

The government and its lawmakers should do everything in their power to cultivate an ideal environment for small businesses to grow and prosper by removing roadblocks to growth and by building economic certainty. We need to keep the focus on the American worker and on small businesses. We need to remember that every week is small business week.

THE FARM BILL—A PARTISAN PRODUCT

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

Mr. GALLEGO. I rise reluctantly to express my disappointment in today's proceedings. I am one of those Democrats who voted for a bipartisan product coming out of committee; but unfortunately, today, the bill that we saw come out of committee became an extremely partisan product towards the end.

One of the challenges for me was that I am a firm believer in the SNAP program. It's an anti-hunger safety net that serves vulnerable children and seniors across our country. The average benefit is \$4.50 a day. That's a lifeline. That's not a luxury. In 2010, SNAP helped more than 3.6 million people in Texas afford food. It's critical to children and seniors. In the 23rd Congressional District, there are 36,000 households receiving SNAP. The vast majority is of households with working class families and working class families with young kids.

Today was a disappointment. I was perfectly prepared to work for a product that we could get to conference—I had my card to vote green—but it seemed, in watching the debate here and the finger-pointing immediately—the blame of who did what to whom—was just so frustrating.

The truth is that we've got to get somewhere in the middle. When you continually offer these amendments that move us further and further off the middle and that move us further and further and further to the right, it makes it increasingly difficult to support what should be a bipartisan product.

DON'T TAKE FOOD FROM ME

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Most of America would ask the question: What happened here today?

I can probably say that what happened here today is a little hand of a hungry child that was raised up, and the child said: What about me?

You can talk about farms—little ones and big ones. I am a big supporter of our agricultural production in this Nation—it is from the soil—but I am very glad that we stood up for the children who are faced and confronted with \$20

billion in cuts from something that stamps out hunger. Households with children receive about 75 percent of all food stamp benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we didn't want to just stop there.

We didn't want to just take food from 200,000 hungry children. We wanted to make sure that, if you are a disabled parent with a young child—and if you don't have child care and if you can't find a job—your SNAP money would not be given to you by the State, and the State would be able to keep it. We didn't just want to take food out of a hungry child's mouth. We wanted to slap him down. We wanted to make sure that the State would be grinning by saying, Ha, ha, ha, not only do you not get food, but—in the same breath—we get to keep the money.

We are better than this as America. We can do better. This bill was defeated because the hand of a hungry child was able to be heard on the floor of this House. I am glad that I stood with the hungry child and stamped out hunger in that child's heart, stomach and mind. Today, a child's voice, as sweet and quiet as it is, Mr. Speaker, was loud and clear: don't take food from me.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

□ 1440

JUNETEENTH AND SNAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it's not often that one is able to come back to the podium as soon as I have, and I thank the gentleman for his courtesy.

I started to speak about unfinished business, but first I want to celebrate and acknowledge a day this week that many of us commemorate. In fact, it is moving to become nationally recognized. It's something that is called "Juneteenth."

Today is June 20. So yesterday, June 19, was Juneteenth. I didn't get a chance to explain what Juneteenth meant on the floor of the House, and I wanted to do so.

In 1865, the captain of a Union army arose and arrived on the shores of Galveston, Texas, to let the then slaves who had not been notified, who had not been freed in 1863, on January 1 when President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, finally the Union came to our shores in Texas and let a whole swath of slaves who were still working and toiling unpaid in conditions that were obviously unsatisfactory, because no one should hold

slaves. Finally, in 1865, on June 19, those in Texas and places to the west were freed. So it is a day of freedom.

When I talk to children about Juneteenth, I say it is living freedom. It is accepting the values of this great Nation that has turned, I hope, forever against the idea of holding others as slaves. And it moved this Nation forward, even in difficulty, with women not being able to vote and African Americans moving from Reconstruction into Jim Crowism and the terrible times of the 1900s and, as well, moving into the time of second-class citizenship all the way through World War II as President Truman integrated the United States military. But it moved the country to a lust and a desire for freedom and opportunity.

