

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the 23rd District in 1 minute—23 in 1 today. I want to talk about Monahans, Texas, the home of the Lobos.

Monahans High School is known not only for their athletic programs, with several State championships in women's volleyball, for example, but also on the academic side as the host of one of the preeminent—one of the biggest—speech and debate tournaments in west Texas.

Monahans is in Ward County in the Permian Basin, located off of I-20. The economy is booming with high-paying jobs and with an active, full service Chamber of Commerce—one of the more active in the region. If you are looking for recreation, the Monahans Sandhills State Park has sand dunes that are 70-feet high, with sand boarding, sand football, sand surfing, sand tobogganing, hiking, and even horseback riding.

If you go there in the spring, for example, the Rattlesnake Army Airbase will be a new museum. It was one of the largest bomber training bases of World War II, and it was the temporary home of the Enola Gay, which dropped the atomic bomb on Japan in World War II. It is scheduled to open in March.

Nearly 24 percent of Texas is in one district, in the 23rd District. It is an incredible stretch. I am so proud to have the opportunity to represent Monahans, Texas, in Ward County.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: INCOME INEQUALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to once again have this opportunity to come to the floor of the House of Representatives and to anchor—along with my good friend and colleague, the distinguished gentleman from Nevada, Representative STEVEN HORSFORD—the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order, where for the next 60 minutes we have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about an issue of great significance for the communities that we represent as well as for the entire country.

Income inequality is an issue that is of increasing concern to working families, to low-income Americans, to mid-

dle class folks, to those who aspire to be part of the middle class. We know that at this moment in time in 2014 income inequality is the worst that it has been in America since the Great Depression.

Now, we live in the wealthiest country in the world. Yet we know that all across America there are people who are struggling to put food on their tables, clothing on their backs or to provide shelter for their families. That is an unacceptable situation, and we know that things have gotten worse over the last 5 years since the collapse of the economy. The recovery, while progress has been made, has been uneven, inconsistent and schizophrenic in many ways. Some have benefited, particularly those amongst the wealthiest 5 to 10 percent of Americans, but others have fallen behind.

So, today, the Congressional Black Caucus will speak to the issue of income inequality, but it will also propose why it is something that needs to be addressed and what some of the things are that Congress can do, in working with the President, to deal with this pressing issue in America.

We have been joined by several distinguished members of the Congressional Black Caucus. It is now my honor and privilege to yield some time to the dean of New York's congressional delegation, a legendary Member of the House of Representatives, the Lion of Lenox Avenue, the distinguished gentleman from New York, Representative CHARLES B. RANGEL.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Let me thank my friend and my colleague from New York for bringing this important issue to the attention of our Congress and the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is a strange thing about those Americans who have been raised in poor communities. That is, as they grow older, it seems that God has blessed them to remember just the good things that they have enjoyed, and the misery and the pain somehow fades away; but I think that the most important thing that comes out of this is the hope for the future. Very few Americans have not witnessed in their families devastating economic impacts, but that was more than compensated for because they knew, if they had to be in any country in the world in which some of these problems could be resolved through opportunity, they would be in the United States of America.

The tragic thing that we have today is that this dream appears to be fading for the poor as well as for the middle class. When that happens, I think what makes America different from so many other countries is that it is possible to have classes that are locked in frigid concrete, as used to be the case in Europe—that is dramatically changing to be more fluid as it relates to upward mobility—while it appears to us that

today, if you were born in poverty, you are almost destined to remain in poverty. What a sinful, historic condition that would make. What a tragic example it would set for the rest of the world that has used us as an example as to what human beings can do.

What is it that the economists don't see? Poverty is not only painful; it destroys the very fiber of our economic productivity. Sick people, poor people are not productive people. There are inclinations for them to cost more in terms of dollars and cents than if we provided them with the tools for them to acquire decent jobs with decent living wages. People are talking about equality in wages, but I am not comfortable with that expression because I don't want some of my friends on the other side of the aisle thinking that I think everyone should have the same income in terms of equality; but when it comes to the equality of opportunity—when it comes to making certain that you can tell your kids that you are doing pretty good but that you know that they can do better—and then when it comes to those dreams being hurt because of examples that we find in this country, then it hurts the whole idea of manufacturers wanting to have their workers be in a position to buy the things that they are manufacturing or the services they are providing.

