

bringing a bill to the floor tomorrow that, if passed, will undoubtedly make hunger worse in this country. Their bill will make hunger worse for working mothers and fathers, for kids, for senior citizens, and even for our veterans.

CBO reports that the bill would cut 3.8 million low-income people from SNAP in 2014—and just so there is no misunderstanding, “low-income” means “poor.” On top of that, an average of nearly 3 million people will be cut from SNAP each and every year over the coming decade. These are some of the Nation’s most destitute adults as well as many low-income children, seniors and families that work for low wages. That’s right. People who work but who don’t make enough to feed their families will be cut from this program.

The biggest cut affects at least 1.7 million unemployed, childless adults in 2014 who live in areas of high unemployment. These are poor people. Many don’t have the skills or education they need to find a job. This is a group whose average income is about \$2,500 a year for a single individual—\$2,500 a year—and for most, SNAP is the only government assistance they receive.

This bill also cuts an additional 2.1 million people from SNAP in 2014, mostly low-income working families and low-income seniors. These are people who have gross incomes or assets modestly above the Federal SNAP limits but whose disposable incomes—the income that a family actually has available to spend on food and other needs—are below the poverty line, in most cases often because of high rent or child care costs.

If that weren’t bad enough, 210,000 children in those families would also lose their free school meals, and 170,000 unemployed veterans will lose their SNAP benefits. To top it all off, other poor, unemployed parents who want to work but who cannot find a job or an opening in a training program, along with their children other than infants, will be cut from the program.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when combating hunger was a bipartisan issue—when Bob Dole worked with George McGovern and when Bill Emerson worked with Tony Hall. It didn’t matter whether you were a liberal or a conservative—ending hunger was a priority. The current Republican leadership has blown all that up.

We should not do this. There are no hearings on this bill, no markup, no semblance of regular order. And for what—to stick it to the working poor yet again? We should be doing everything we can to end hunger now. The Republican bill just makes hunger worse, and it should be soundly defeated.

Mr. Speaker, I urge and I plead with both Democrats and Republicans to stand together, to come together in a bipartisan way, and to demand to end hunger now.

Please, please, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, reject this Repub-

lican leadership bill that is coming to the floor tomorrow. It is cruel. It is immoral. We are much better than this. Reject the leadership bill.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, although this hall is empty, there are a lot of people watching it, and I wonder how many of them have ever actually gone hungry. How many of the people watching this have had to go without a meal so their kids could eat? How many have had to wonder how they’ll get through a summer without subsidized school lunches? It’s easy to talk about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps when you’ve had designer shoes on your whole life.

Tomorrow, we will be voting on whether or not to cut \$40 billion from SNAP. That’s a nutrition program for people who do not have access to adequate nutrition. It’s a program that helps one out of seven Americans to put food on the table. If this seems familiar, it’s because it is familiar. Republicans tried just exactly this before the August recess, a couple of months ago, and not surprisingly, for the most unproductive Congress in decades, this bill had to be pulled at the last minute because of a lack of support. Even some of the Republicans saw it was too much.

Anyone who has been paying attention knows that symbolic votes to nowhere are the bread and butter for this Congress, but the Republicans couldn’t even get their own support on the bill—\$20 billion of cuts that primarily help children and the elderly wasn’t enough for them. They had to hurt people more, so here we are again with a new, improved plan that doubles the cuts to \$40 billion. On top of making 2 million people ineligible for benefits, they are also going to take away our States’ ability to provide temporary benefits in times of high unemployment. As a result, the CBO predicts that this will add an additional 1.8 million hungry Americans to the “ineligible” list.

Why are we attempting to inflict another needless wound on the working poor?

Republicans will tell you that the program has grown too much over the last few years, as though the need for food stamps were unrelated to a dragging economy. They see no connection between the economy and the fact that people don’t have food. That’s exactly what the program was designed to do—quickly help people who are in need. When unemployment is high and people can’t pay their bills, that’s exactly the time they need the SNAP program. Caseloads rose dramatically when the recession hit. We laid off 700,000 people a month in 2007, but that growth has also slowed as the economy has recovered slowly. The CBO projects that, in

just a few years, SNAP spending will be back down to 1995 levels as a share of the GDP, and since it’s shrinking on its own, it isn’t adding to the long-term deficit problems.