So Juneteenth is a day of jubilation. It is a day when families gather together. But it is a very important historic time. It is a historic time, if you will, to be able to, in fact, acknowledge that what has been wrong can be fixed. It wasn't a pleasant time to, in essence, work as a slave, to be held as a slave, to be captured as a slave some 18 months to almost 2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

I say that because I wanted to explain further why something that had traditionally been bipartisan—we love the farm life for those who have experienced it, those who read about it. Often in my tenure here in the United States Congress, urban Members and rural Members came together to pass a bill that generated not only food for America but food for the world. Let it be very clear that we took pride today to vote "no," because sometimes you have to listen and understand that there are things greater than your own interests.

I don't know what reason caused the implementation or the addition of a \$20 billion cut to the SNAP program. Who had to be satisfied to put that gigantic, unsympathetic, cruel taking of food from the plates of Americans on the floor? SNAP has no region, it has no racial identity, it has no age identity. It is, frankly, Americans who are in need.

Let me share with you some numbers. Households with children receive about 75 percent of all food stamp benefits. That immediately quashes the stereotype that deadbeats get food stamps. Twenty-three percent of households include a disabled person. Eighteen percent of households include an elderly person. The food stamp program increases household spending. The increase is greater than would occur with an equal benefit in cash. These people are not asking for cash. They're asking for you to allow them to be able to buy decent food so there is nutrition and nourishment.

But again, what motivated a \$20 billion cut that had never been implemented in an agricultural bill that many of us voted on in a bipartisan manner? Did anybody listen to the chairman of the Federal Reserve? The

Chairman of the Federal Reserve said just yesterday that the economy is percolating, that it's doing all that it needs to do, that they're not going to reduce interest rates yet, and they're monitoring it because jobs are being created—not enough—but the economy is finding ways to restore itself.

It was good news for some of our college students, finding more jobs than they found last year as a college graduate.

So the idea that we need to continue to punish the American people, to wound ourselves because there is something out there called the deficit, this imaginary “continue to undermine the government” standard bearer that everyone wants to use—there is a deficit, but it has been steadily coming down because of the belt tightening.

Now we want to go beyond the belt tightening. We want to go beyond the family of four that says, We are not going to go out as much. We aren't going to have more cereal than we used to have. No, we are going to tell the family of four, You're not going to have any cereal. Just wake up in the morning and drink water. We're going to take everything away, and maybe you'll have one meal a day.

This is absurd, and it is not the American way.

Every \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates almost twice as much—\$9.20—in total community spending. The economics of SNAP and food support programs benefit everyone by preventing new food deserts from developing. The impact of SNAP funds coming into local and neighborhood grocery stores is more profitable. We'll have areas of grocery stores and supermarkets, more jobs for people. SNAP funds going into local food economies also make the cost of food for everyone less expensive.

It is clear that the SNAP program is a valuable program. In fact, SNAP is the largest domestic program in the American domestic hunger safety net. The Food and Nutrition Service program supported by SNAP works with State agencies, nutrition educators and neighborhoods, as well as faith-based organizations, to assist those eligible for nutrition assistance. Food and Nutrition Service programs also work with State partners in the retail community to improve program administration and work to ensure the program's integrity.

Let me tell you beyond the \$20 billion what else occurred. Not only did it involve the \$20 billion in the underlying bill, but that wasn't enough. They offered an amendment on the floor to make it an estimated \$31 billion in cuts. If that isn't outrageous, I don't know what is. Literally, not only have they taken the food, but they've taken the table, the utensils, and are leaving you with a good-looking floor, if that's what you have, or rough floor, to simply go there and admire food.

□ 1450

This is an outrageous addition. Cutting off benefits of 2 million Americans

extra who struggle to find work, severing the tie between LIHEAP and SNAP, which is the dollars that supplement those who are not able to pay their energy bills in the cold of the winter, how could you? Penalizing those who don't abide by an unnecessary, burdensome job search if you have a disabled child, this is what was on the floor. Not just taking food away, but literally dismantling the table.