So I am glad that we have this time tonight to go beyond the pain of poverty and to talk about the hopes and the dreams that people have in coming to this country. They come here not to remain poor. They don't come here to get rich. They come here because of the opportunity we have—and poverty is a poison that can get into any economy and make it impossible for poor folks to get out of it.

Thank you so much for constantly reminding this great country that we can't afford to lose that greatness, because a lot of it was in God we trust. I do hope, as a result of our voices, that we hear from some of the people who hear directly from God—our ministers and our rabbis—to be able to understand that Jesus may have said that the meek shall inherit the Earth, but he sure didn't mean that the meek should suffer while the rich just get richer. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

□ 1930

Mr. JEFFRIES. I certainly thank the distinguished gentleman from New York for his eloquent, as always, observations.

It is an honor and privilege to be joined by the Representative from Texas, who has been a fighter on behalf of these issues—a voice for the voiceless and someone who is always on the front lines trying to deal with socioeconomic inequality wherever it might be found in America, but certainly in her home district anchored in Houston, Texas. Let me now yield to Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the distinguished coleader of the task force in presenting our case to the American people, the distinguished gentleman from New York—and I say it with great affection and respect—and his coleader, Mr. HORSFORD, the distinguished gentleman from Nevada.

Let me quickly indicate that income equality has been raised by the Congressional Black Caucus and the Task Force on Poverty through our chairwoman, the Honorable MARCIA FUDGE; my colleague, BARBARA LEE; myself and others through the years—one might offer to say decade—and you will hear from our other members. The distinguished dean of New York gave the history. I know the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey is on the floor, as well as our southern anchor, Representative Mr. G.K. BUTTERFIELD. Again, we also have New York, New York's Representative, YVETTE CLARKE. I think our members are here because we come from far and wide.

Income inequality refers to the extent to which income is distributed in an uneven manner among the population. In the United States, income inequality, or the gap between rich and poor, has been growing markedly for some 30 years.

U.S. income inequality has been rising steadily over the past four decades. Let me emphasize to my colleagues that it is reaching levels not seen since the 1920s; and for those of us who read the history books, we know of the financial collapse leading to the Depression of that era. That is frightening.

In the midst of that discussion, we are hearing babble or conversation about reducing the debt and closing the deficit, when we have decidedly made a mark on that over the last decade. We did so with President Obama's fixing and working to turn Wall Street back on its feet. We did it with the stimulus package which infused dollars into the economy. We fixed the mortgage meltdown, and so now we find that houses are being sold and banks want to be able to relax how they give money to their various clients that are seeking to buy a house.

We are at a point where we need to stop talking about the deficit and the debt—which is closing—and the debt going down, and start talking about investing in America and closing the horror of wealth inequality. Somebody is going to understand from whence they came and know that America was always a place where someone without shoes could walk into the opportunities and the sunlight of opportunity.

Lyndon Baines Johnson's history tells of how very poor he was growing up after the loss of income from his father. It was on his mind that people who are poor should not be treated with indignity.

So one of the biggest factors driving the increase in income inequality since 2000 is the stagnation of the typical American household in terms of income. We need to raise the minimum

wage. We need to stop blaming poor people and suggesting that their condition is their own.

There are studies by the University of Wisconsin and the University of Kentucky, and let me give the facts. A low-wage job supplemented with food stamps is becoming more common for the working poor. They have a job, and yet they have to get food stamps. That is not their desire. They are working people. They want to be respected for their work.

Many of the U.S. jobs now being created are low-income or minimum wage, part-time, or in areas such as retail or fast food. Yes, jobs. We don't denigrate them; but it brings about the highest level of income inequality. And then, on top of it, we are cutting billions from food stamps.

As I told you, a young lady in Texas makes \$10 an hour working to be able to provide for her family. Without shame, she has to get on food stamps; and since 2009, 50 percent of the individuals getting food stamps are working. That is a point that we should realize.

