

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-

fected 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

be doing more to address the root causes, we should not turn our backs on those struggling to make ends meet by cutting benefits that help put food on the table for working families.

I believe we all share the goal of seeing a stronger economy that creates jobs and reduces the need for this kind of assistance. But until that time, let's not make the most vulnerable among us pay the steepest price.

SNAP BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, during the 35 years I spent in the military, it was my privilege to lead the outstanding men and women in our Armed Forces. Many are still serving today. They served with honor and distinction, yet here we are talking about treating the lowest paid of them like second-class citizens, unworthy of basic assistance in these difficult times.

I was elected to Congress to represent everyone in the 12th Congressional District of Illinois. I represent the poorest county in the State of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, 100,000 people in my district, most of them children or seniors, live below the poverty line. My district has a higher proportion of veterans than any other district in this State.

I answer to Active Duty military and veterans who rely on SNAP benefits to make ends meet. They exist in my district and in every district represented in this House. Mr. Speaker, does anyone in this Chamber wish to tell them that in this hour of need, their country is turning its back on them? Who among us wants to decide which of these veterans deserve assistance and which do not? I know I don't.

According to the Census Bureau, about 7 percent of people who report prior military service also report receiving SNAP benefits. Census data indicates that some 1.5 million households with a veteran are receiving SNAP benefits.

The base pay of most recent enlistees, from corporals on down, is at or below the \$23,050 poverty rate for a family of four. At military commissaries nationwide, nearly \$88 million in SNAP benefits were redeemed. Stars and Stripes reported that in 2011, food stamp purchases at military commissaries tripled during the preceding 4 years.

Just last month, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that approximately 900,000 veterans currently receive food aid and that proposed cuts would impact around 170,000.

According to The Hill newspaper, more than \$98 million in SNAP benefits were redeemed by veterans in 2012. The Huffington Post reports that in 2011, "both Active Duty members and retirees, together, used more than \$100 million in Federal food aid in the past year."

Sixteen percent of SNAP recipients are disabled, many of them are veterans. SNAP benefits are already scheduled to go down. On November 1, families of three will lose \$29 a month. Now, that doesn't sound like very much, but the daily per person per meal benefit will be less than \$1.40.

Recently, one Illinois veteran was quoted, saying, "I relocated, and the job I was supposed to get fell through. I lived off my savings but found myself needing to apply for emergency assistance to sustain until I found a job. I, like many others, was only receiving assistance for a time (5 months) but don't know what I would have done without it."

They served us with honor and distinction, Mr. Speaker. Some are still serving. Now it is time for us to serve them with a measure of honor and distinction of our own. I urge my colleagues to reject these shameful proposals which would cut this basic level of assistance to deserving recipients who need it now more than ever.

A SAD DAY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I probably don't need 5 minutes to say what I would like to say.

This is a very sad moment for the most powerful Nation in the history of this planet. We are on the verge of a government shutdown over ideology. I can remember in 1995, I was the mayor of Kansas City when the government shut down and the impact was Herculean, not just here in Washington, but around the country and around the world. And if we are proud to be Americans, it means that we pay our bills.

We are the only nation that still allows a vote by a legislature on paying our bills. Most countries won't do that because they don't need any disruption in paying their debts. We are close to declaring to the whole world that we don't pay our bills.

The other part that's troublesome is this whole issue of SNAP, or food stamps. And there are so many myths that roll around that it just turns my stomach.

I lived in a house with no running water or electricity until I was 7 years old. We moved into public housing. My father worked three jobs. He eventually was able to buy a home.

I know what it's like to be poor. I know what it's like to struggle. My father was able to send my mother to college when I was in the eighth grade, and then all four of his children graduated from college, too, with post-graduate degrees. So I am always insulted when I hear all of these irreverent and nasty comments about poor people. And we spread this stuff around the country to the point of absurdity.

We spread lies. "Well, people go into stores and they buy alcohol with food stamps." Well, we don't have food

stamps anymore. We have cards, Economic Benefit Transfer cards. And in spite of the lies that people tell, you can't buy alcohol with cards. You cannot buy lottery tickets. I heard Members of Congress—this Congress—tell people that they know that people in prison are getting food stamps, and they've seen people buy alcohol with food stamp cards. It doesn't work. And it divides and damages this Nation.

The other lie, over 70 percent of the people receiving SNAP benefits are the elderly, the disabled, and children. And we are against helping them? Another 25 percent are people who work every day, it's just that they can't make enough to survive.

I remember growing up and my mother would say, Eat everything on your plate; there are starving kids in Africa. Well, I'm not sure how eating everything on my plate helped them—I'm still struggling with that—but there are starving people not far from here, and the government of the United States is saying we'd rather shut down than to have a program that deals with the people who are in trouble.

I just heard a few moments ago about a 101-year-old person whose daily Meals on Wheels had been reduced. 101 years old, and people are celebrating that, Mr. Speaker? This is a sad, sad day. And by the end of next week, when we are shut down, it's going to be much sadder.

UNITED STATES FINANCIAL CRISIS: 5 YEARS LATER

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the meltdown of Lehman Brothers, and the 5-year anniversary of the greatest financial crisis in a generation that struck our country. This economic disaster nearly caused the destruction of our country's entire financial infrastructure and led to what we now call the Great Recession.

However, Wall Street, during the last 5 years, has actually profited greatly from this crisis and, in the process, has caused continuing financial failures of millions of Americans. JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley have all reported record profits during the recession.

□ 1045

Wall Street, in the last 5 years, has regained all of its pre-crisis wealth with interest. Wouldn't the American people like to be in that position?

Meanwhile, Main Street has yet to see a real robust recovery.

The roots of the recession began in the late 1990s, when a majority in this Congress first overturned something called the Glass-Steagall Act, which separated speculative banking from prudent banking and then, in 2000, refused to regulate the trading of derivatives.