Oh, that wasn't enough. Then they wanted to do this. This looks like a great idea. As you well know, varying States have different economic positions. Some States are thriving because of the industry they have. A State like Texas has an energy-based, oil-based economy. Some States have other kinds of economies, and those economies are coming back, but there are still poor people and people without jobs. And this is what the SNAP program is for. It is not for fraud, waste, and abuse. I don't have any problem with oversight. But how dare you take food away from children, cutting out school lunches, cutting out school breakfasts that sometimes are the difference between a child learning and surviving.

But that wasn't enough. Listen to another amendment that was offered and passed on the floor of the House. It makes the SNAP policies, this amendment, even worse than what I've just discussed. It would allow States to pocket, put in their pocket, smack their lips, roll their hands, the savings if they cut people off of the Supplemental Nutrition program. That means the disabled, parents with young children who don't have child care, those who are unable to find work in the area they're in because there are no jobs available in that community. And there are census data and census tracts where you cannot find jobs. This amendment would find no funding for job search or job creation to help recipients of the SNAP program find work, and it places no restrictions on what States can use the bonus moneys that they put in their pocket for.

Oh, they can throw it for all kinds of unnecessary extras, if you will. Maybe they can do extra security for roaming elected officials. And when I say that, my State is quarreling over whether it should pay security costs for our Governor. Maybe it can throw a few extra parties. Maybe it can build another bridge to nowhere. What will they do when they take money—money—out of the mouths of babes into their pocket?

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentlelady, because it is with a full heart that I come to the well of the House and address the Members to say that the gentlelady from Texas and I didn't see eye to eye on every part of this bill, although we are in the same party. And those of us

who are new to this Congress, who came here to work because we heard that the American people wanted us to work together and solve problems, those of us on the Agriculture Committee approached this bill with an open mind and with a willingness to compromise, and we did so.

We worked together to include in this bill the best combination of things that we thought would help the American people, and in my case, the people of the Hudson Valley. And that meant that we also tolerated things that we disagreed with very strongly, Mr. Speaker, but we moved the process forward because we believed if we brought it to the floor of the House, and if the House passed it and we sent it to conference with the Senate, that we would be able to accept the compromise in good faith that this body worked out.

But what happened today on the floor of the House of Representatives was that the extremism of a small number of people has set back progress for the rest of us. Once again, the insistence on something so extreme has defeated good-faith efforts, like those of my colleagues, particularly the new Members of Congress on the Agriculture Committee who wanted to reach an honorable compromise, to make progress for our farmers, to help our dairy farmers in particular, to help our conservation efforts, to help our beginning farmers, to help folks with flood mitigation, particularly in the black dirt region of Orange County, New York, that I represent. We thought we could work together.

And what we saw today, what we learned today, was that extremism is still alive and well on the floor of this House, and that there are those who would rather destroy the fragile efforts of bipartisan cooperation than work together on something that we can all move forward together with that will help the American people and help our farmers.

The Southerland amendment, which the gentlelady has properly described, is so punitive, so mean spirited that it would deny basic food assistance to women with small children, to people with disabilities. It would require work where there is no work. It is not designed to be reform. It was designed to kill this bill, and it succeeded in that purpose today, by destroying the good-faith efforts of those who worked together.

Once again, tea party extremism has destroyed the efforts of people of good faith to make progress and get results. It is a sad day in the House of Representatives, and it's a tough education for those of us who have come here ready to work together across the aisle and who have much proven that with our votes in a bipartisan fashion to move this bill forward, despite the presence of things we didn't like.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to bring this bill back to floor because it matters. It matters for our farmers. It matters for our communities in the Hudson Valley. We can

work together to improve it, but we must stop these destructive efforts to stop all progress.