We need to increase the minimum wage, and we realize that the highest number of high school graduates head the bulk of the food stamp households, but college graduates or those who have had some college are also on food stamps.

Income inequality: as recently as 1998, the working age of a share of food stamp households was at 44. It is now up to 50.

Let me say we are finding ourselves in an economy of globalization, automation, and outsourcing. I would like to work with my Republican friends on curing that disease—the disease of outsourcing, giving up people's jobs, and cutting down on manufacturing—which, in actuality, under President Obama, we have been able to surge up.

I would like them to look at legislation that says if you are chronically unemployed, you can get training. You can get a credit and you get the unemployment, and you don't have to touch that. But you get a training credit or a stipend to change your life.

The young lady in this newspaper article is trying to save money to be able to get paramedic training. She wanted to be a nurse. She had to drop out because of the lack of money. What are we doing about people like that?

Let me close, Mr. JEFFRIES, with the CNN commentary, or CNN programing. The individual that gave these words was a prominent wealthy gentleman who is a senior citizen. I have a great respect for senior citizens. I really do. They are all over my district. But I hope that we don't have to come to a time that the idea of trying to balance wealth inequality gets you accused of being like Nazis. My heart is broken to be able to think that someone would misconstrue the idea of helping this young 25-year-old suffering with low wages and trying to close the income gap to a ridiculous comparison as that. Free-

dom of speech, of course; but that is ridiculous.

Let me show this form as my final expression here.

We are still fighting to get unemployment benefits. The numbers have gone past 1.9 million; and let me be very clear that four out of five beneficiaries have at least one other adult in the household. Many support children, single adults, multiple adults in the household. These people need an unemployment insurance extension for basic benefits, and we can't even do it. And we used to do it on an emergency basis in the same breath as talking about debt and deficit.

We need to invest in America's people. We need infrastructure to create jobs and close the wealth inequality.

One-half of the people who need an unemployment insurance extension have at least some college. Nine in 10 live in households with total income of less than \$75,000 a year. They need that bridge to keep them going; and shamefully, unfortunately, we have not done that.

So I want to thank the gentleman for giving me the opportunity. I feel bipartisanship coming from my colleagues as they begin to talk on the floor, and that bipartisanship wants to have an increase in the minimum wage, to make it a livable wage, pass the emergency unemployment insurance, and have a reconsideration. Even though I know there is a conference bill, we just can't cut food stamps to those who are suffering.

I want to thank the gentleman. I look forward to investing in jobs that will be equal in income. I look forward to dealing with making automation work for those who want to work, technology work for those who want to work, closing the outsourcing gap and boosting manufacturing to give hard-working Americans who want something more than unemployment, but need it now; who want something more than low-skilled jobs, but need jobs now; and want something more than having to get food stamps, but need it now, to be able to close this heinous income inequality that is plaguing America. It is an epidemic that we must fight with every bit of our breath.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ACTING ON CRITICAL
LEGISLATIVE ISSUES—JANUARY 2014

House Democrats remain committed to policies that will address growing income inequality, the economic well-being of American families, and our economy—including renewing unemployment insurance, raising the minimum wage, and passing comprehensive immigration reform.

Addressing these issues would greatly benefit American families and our economic recovery, according to reports by leading economists and policy analysts.

Renewing Unemployment Insurance

On December 28, 2013, 1.3 million Americans lost access to emergency unemployment insurance. Democrats are committed to restoring this program that expires for an additional 72,000 Americans each week.

Renewing this program would help millions of Americans who are struggling to find a job

and put food on the table, and it would also provide economic benefits:

Extending Unemployment Benefits Increases Output and Employment: "CBO estimates that extending the current EUC program and other related expiring provisions until the end of 2014 would increase inflation-adjusted GDP by 0.2 percent and increase full-time-equivalent employment by 0.2 million in the fourth quarter of 2014." [Congressional Budget Office, 12/1/13]

Failure to Extend Emergency Unemployment Benefits Hurts Jobless Workers in Every State: "Failure to extend the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program would affect jobless workers in every state. . . . In all, an estimated 4.9 million workers would lose out on EUC benefits by the end of 2014." [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 12/11/13]