The rhetoric is simply empty and stupid. Conservatives can try and push this tired welfare abuse narrative. It’s a talking point. Every time they come out here, “Welfare abuse. Welfare abuse. People are getting money for food. That’s welfare abuse,” but as usual, the reality is not in their corner. Studies show that food assistance has some of the lowest rates of fraud of any benefit program. If you go to one of those food banks and talk to the people who are there, you’ll find some surprising people there, people who thought they would never have to go there, but they are short on money and can’t feed their kids, so they’re getting some money.

So I ask you again: Why are we doing this—wasting time to satisfy the furthest right-wing of the Republican Party?

We are again catering to a fringe agenda thought up by partisans who are obsessed with the deficit bogeyman. That bogeyman has been roaming around here for 4 years. “We’re going to have a terrible collapse. We’re going to have inflation. We’re going to have terrible things.” It has never happened. The President has done a miraculous job in keeping us on an upward track in spite of the resistance of the other side. What it does is it makes it harder for 4 million people to put food on the table.

So be it. That’s their attitude. I’m in. At least they won’t risk facing a primary in the next election. They are all worried about somebody further on the right. We’ve already got one Member over here, Mr. Speaker, who is worried about somebody coming from the right, and he’s about the furthest right I can imagine on the floor.

Senate Democrats and Republicans appointed conferees to negotiate a farm bill back at the beginning of August. Quit worrying about scoring points with the Heritage Foundation, and let’s focus on the American family and vote this bill down.

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SNAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I think each one of us 435 has to ask ourselves, Is this really what we were sent here to do, to take food out of the mouths of hungry people, nearly half of them children? That’s what’s at stake this week when we are asked to vote on legislation that would cut \$39 billion from one of our Nation’s most successful and important programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP. It used to be called food stamps.

As a Jew, we just came through the Jewish holidays, and we talked about what it means to be a human being in this world, in this country. Every major religion in this world and represented in this House teaches that you feed the hungry. Not as charity, but as a mandate, because that's what it is to be a human being in our world. All the religions have written letters and implored us not to do this.

I participated three times in the congressional food stamp challenge in which we eat on \$31.50 for an entire week. I'm not complaining about it because I knew it was just a week and it would end, but that's the average SNAP benefit. You know what? You can get the calories. That's pretty easy if you're lucky enough to live near a grocery store and not in a food desert. The reality for 48 million people is that you can get the calories, but it's really hard to get the nutrition. By the time you get to the fruits and vegetables, which are quite expensive, it's hard to do it. It's not comfortable to rely on SNAP benefits, and many people line up at the end of the month at food pantries that are everywhere in this country, including some of the richest districts. But the SNAP program, which has a bipartisan history, is the last line of defense between 48 million Americans and chronic hunger.

The House already voted down a farm bill that included \$20 billion in SNAP cuts, and it would have taken benefits away from up to a million children and would have prevented 200,000 hungry children from getting the school lunches that they rely on so much. Now this bill is back but on steroids. In addition to all of the devastating cuts that have been proposed, those that were rejected earlier, the new bill would prevent any able-bodied adult from getting more than 3 months of SNAP benefits during a 3-year period, even if they're unable to find work. Up to 170,000 of those who are veterans who served our country would be denied. This is at a time when unemployment among low-income Americans is over 20 percent and the average time of unemployment is about 9 months. Those numbers don't add up. It means that passage of this bill could nearly starve those looking for work, and no one can deny that fact.

I know how SNAP benefits my constituents, and I know what would happen if those benefits were lost. I've attended several events at food pantries and community centers, and each time I've heard resounding support for SNAP. In just one day, I received 242 postcards from my constituents urging me to oppose these dangerous cuts to the SNAP program. They have my vote, and I'm imploring my colleagues that it should have the vote of every Member of this body to reject those cuts.

A constituent who previously wrote to my office summed up her thoughts about the importance of funding the SNAP program this way. Here's what she said:

Hungry thoughts every waking day are my constant companion here in the supposedly wealthiest country on Earth. Please have compassion for your low-income and fixed-income constituents who are loyal, patriotic Americans and who are in dire need of nutritious and affordable food.