I thank the gentlelady.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I applaud the gentleman for his honesty and for his work, because as I began this debate, we have always voted in a bipartisan manner on the farm bill. For those of us in the urban areas that touch a little rural area or live in States that have large pockets of rural areas, we are well aware that we are the breadbasket of the world. When we travel the world, we are always eager to see the food products. That has been our nomenclature. That has been our name. That's been what America is known for, not only its generosity and its heart, but its willingness to feed the hungry.

As I indicated, who could craft an amendment that would deep-six this bill, adding insult to the \$20 billion that I know the gentleman indicated we were looking to compromise on in the conference. But to say to the gentleman, we all would hope the bill will come back. Maybe it might even come back with the recognition that the \$20 billion is spiking too high. But certainly the Southerland amendment, and the one previously that did not pass that wanted to cut even more from the \$20 billion, if I might say, it's an oxymoron between the farm and those who need to eat. We always work together, and we were able to produce products and enough food to give those who were hungry and those who could not find work.

I want to make mention of the fact, as the gentleman said, that included in taking their food away from them, as the gentleman said, was the disabled and the parents with young children.

And so I want to thank the gentleman for his words and, of course, for his leadership for his area and also on this topic.

So that is two Members from two distinct places, Democrats, who would have been able to come and find a reasoned way to address this bill.

Might I also say that I do thank the committee for acknowledging an amendment to be able to reach out, my amendment, the Jackson Lee amendment that was included; but I'm willing to sacrifice that amendment that was to reach out and create opportunities for minority businesses, women-owned businesses, family farmers, Black farmers who have been discriminated against for eons under the Agriculture Department. My amendment would have caused a specific outreach to these individuals, and I'm glad for it.

I was able to support the McGovern amendment, which had an offset that I believe was a proper offset that would have put the money, \$20 billion, back in.

Again, I want to remind my colleagues, our deficit is going down. Our economy is percolating. I didn't say it was perfect. I didn't say everyone had a

job. But what I did say is we're making progress. Why are we continuing to do injury for those who cannot speak for themselves? I do not know.

Again, I was eager to see in this bill, to be able to work with more urban gardens, community gardens, what we call victory gardens.

□ 1500

They've been successful in the city of Houston, in Acres Homes, in fact, in Fifth Ward. I see them as progress, the growing of food, the putting food on the tables, healthy food, of people who don't have the means to get good vegetables and to be able to use those urban gardens to teach children to help families come together and to be able to take home good food.

I want to pay tribute to the Houston Food Bank in my congressional district that has brought so many people together. But I can tell you that they're not lacking in business, and the \$20 billion of this SNAP program going down, meaning, being taken away, one of the largest food banks in America, would have been impacted negatively by the idea of the lack of the supplemental nutrition program.

I wanted to also make sure that we had an assessment of helping the older Americans have accessible and affordable nutrition, one of my amendments that did not get in. But when we see older Americans, we can tell sometimes that they're making choices between food and, obviously, their medicine, their prescriptions.

I wanted to make sure that we had had a special commitment to helping them build up their access to nutritious food, along with those who suffer with disabilities. I wish that had gotten in.

And then I wanted to make sure that we did not turn our backs on obesity and juvenile obesity. Just this week the medical community has joined and named obesity as a disease; and my amendment would have had a sense of Congress that encourages food items being provided pursuant to the Federal school breakfast and school lunch program, and that the kind of nutritious items should be selected, and so we can bring down the incidence of juvenile obesity and maximize nutritional value and take away the possibility of our children not having the right kind of nutrition.

So I am eager to get back to the drawing board. But I walked through neighborhoods that suffer from the lack of access to food, and, as well, I'm aware of something called food deserts, where the only place that you can buy is the local gasoline, gas station location.

And maybe you can find an apple or a banana, but mostly what you're going to find is a lot of, if you will, the other kind of food. Some have called it junk food. Pretty tasty. Make sure there's a market for it. It's always good to have fun, but it's not what you have to raise children, to provide for

those who are ill, disabled, parents who cannot work. That's not where they should be shopping.