Labor Market Will Lose 310,000 Jobs in 2014 if Unemployment Insurance Extensions Expire: "Less understood but equally crucial, the UI benefit extensions boost spending in the economy and thereby create jobs. We find that continuing the extensions through 2014 would generate spending that would support 310,000 jobs. If this program is discontinued, the economy will lose these jobs." [Economic Policy Institute, 11/7/13]

Raising the Minimum Wage

The minimum wage has not been raised since 2007, and raising the minimum wage would help American families while also growing our economy:

Raising Minimum Wage Will Help Low-Wage Workers, With Little Negative Impact on Employment: "The weight of the evidence is . . . that minimum-wage increases of the magnitude that have been enacted in the past . . . are a clear net benefit to low-wage workers as a group as well as a policy tool that pushes back against rising inequality." [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1/7/14]

Raising the Federal Minimum Wage to \$10.10 Would Lift Wages for Millions and Provide an Economic Boost: "Raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2016 would lift incomes for millions of American workers and provide a modest boost to U.S. GDP. . . . Across the phase-in period of the increase, GDP would grow by about \$22 billion, resulting in the creation of roughly 85,000 net new jobs over that period." [Economic Policy Institute, 12/19/13]

Passing Comprehensive Immigration Reform

In addition to providing a pathway to citizenship, passing comprehensive immigration reform would boost economic activity and grow our workforce:

Taking Action on Immigration: "Studies show that highly educated, foreign-born professionals are net job creators. Low quotas for both H-1B temporary visas and permanent residence green cards are the primary problems for employers seeking to hire high-skilled foreign nationals. Visa shortages and long waits created by the current law lead highly sought-after world talent to either leave America or choose to remain overseas and work for foreign competitors." [Business Roundtable, 4/5/13]

Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Creating Jobs and Strengthening the Economy: "The United States continues to lead the world in technology and science innovation; immigrant entrepreneurs play a large role in this competitive thrust. A study by Wadhwa and col-

leagues found that foreign-born entrepreneurs were founders or co-founders of more than 25% of technology and engineering companies started between 1995 and 2005. In 2005, these technology companies employed 450,000 workers and generated \$52 billion." [Chamber of Commerce, 1/2012]

Economic Impact of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act: "Taking account of all economic effects (including those reflected in the cost estimate), the bill would increase real (inflation-adjusted) GDP relative to the amount CBO projects under current law by 3.3 percent in 2023 and by 5.4 percent in 2033, according to CBO's central estimates." [Congressional Budget Office, 6/18/13]

Immigration Reform: Implications for Growth, Budget and Housing: "Effective immigration reform can be a powerful instrument of economic revitalization. By increasing the overall population and particularly the number of working-age labor force participants, reform can help expand the economy, contribute to higher overall average wages, generate more consumer spending, and spur new demand for residential housing construction." [Bipartisan Policy Center, 10/29/13]

[From the Houston Chronicle, Jan. 8, 2014]

NO. 1 JOB FOR HOUSE: EXTEND EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT AID

PROGRAM WILL HELP ECONOMY BY CREATING JOBS, BOOSTING GROWTH
(By Sheila Jackson Lee)

Right now, 1.9 million Americans are experiencing an economic emergency, which will turn into a catastrophe for them and their families if Congress does not act immediately to extend the emergency unemployment program that expired on Dec. 28. Unless the aid is extended through 2014, nearly 14 million Americans will be negatively affected—the 4.9 million workers who will see unemployment insurance cut off and the approximately 9 million additional family members those workers are supporting.

There are some who believe that there is no economic emergency justifying an extension of the emergency unemployment program. They are wrong. Let them tell that to jobless veterans looking for a new job in an economy in which there are still nearly 2 million fewer jobs now than there were before the recession began. Let them tell that to the persons who know from experience there are more than three applicants for each new job created. The national employment rate is 7 percent and of these unemployed, the long-term unemployment rate—the share of unemployed workers who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or longer—is 37 percent, the highest it has been in 20 years.

Behind these grim statistics are the heart-breaking stories of real people—veterans, parents, seniors—struggling to get by on about \$300 a week. These benefits, which the recipients earned and paid for through their payroll taxes, are needed to pay rent and utilities, buy groceries, pay for internet access to search for jobs and gas to get to job interviews.