A former SNAP beneficiary, a woman named Dresden Shumaker, described the program as a trampoline rather than a safety net. Because of SNAP, she was able to make ends meet for her young family during a period of time of great need. Her story is similar to most SNAP beneficiaries who no longer need food assistance within one year of receiving benefits.

I'm begging my colleagues, please, don't support these cuts. Let's be the value-driven country that we are and vote "no" to the \$40 billion cut to SNAP.

SNAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the ongoing Republican war on the poor—and that's what this is—and their attempt to gut our Nation's critical safety net against hunger one more time.

This past June, the Republican leadership failed millions of farmers and millions of struggling families when they could not pass a farm bill. They allowed the extremist Tea Party fringe of their party to poison the farm bill with amendments and so-called reforms that, in fact, would only increase hardship and hunger in America.

Yet instead of working across the aisle to find a better solution that would create jobs and protect families, the Republican leadership has chosen to bring an even more hurtful, toxic, and heartless nutrition bill to the floor. This new bill includes all of the extremist amendments that killed the first farm bill. It also piles on even more restrictions and so-called reforms that only serve to increase hardship for hungry families, children, seniors, and veterans.

These false reforms will dramatically reduce access to vital nutrition assistance all across America—rural and urban—in every single one of our congressional districts.

This bill would also end critical flexibilities for our States and would cripple smart and targeted programs that allow States to efficiently deliver nutrition assistance to the neediest. For example, the Republican nutrition-only bill would end categorical eligibility for all of our States.

We created this to streamline the delivery of social services so that we can lower administrative costs and put more of these dollars directly into the hands of needy families. This Republican bill would end those efficiencies, raise costs for our States, and make it harder for families to get the help they need.

This bill also claims to create work requirements for able-bodied adults. Let me remind my colleagues that the SNAP program already has very restrictive work requirements. The current SNAP program cuts off able-bodied adults after just 3 months of benefits right now. We only allow States to adopt waivers for when unemployment in their States rises high enough that this restriction is clearly unreasonable. The new so-called "reforms" would cut everybody off, no matter what the unemployment rate is in their State. This is just heartless. These cuts would come at a time when the Republicans have blocked every single effort to pass a real jobs bill in the House and cut job-training and job-placement assistance. Let me tell you, as a former food stamp recipient myself, I know that people don't want to be on food stamps. They want to work. If we're going to put work requirements on people, why in the world don't we pass a jobs bill so they can work?

At a time when our Nation should be creating opportunities for all, the House Republican leadership proposed to cut SNAP by \$40 billion. This will surely create a bleaker future for our children, our seniors, and our overall economy. If this bill ever becomes law—and I hope it doesn't—at least 4 million to 6 million low-income children, seniors, and families will be cut from this economic lifeline and pushed into poverty.

Similar to about 29 of my colleagues, I have taken the food stamp challenge about three times and ate off of \$4.50 a day. It was unhealthy and very difficult; yet I knew it would only last a week for me. Yet millions of Americans see no end in sight. And now, mind you, they have to worry that this meager benefit, this pittance, is going to be cut even more.

Instead of gutting SNAP, we need to strengthen it. Not only does SNAP help put food on the table for struggling families; it also helps stimulate economic growth. For every \$1 in SNAP benefits, we generate \$1.70 in economic activity. So Congressman CONYERS and I have introduced new legislation that would extend the SNAP benefits that were increased as a part of the stimulus package. Otherwise—and many don't know this—on November 1, every single family or individual who receives SNAP benefits now will see an automatic cut of about \$29 per month for a family of three. This will happen regardless of this \$40 billion nutrition cut.

In 2011, SNAP lifted 4.7 million Americans out of poverty. Without SNAP, millions more would fall into poverty, millions more of Americans would suffer hunger, and our economy would create even fewer jobs and be worse off.

I just have to say, our values as Americans and who we are as a country recognize that these despicable cuts are immoral and un-American. We need to provide opportunities to help lift families out of poverty, grow the economy, and create economic stability for