Food deserts exist in rural and urban areas and are spreading, as a result, fewer farms, as well as fewer places to access fresh fruit, vegetables, proteins and other foods, and that's why this bill is important, to help our small farmers, but also to help those get assistance.

And by the way, the supplemental nutrition program is not welfare, because there are many people who are working who are on food stamps, but their income is such that they cannot provide the nutritious food for their children.

But the main insult is the loss of these dollars for our breakfast and lunch program, that no matter whether you're living in rural America or urban America, your child has the ability to have a good, warm, hot meal for lunch and for breakfast to get them started and ready to learn.

And, therefore, it avoids the metabolic function that comes from malnutrition that causes the breakdown in tissue. For example, the lack of protein in the diet leads to disease and decay of teeth and bones.

Another example of health disparities in food deserts are the presence of fast-food establishments. Again, it's good to have fun; but if that is all that you eat, then you know that that is not going to make for a healthy young person, child, in the growing years, the maturing years, the years that their cognitive skills are growing, the years that they're strengthening their physical being in order to grow into an adult that will be healthy.

And so many of us took the SNAP challenge, the supplemental nutrition challenge, to live on \$4.50. And I went to the grocery store, and I was so scared about going over. I bought one apple, one banana, two apricots. I bought an avocado and a tomato and two potatoes, and I was calculating in my mind, because this was \$4.50 for the day.

And I went to the meat area and looked at, of all things, chopped meat, hamburger meat. I couldn't find anything that would even fit. They were all \$5, \$4.

I kept looking, cheese, too expensive. And I found something in a package called smoked chicken. And in this store, they had it for 58 cents, processed smoked chicken. And I said that I can use for protein.

And so the meal, in my mind, was going to be an apricot, and a banana for breakfast; lunch, you boil a potato with sliced tomatoes, which you would save for your big meal, your dinner.

But every day, a family has to look at \$4.50 to have their meals. And so for anyone that thinks that this is a bunch of folk who enjoy getting these food stamps to have a jolly good time, I'm glad that I experienced that purchase and what you get for \$4.50.

And yet on the floor of the House today, there were those who were willing to put up a bill that would take \$20

billion and, literally, as I started to say, and have said, dismantle the kitchen, dismantle the table, take the utensils and just say, plop down on the floor.

And as we came to the end of the bill, that was not enough. The Southerland amendment came forward and said, not only are we going to insult you and take all the utensils and table away, but we're going to make it a boondoggie.

We're going to give incentives. We're going to make it a gambling opportunity for our States. We're going to let them throw the dice. How many can you get off of SNAP? And if you get them off, you'll be able to pocket the money.

We don't want to control what you do with it. We're not going to suggest that you put it in education, or maybe give back to the schools so they can get a different kind of meal for the child that's lost the breakfast program. No, we don't care.

You're just going to pocket the money and run off into the hills.

States have many burdens. I'm a champion of our States. I love my State. But I've seen the tough debates that my State legislators have had, fighting to get a few parcels for food, for education dollars, for infrastructure dollars.

So I know it's tough; but as I said, some States are a little bit more better off than others. It's all about priorities.

And I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that today we didn't commend ourselves well. I want to go back. I want to be able to, if you will, I want to be able to put the table, the utensils back, the table cloth.

I want to be able to have a poor family have a nutritious meal. I want to be able to have a child have a lunch or breakfast. I want a disabled person to be able to have the right kind of food to help them in their illness. I want an elderly person to be able to have their prescription drugs and, as well, to be able to have food that will nourish them.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I spoke about unfinished business. And as we go forward, I join my colleague from New York, call upon the good people of this House, who represent the good Americans of this Nation, to come back together and find a way that passes a farm bill that does not put on the sacrificial table of destruction poor people who, through no fault of their own, are unemployed or disabled, or have children, or are only able to support the children and provide for them in this way because they live in an area where there are no jobs.