This is why the most urgent task pending before the House of Representatives is to extend the emergency unemployment program. To address this emergency, I introduced legislation last month, the Unemployed Job Hunters Protection and Assistance Act (H.R. 3773), that would extend the program for 12 months to provide the benefits earned by the recipients and avoid what will be a tragedy not only for those who are unemployed but also for an economy still recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Extending the program is good for the nation's economy because it will create an estimated 200,000 jobs, increase economic growth by .2 percent and generate \$1.52 in economic activity for each dollar expended.

The emergency unemployment program was established in 2008 during the Bush Administration and has been reauthorized several times as the economy continues its recovery. Congress has never failed to extend emergency unemployment insurance when the rate of long-term unemployment was even half the current level of 37 percent. And because of the emergency nature of the congressional action, the extension was not subject to any offset requirements during the Bush Administration. There is no good reason to impose any such requirements now; doing so serves no purpose other than to punish the persons who need our help.

Despite a slowly recovering job market, these unemployed job hunters have not lost faith. Every morning, they get up and go out or online looking for jobs. They want to work. They still have hope that things will get better so they can provide for their families. But they need the help that unemployment insurance is intended to provide.

Now is not the time to scapegoat those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Now is the time to extend the emergency unemployment aid. At a minimum, Congress should and must vote to extend the program for three months while negotiations continue on a long-term solution. On Tuesday, a bipartisan measure that would do this cleared a procedural vote in the Senate, allowing debate to continue on the three-month stopgap. This is an economic emergency. It is time for congressional Republicans to work with their Democratic colleagues on the issues of importance to the American people.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from Texas.

Earlier this month, we marked the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the war on poverty. In this Chamber in January of 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson spoke before a joint session of Congress and announced a series of initiatives designed to combat chronic poverty in America. As a result of this effort, there were several legislative battles that were won in the march toward trying to create, as President Johnson said, the Great Society—Medicare, Medicaid, the Food Stamp Act, the school breakfast program, college work study, Job Corps, and minimum wage enhancement. These were all part of the war on poverty.

But, unfortunately, as we stand here today, in 2014, some in this Chamber have abandoned this war on poverty and instead have launched a war on the poor. As a result, we have seen income inequality grow. That is why it is such an important issue for us to confront now.

I am pleased that we have been joined by one of the strongest voices in the Congress for dealing with this issue, the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina, someone who is the vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Representative G. K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Let me thank you, Mr. JEFFRIES, for yielding time, and thank you for your passion and your willingness to come to this floor

each week to raise issues that are very important to the Congressional Black Caucus and should be important to every American. Thank you for your energy and the way you represent your district in Brooklyn. Thank you to Mr. HORSFORD for your tireless efforts as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the State of the Union message tomorrow night. I have seen probably nine or 10 since I have been in Congress, and each one is unique in its own way. But I am really looking forward to the State of the Union message tomorrow night from President Barack Obama.

If press reports are correct, it seems to me that the President is ready to pull off the Band-Aid and expose the disease of income inequality in this country; and, hopefully, the President will lay out a plan tomorrow night to address poverty and to address the huge income disparity that we see in our country.

These are the facts: there are 46.5 million Americans that live below the poverty level. Mr. JEFFRIES, there are 308 million people in America, and one out of six of those lives in poverty. That is unacceptable. In my district in North Carolina, one of four lives in poverty. That includes some 73,000 children, and my congressional district is among the bottom 10 of all of the congressional districts in the country.

American workers are working very hard, but their purchasing power in my district and your district, Mr. JEFFRIES, and all across America, is getting less. Why is that? It is because wages are flat. Workers are not experiencing pay raises and raises in their income as other Americans are. Wages are flat. Ten percent of wage earners today earn 50 percent of the Nation's income. Each year, the top 1 percent makes 26 times what a minimum wage worker makes, on average.

These are the facts. These are the statistics. We have not concocted this theory of people living in poverty. It is real. Nearly 50 million Americans are living in poverty, and so we must get serious. We must get serious about enabling the American Dream for millions of low-income Americans and millions of middle-income Americans.

