

And then about the terrorists. As I mentioned, they are really on both sides. And we hear from the administration, with all due respect, that the minority of fighters on the rebel side are al Qaeda. I respectfully disagree with the Secretary of State. What seems to be happening is the Free Syrian Army is going through Syria liberating Syrians, and al Qaeda is in the background, coming in and occupying the territory and imposing strict Islamic sharia law. We can see this play out. If the rebels eventually are successful, then we may have a second civil war between the Free Syrian Army and al Qaeda.

All of that may be down the road. And why would the United States want to get involved in this situation?

So today, Madam Speaker, I have filed a resolution stating that no U.S. funds will be used for this war with Syria. This religious civil war is not our war. So no money for the "Peace President's" war. And if he starts a war with Syria, I suggest the President return the Nobel Peace Prize. If he really wants to send a message, he should follow Samuel Goldwyn's advice: "try Western Union."

And that's just the way it is.

USDA FOOD INSECURITY FIGURES

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, last week, the United States Department of Agriculture released its annual report on food security in the United States. The report documents the levels of food security and insecurity in this country. In this report, the USDA measured the amount of food available or unavailable to households and individuals. In other words, Madam Speaker, the USDA measured the amount of hunger in the United States. It measured the ability of Americans to put food on their tables.

The good news is that hunger isn't getting worse. The bad news is that there are still 49 million people living in our great country who are food insecure; 49 million people who don't know where their next meal will come from; 49 million people who are forced to choose between basic needs like rent, utilities, and food; 49 million people who don't have the resources necessary to make ends meet; 49 million people who are hungry. That's one out of every six people living in this country who is food insecure—a figure that hasn't changed since 2008.

While it's a good thing that food insecurity isn't getting worse, that's simply not good enough. We must do more to ensure that healthy and nutritious food is available to everyone in America. We must ensure that 49 million people are not left behind when it comes to buying food.

The fact remains that millions of Americans are still struggling to make

ends meet. Millions of Americans continue to feel the effects of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. As a result of the staggering loss of jobs and reduced wages that came from the recession, millions of Americans were forced to turn to the Federal Government's preeminent anti-hunger program, SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, in order to put food on their tables.

SNAP participation rates skyrocketed precisely because of the recession. SNAP is a safety net. It's designed to increase in participation in times of need. That means the cost of the program goes up as more people need help buying food while they're either unemployed or struggling with lower wages. That's precisely what happened during the recession. And that's why there are so many people relying on SNAP today. These food insecurity numbers confirm that hunger is a problem in America; that there are millions of people—49 million—who don't know where their next meals are coming from and need helping buying food for themselves and their families.

This is a sobering report, Madam Speaker, and one that would normally result in congressional hearings on the problem and possible ways to reduce hunger in America. But we're not living in normal times. That's because, Madam Speaker, even with the release of this report showing that rates of food insecurity are unchanged since the end of the Bush administration, this Republican-controlled House is preparing to consider a bill that would cut at least \$40 billion from the SNAP program. That's right. The response to this report is to make hunger in America even worse than it is today.

I want to remind my colleagues there is not one single town, city, county, or congressional district in America that is hunger free. For the life of me, I can't understand why the Republicans want to cut this program that provides food to millions of Americans. I cannot understand why the Republican leadership wants to balance the budget on the backs of the working poor.

SNAP is not only successful; it's efficient and effective. The error rate for SNAP is among the lowest, if not the lowest, error rates of any Federal program. That's right. Fraud, waste, and abuse in SNAP is at an all-time low, which means that SNAP dollars are going exactly where they should be going—to food-hungry Americans. On top of that, SNAP kept 4.7 million people out of poverty in 2011, including 2.1 million children. That means that cutting SNAP will also result in increased poverty in America. The irony is there are some Members of this House who are collecting millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded farm subsidies while at the same time they vote to take away food from hungry Americans.

Madam Speaker, hunger in America is real. It must be addressed. That's why I've called for a White House conference on food nutrition, a conference

where we can explore hunger and nutrition and develop a plan to end this scourge once and for all. We will not end hunger by cutting the most efficient and effective anti-hunger program in the country. We will not end hunger through arbitrary, harmful, and spiteful budget cuts.

We can end hunger now if we decide to take that step. The USDA food security report provides evidence that we're not doing enough to end hunger now. The upcoming vote to cut the anti-hunger safety net shows how truly harmful the Republican leadership is when it comes to the working poor in America. We can do more. We can do better. We can—and we must—end hunger now.

MEDICARE DME-POS MARKET PRICING PROGRAM ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on August 22, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General, Daniel Levinson, announced his decision to initiate an investigation into the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, aka Medicare, and its handling of the Competitive Bidding Program for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies.

I initiated a request on June 20, 2013, following disclosures that CMS awarded contracts nationwide to suppliers that lacked the proper licensure and accreditation—clear violations of the agency's program guidelines for participation in the Competitive Bidding Program.

