

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

all. Let's restore a unified farm bill, and let's put an end to these draconian cuts to SNAP.

SNAP

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, there's a cruel war being waged on the poor and hungry in America. I stand today as a voice for more than 1.6 million Texas households who depend on SNAP. Cuts to SNAP, our Nation's first line of defense against hunger, are immoral. I will not stand by as my Republican colleagues continue to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable Americans.

House Republicans unveiled on Monday a plan to cut over \$40 billion in SNAP over the next 10 years. This proposed package would eliminate basic food assistance for over 4 million Americans, including poor jobless adults in areas of high unemployment, working-poor families, children, seniors, and even struggling veterans.

Some might say that the proposal is an attempt to reduce fraud or waste in the program. Some say benefits are going to adults who don't want to work. I have news for people who say that: you try earning minimum wage, working hard every day, and you will still, after working 40 hours a week at the end of the year, only make around \$15,000.

All of these claims are misleading to the public. SNAP fraud has been reduced to about 1 cent per dollar spent on the program, according to one of the most recent USDA statistics. In fact, the cuts will come from benefits that many Americans need to survive. These cuts will take food out of our seniors' refrigerators and food out of the mouths of our babies. This new legislation unfairly targets millions of unemployed adults who want to find work; but due to a bad economy and a sluggish recovery, they cannot find a job.

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This includes Republicans, too. I worked at a grocery store in Texas when I was in high school. And I saw Republicans come in from Republican strongholds, like Weatherford, Texas, Azle, Lake Worth, and they were on SNAP.

People need to stop stereotyping the program. Proponents claim that these cuts represent "work requirements," but that is willfully misleading, Mr. Speaker. The provisions would callously terminate food aid to people who are willing to work but just can't find a job.

Just a few short weeks ago, the Republican leadership of this House tried to eliminate the SNAP benefits entirely when they stripped the nutrition program from the farm bill. This is a cruel assault against the most vulnerable and neediest Americans. Those af-

ected by the bill's harshest provisions even include low-income veterans, putting food assistance at risk for an estimated 170,000 of the approximately 900,000 veterans who receive SNAP benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I also participated in the SNAP challenge this year and lived on a budget of \$4.50 a day and can attest that it was not easy. I had to make tough decisions and realized firsthand how difficult it is to follow a healthy diet on such a limited budget. I made difficult choices, as families do every day, between purchasing nutritious options and what's on sale. As a father of a 7-year-old son, I cannot imagine the decisions many Texans have to make every day, including skipping a meal to provide nutrition for their kids.

When drafting this legislation, did anyone take the time to think about how these SNAP cuts would hurt our kids? Nearly half of all SNAP participants are kids. This represents close to one in three children in the United States. Without access to nutritious meals, our children are put at risk of developmental delays, poorer physical health, and many other ailments.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do everything that we can to keep the SNAP program going. The conditions that I have talked about are very serious when you think about it affecting a child's ability to learn and perform well in school. These long-range implications have dire consequences for our entire economy.

I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle who support these cuts, these kids that I just talked about, what did these kids do to deserve these cuts?

This past year, some 49 million Americans lacked access to adequate food because they didn't have enough money or other resources to meet their basic food needs. Many of these hungry Americans skipped meals or took other steps to reduce what they ate to make ends meet.

I represent a constituent in my district who is elderly, disabled, and lives on a fixed income. She received \$93 a month in SNAP benefits, but recently, those were cut to only \$52 a month. That's only \$1.73 a day. And if this bill is passed, she will be cut off from the program entirely. I ask the proponents of this program, where is she to find assistance for her nutrition needs? I refuse to stand silent as some propose we take food out of the mouths of the hungry.

SNAP is also a very powerful anti-poverty program that has helped make our economy stronger. In 2011, SNAP kept 4.7 million people out of poverty, including 2.1 million children.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS AND HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, it's time for Congress to

work together on a commonsense solution to address the impacts of climate change.

As we begin Hispanic Heritage Month, it's important for us to recognize the impact climate change is disproportionately having upon minority communities across the country. Whether it's farmers and ranchers in my home State of New Mexico struggling through devastating drought conditions or communities that are being impacted by recent flooding as a result of more severe weather, millions of Americans have been impacted by the effects of climate change.

Released earlier this year, a survey conducted by Public Policy Polling found 74 percent of Latinos believe climate change is a serious or a very serious problem, a higher level than the 65 percent among all American adults; 68 percent of Latinos support the President using his authority to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, including 60 percent of all American adults; 69 percent of Latinos agree with the President's statement that "for the sake of our children" and our future, we must do more to combat climate change, compared to 62 percent of all American adults.

Combating climate change and preserving our land, water, and air is a top priority for many Americans, especially those in minority communities. For years, a coalition of stakeholders, including Hispanic farmers and ranchers, tribal communities, conservation groups, hunting and fishing organizations, and local governments came together to lay the foundation that led to President Obama establishing the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument earlier this year. This is an example of the type of leadership and advocacy that can make a real difference in addressing climate change and preserving our precious resources. By establishing the Rio Grande del Norte, we have created economic certainty for farmers and ranchers, increased recreation and tourism opportunities, and, most importantly, protected our land, water, and air for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I have also come to the floor today to express my concern for the House Republicans' plan to slash funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This program is vital to many in New Mexico, especially our children. Sadly, New Mexico ranks near the bottom when it comes to childhood well-being and ranked worst in childhood hunger.

The Republican plan to cut \$40 billion from the SNAP program caters to the most extreme views. Earlier this year, they tried to cut \$20 billion, only to have the Tea Party revolt. So the new plan goes even further at a time when many communities are still struggling from a slow economy, even including a provision that prevents high unemployment areas from receiving additional assistance.

Today we have 47 million Americans living in poverty. And while we should