A few moments ago, I heard the gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, talk about the minimum wage. And she is absolutely correct. It is time for the minimum wage to be raised.

□ 1945

Raising the wage to \$10.10 per hour would immediately lift 4.6 million Americans out of poverty. And many of those who are in poverty are the working poor.

It is time for corporate America to use their record profits. They are experiencing record profits, and good for them, but they must use their record profits to provide higher wages and better benefits. The fact is that corporate profits are enhanced when workers and their families are secure.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the State of the Union message tomorrow evening and urge the President to demonstrate his resolve to give equal opportunity to every American.

Finally, the Congressional Black Caucus has constantly made the point that there are dozens, if not hundreds, of communities across America represented by Republicans and Democrats that have poverty rates in excess of 20 percent. Some of those communities have had those rates for more than 30 years.

The Congressional Black Caucus has asked President Obama to use his executive authority to target at least 10 percent more resources to these communities. The Congressional Black Caucus has framed this as the 10-20-30 plan. I ask our President to target more resources to low-income communities.

I thank you, Mr. JEFFRIES, for yielding time.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina.

As you pointed out, income inequality and poverty should not be a partisan issue. It impacts urban America and it impacts rural America. It impacts blue States and it impacts red States. It impacts the north, the south, the east, the west, and the heartland of this country.

That is why it has been unfortunate that, heretofore, we have seen a refusal by some of our friends on the other side of the aisle to do commonsense things like raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour, which would lift millions of the working poor out of poverty and set them on a pathway toward the middle class.

Now, one of the places where income inequality is particularly pronounced is in my hometown of New York City, one of the greatest cities in the world, one of the richest cities in the world. But 25 percent of the population in New York City lives below the poverty line. In the shadow of Wall Street, the engine that drives the world economy, that is an unfortunate reality.

One of the people who has been raising this issue and fighting hard to address this back home in New York City is my distinguished colleague who represents the Ninth Congressional District, immediately adjacent to the one that I am privileged to represent. It is my honor to yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Brooklyn, New York (Mr. JEFFRIES), my good friend and colleague, for yielding, and the gentleman from Nevada, the Honorable Mr. HORSFORD, for anchoring the Special Orders of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I join with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus in rising this evening to address the issue of income inequality that continues to splinter the foundation of our Nation.

In Brooklyn, the lowest income and the lowest fifth of households took home about 2.5 percent of the borough's income in 2011. The top 5 percent claimed 24 percent. Almost 22 percent of the population of Brooklyn lives in poverty.

While the causes of this polarization are complex, I believe they are not insurmountable. The people of Brooklyn have started to stand up and demand action on the issue.

We know that the wage stagnation contributes largely to income disparity, so let's raise the minimum wage.

We know that education is the true ladder of opportunity in our communities, so let's make the vital investments in education.

We know that unemployment insurance is not only an essential tool for individuals, a bridge to find new work, but it is also a stimulus to our local businesses, so let us extend unemployment insurance.

Most importantly, we must make every effort to make sure that no American is allowed to fall through our social safety net and that we, as their national representatives, truly look out for those that have been driven deeper into desperation and poverty by the recent financial crisis.

So our message today is simple: the economic disparity that has crept across our Nation is threatening America's fundamental promise of opportunity for all. We must take action: opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation; maintain our social compact so that no American has to go hungry, that we provide the food assistance through a robust Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; provide the unemployment insurance that families need to maintain until they get those jobs they have been seeking.

We must take action. That is what we have been sworn to do.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend and colleague, Representative YVETTE CLARKE, and look forward to continuing the fight and the march toward socioeconomic justice on behalf of the people we represent back at home in Brooklyn and New York City.

