, Congress should be doing all it can to replace the across-the-board cuts caused by sequestration with a balanced, bipartisan, long-term budget. Cutting across the board is not a strategy. In fact, it's anti-strategic.

Unfortunately, this Congress has been stuck in "park" when it comes to working toward a long-term budget. In fact, Congress has only passed 13 bills in 6 months, none of them dealing with jobs, and none of them working to replace these nonstrategic cuts.

Congress needs to understand the impacts of its dysfunction. In my district, we see those consequences every day.

I'm a member of the House Armed Services Committee, and I'm proud to represent several military installations, including Naval Base Kitsap and