The so-called "competitive" bidding model is being used by the government to procure goods and services for our Nation's seniors and those facing life-altering disease and disability. While CMS makes claims the Competitive Bidding Program will increase market competition and lower costs, in practice it's shown to be anything but competitive. Over the past several years, we've seen the program negatively affect seniors and force small medical companies, many that are local and the only entity capable of providing quality goods and a high level of service, out of the market and out of business.

In 2011, more than 240 economists and market auction design experts wrote to President Obama concerning the flawed bidding model. The experts wrote:

The current program is the antithesis of science and contradicts all that is known about proper market design.

These warnings have become reality over the past several years. The licensure and accreditation abuses are just the latest among a long list of program failures.

For many of these reasons, on June 12, 2013, 227 bipartisan Members of the House—a full majority—including 82

Democrats and 145 Republicans, sent a letter to CMS outlining the flaws and abuses in the program, requesting that the agency delay further implementation until such issues are fully addressed and fixed.

Despite the growing number of reported abuses under the program and strong congressional concern about the bidding design and a long overdue need for transparency and accountability, CMS moved forward with the program in 91 new bidding areas on July 1, 2013, bringing the total to 100 areas nationwide.

While CMS has admitted to the abuses, the agency has failed to detail how these failures occurred or offer a plan for corrective action. With any hope, the Office of Inspector General's efforts will shed light on how these failures occurred and impose a new level of transparency at the Medicare agency, CMS, and among the agency's administrators. In the meantime, it will be up to the House of Representatives to take corrective action.

With this said, I respectfully request that each of my colleagues join me in cosponsoring H.R. 1717, Medicare DMEPOS Market Pricing Program Act of 2013. This commonsense measure, authored by my esteemed colleague from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, will apply real market principles to the highly flawed competitive bidding model. Madam Speaker, we owe as much to our constituents, the taxpayers, and our Nation's Medicare beneficiaries.

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 27 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Harmon E. Stockdale, Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, Rochester, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge You with adoration and humble gratitude. We pray for Your presence and guidance over this distinguished body before whom we stand.

We thank You for this great land in which we live, the United States of America. And we thank You for all who share in making the policies, laws, and decisions which guide and govern our Nation.

We ask Your blessings upon all of our elected and appointed leaders as they lead us to face the challenges of our

day. Grant that we, as a Nation, may be mindful of Your providence and Your grace as we give moral and ethical leadership to the people of our world.

May justice, equality, and compassion always be the guiding principles for our way of life; and may we never forget that to whom much is given, much is required.

In Your Son's name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS 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

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

USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN SYRIA

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, this week, all eyes will be upon us as we debate the use of force in Syria. This decision is not one that should be made lightly, as ultimately there are many factors to be weighed.

Make no mistake that what is happening in Syria is truly a human tragedy. That nation has been torn apart by civil war. It is without a doubt that Assad is not a friend or ally of ours. But things are very complicated. A large number of those who oppose the Assad regime are affiliated with al Qaeda. In the case of Syria, Assad, and the rebels, it cannot be said that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. In this dangerous civil war, the enemy of our enemy is still and will always be our enemy.

It is this dynamic which has led to the overwhelming response of people throughout my district and our Nation to say without an imminent threat to national security, without a plan, without a goal, without unified international support from our allies, we must stay out of Syria.

NATION-BUILDING AT HOME

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Syria is that of a national civil war. It's a sectarian and ethnic conflict between two warring factions. This is not about democracy and freedom. There is no social contract. There is no constitution. There is no preamble. There is no unifying vision as to what Syria wants to become. This is a brutal battle between two bad sides for control. Assad is a brutal dictator, for certain; but the opposition's best fighters are al Qaeda and Islamic extremists bent on creating an Islamic state in Syria.

In the international community, 194 countries have said—but for Turkey and France—yes, the United States, go get them; just don't ask us to participate. So the American people will find themselves, once again, for the third time in a decade, in a region of the Middle East in South Asia in another civil war, essentially alone again.

The American people want nation-building. But they want it right here at home, in America.

ANOTHER SOLUTION IN SYRIA

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the President's action in Syria.

I just returned from the Middle East, meeting with heads of state in Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and our ambassador to NATO. I'm firmly convinced that any action on our part will further destabilize Syria and cause a collapse of the government. What will happen then? What will happen is that country will then fall in the hands of Hezbollah, Hamas, al Qaeda, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the end of the day, what's important, Mr. Speaker, is who has control of those weapons of mass destruction. While what Mr. Assad has done has been barbaric and evil, we will never forgive ourselves for the havoc that will be played upon this world if those weapons fall into the hands of Islamic extremists. We need to work together collectively to address the problem of identifying and finding those weapons of mass destruction and securing those for the future.

There are many people who are living outside of their country now as refugees. There are tens of thousands of able men who could be recruited to be a part of that solution.

NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

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