They hope there'll be jobs. They want there to be jobs but, at this point, it hasn't come.

□ 1510

I conclude my remarks by saying in a list of things that we must do as unfinished business, I look forward, as well,

to our being able to join some mothers that stood with me earlier this week, mothers that demand action, and they ask me about the idea of protecting their children with sensible gun legislation that would prevent gun violence. I hope, among other initiatives, a universal background check will also look to laws that will require the storage of one's guns, none of which impact or take away from the Second Amendment.

Then I hope in unfinished business that we will continue to find, in a bipartisan way, a pathway forward for helping those individuals who came to this country, through no fault of their own, who come to this country and are working and don't want to do us harm, but simply want to find a way to stay in a country that they love, and, as well, to say to the American people that we take no shortness in your need and commitment for border security.

I don't see why we can't do it all. That is not unheard of. It is not impossible. It frankly is something that we can go do.

I want to close by saying that I am a person that loves the Constitution, believes in the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, the freedom of press, speech, the Fourth Amendment that protects you against unreasonable search and seizure, the Griswold v. Connecticut Supreme Court case along with the Ninth Amendment on the question of privacy. So I'm going to make a commitment to my colleagues that we work together on the issue of ensuring the American people's civil liberties while we ensure our national security. We can do both.

I have introduced legislation that would ask for a study of all of the outside contractors that are in the intelligence business and to present that study to the United States Congress and ensure that all those who have top-secret clearance are doing it in the name of this Nation, otherwise to present a plan to reduce that usage by 25 percent by 2014. That is only the fair way because certainly we must have oversight to who has access to your private information and is it access in order to secure this Nation. I stand with them if that is the case.

But I ask the question, why are persons far-flung and unsupervised with top-secret credentials such as the individual who has decided to leak information that is now being assessed? We have to ask the question, are credentials, do they meet the test? Are private contractors making a review of these individuals and assessing them and giving them clearance or if not, not supervising them? I have to ask that question.

And then I would say that it is important that where you can be presented opinions that deal with something we call the FISA court, which is the court that we go into to protect your rights and to be able to go into and make determinations about whether or not there is surveillance, I would

say to you that opinions that will not impact on national security or classified information can be shown to the American people. There's nothing wrong with that.

So I am looking forward to working in a bipartisan way on unfinished business. And I can only say, Mr. Speaker, in my final entreat to this body, the one thing that we should not do is to take the little hand of a child and to push it back from the table or from food. And what we did today was just that.

I want a farm bill, but today I was proud to stand with the children of America who are better off because they've been able to stamp out hunger through a program called SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and will continue to do so until we get it right. Our children are our precious resource.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege of being recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. I won't, at this time, take up all the issues that were raised in the previous 45 minutes or so, Mr. Speaker. Instead, I'd like to talk about two topics, though, and one of those topics is the topic of the farm bill which historically, in a sad way, failed here on the floor of the House of Representatives within the last hour or so, hour and a half.

The first thing I want to say about that is that the chairman of the Ag Committee, FRANK LUCAS of Oklahoma, has conducted himself in a fashion that is deserving of and he receives my admiration and should receive that of his constituents and the people of this country.

One of the most difficult balances to achieve in any bill that we produce here in Congress is that 5-year—we call it the “farm bill”—the 5-year farm bill that has roughly 80 percent nutrition in it and about 20 percent agriculture in it. And each 5 years, we try to write the best formula and look into the crystal ball for the next 5 years as well as we can, and it takes the chairman of the Ag Committee, which is the least partisan of the committees here on the Hill, to direct the committee staff—which are very experienced and some of the best staff people we have here on the Hill—to work with the ag staff of the Democrat side, or the opposite party, and work with the ranking member to try to bring together such a variety of issues that have to do with sugar, dairy, crop insurance, nutrition and the qualifications for nutrition, piece after piece of this.