It is now my honor and my privilege to yield to another good friend, the dean of the freshman class of the CBC, someone who has continued in the great tradition that had been set forth by his father and his predecessor and is carving out his own reputation as a fighter for justice on behalf of the people he represents back at home in New Jersey. Let me now yield to the distinguished gentleman from the Garden State, Representative DONALD PAYNE, Jr.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the dynamic duo of the CBC's freshman class, Mr. HORSFORD and Mr. JEFFRIES, for their tireless leadership in the 113th Congress, and now the Second Session of the 113th Congress. They have demonstrated that they have hit the

ground running and understand the issues that are important to the people of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the gap between the rich and poor in this country has really become staggering, and that gap is increasing every single day. Nowhere is that more true than in my home State of New Jersey. The number of wealthy families has doubled. Meanwhile, the poorest income brackets have increased sharply. In my district alone, more than a quarter of the people live in poverty, and this is likely really underestimated due to the high cost of living in New Jersey.

Not only is there a growing gap, but unemployment is high, the minimum wage is stagnant, and there is a lack of opportunity throughout this Nation for people to find the jobs that they need to have their families live in the manner in which they should. This, in the richest country in the world, the greatest Nation in the world, is absolutely unacceptable. All of these contribute to growing income inequality.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) was correct. We are not saying that everyone should have the same standard of living or the same salary or income, but the opportunity to rise to those salaries and incomes is the issue of today.

One thing that the Congress can do to help lessen this inequality is to extend unemployment insurance right away.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how some of this issue is couched in: maybe people just don't want to get up and look for a job, and if they take that menial job, then what is the problem? The problem is: you can't feed your children; you can't buy the clothes they need to go to school; you can't educate them. Therein lies the problem.

We are in a time now where there are more than 1 million long-term unemployed who literally have been left out in the cold.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I know what it is like to be unemployed. I know what it is like to be down on your luck. At one time, a company that I worked for for a decade, which I thought would be my career, I would retire from there, get the gold watch, the proverbial gold watch, well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't work out that way. The company closed its doors and I found myself unemployed, going down to the Unemployment Office to get the paperwork needed, and trekking across my community to attempt to get a job.

That is the other thing that people don't understand about this, Mr. Speaker. You see, you can't just sit around and not look for a job in order to collect unemployment insurance.

That it has not been extended is almost a crime because, you see, some of these people have paid into this system for 5 and 10 and 20 years, and now that they need it, we are saying to those people that have played by the rules and done the things that we said they should do, that it is over for you.

I know what it is like not to have a paycheck, to go paycheck to paycheck. Now, I was fortunate. In my situation, I was able to move back home. But what I understand, Mr. Speaker, is that everyone does not have that opportunity. So I will continue to fight for what is right and what this Nation should stand for.

Take it from me, being unemployed, out looking for a job, is hard work, and it wears on you mentally and emotionally, because a job isn't just a paycheck. It is not just about one's livelihood. A job defines your purpose in life.

The hundreds of thousands of unemployed in New Jersey remain hopeful and optimistic that, if they keep working hard, they keep playing by the rules, they will be rewarded one day and find their new purpose in life. We must fulfill that promise that we have made to them. The faces of the unemployed, of those living in poverty in New Jersey are numerous and diverse.

Mr. Speaker, there is another dynamic. We have the dynamic of people who have great qualifications not being able to find a job because it is an employer's market. And, apparently, the bottom line is what is the most important thing for people. To lose a percentage on their gains or the percentage of income they make for their shareholders is the most important thing. So they are willing to let people lose their income to keep those numbers where they are.

There are middle-aged workers who, after decades at a company they have loved, find themselves unemployed. There are young people with college and master's degrees, as I said, who did everything right but can't seem to find a job no matter how qualified they are.

So I am asking my friends on both sides of the aisle to look at the faces of the long-term unemployed, to look at the faces of minimum wage workers, to look at the faces of the men and women and children living in poverty. I am asking my friends on both sides of the aisle to leave behind their political agendas and move forward with a human agenda, because, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, there is no reason that, in the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth, we have these issues to the degree that we do.

□ 2000

So I just want to close by saying that there are people in this Nation that play by the rules. There are people in this Nation that have done everything that we have asked them to do. So it is our obligation in this Nation, as its leaders, to find those opportunities for people to live and continue the type of life they have had in the American way.

I am just here to say that I will continue to fight for the less fortunate because I will not turn my back on any American that wants to play by the rules and have done what we have said in this Nation you need to do. The land of the free and the home of the brave—that still should mean something.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his very thoughtful observations and, in particular, for focusing on the need to reauthorize unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed across America. There has been a myth that really has been put forth unfortunately by those who seek to undermine this program that individuals who are receiving unemployment assistance, who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more, simply are sitting home looking to collect a check without going out and actively searching for employment. Nothing can be further from the truth.

The reality is—and this is connected to the dynamic around income inequality that we are discussing here today—is that for every 2.8, 2.9 million Americans who are unemployed, looking for a job, there is only one job that exists. So obviously we need to do more in this country collectively to generate employment as opposed to exploiting good middle class jobs to other parts of the world and not seeing any reciprocal economic benefit in return.

I am thankful that I have been joined by the coanchor of the CBC Special Order, someone whose very district representing urban parts of Clark County in Las Vegas as well as rural parts of Nevada can speak to the issue quite clearly that income inequality and poverty in America is not simply an urban issue or a rural issue. It impacts all of America, and we are thankful here in this Congress that he has been such a strong champion for his district and for these issues that are impacting people all across the country.

Let me yield to my good friend from Nevada, STEVEN HORSFORD.

Mr. HORSFORD. I thank my good friend, a strong advocate for the people of his district in New York as well as representing the interests of all Americans, and for your leadership in coanchoring this hour on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, where we bring the issues that most Americans want this Congress to focus on to the floor of the House of Representatives.

I would like to thank you for anchoring this hour and all of our colleagues who have come to the floor tonight to speak.

You know, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow night, this Chamber will be packed. Every seat will be filled, and every seat in the Chamber will have Representatives here. Millions upon millions of Americans will be listening as our President lays out the State of our Union. I am looking forward to his remarks and his vision for how we can continue to move our country forward.

Tonight, we come here to gather to discuss income inequality and what Congress can do in working with the President to move some of these important legislative issues forward on behalf of the constituents that we represent and millions of Americans across our great Nation.

There is no easy answer for solving the problem of income inequality or economic mobility. I thank the gentleman from New York for talking about how our various districts are really representative of this issue of income inequality.

In my home district of Nevada, the Fourth District, we have been hit harder than most by higher unemployment, higher home foreclosures which have led to economic loss, and I want to talk about some of that tonight because when we talk about issues of income inequality and economic mobility, it is for all incomes, not just for a select few. It is for the people in rural America as well as urban America. These are issues that are important to all of us.

Now although we cannot expect Congress to solve each person's economic struggle, we can certainly expect our Members of Congress not to target those who are struggling to make ends meet, especially by balancing our budget on their backs.

As of December 28, this past year, Congress did just that, unfortunately, and now, over 1.6 million Americans have lost crucial unemployment insurance benefits. Today, nearly 21,000 Nevadans in my State have been cut off from unemployment benefits. This is personal. As my colleague from New Jersey talked about, for those who understand what it means to be unemployed, for those of us who understand the fact that people are putting in resume after resume, day after day, week after week, it hits a person to their core, being unemployed. To add insult to injury, this Congress failed to do its job.

So its unconscionable to assume that those who are looking for work are lazy or that they want to somehow stay unemployed. Mr. Speaker, the constituents that I have spoken to in my district at the work centers who continue to put their resumes in, they want to be employed.

It is one thing to have our colleagues on the other side believe that the government should not intervene in helping to close the gap between the rich and poor, but it is absolutely wrong to cut critical social safety nets that have been in place for decades—regardless of party—in an effort to reduce spending while maintaining corporate subsidies and tax breaks for the very rich.

Mr. Speaker, it is morally outrageous to target those who have lost their jobs at no fault of their own, but it is even worse to see this happen when we have millions of dollars in tax subsidies to millionaires and major industry.

What is more, the difference between the top and the bottom of the economic ladder is greater than ever before, and climbing this ladder is also becoming increasingly difficult.

Recently, Harvard economist Dr. Raj Chetty found that those who are our parents, and how much our parents earn, are more consequential today than ever before. Dr. Chetty identified five key factors that are heavily cor-

related with economic mobility and income inequality. First is segregation. Second is inequality. Third is the quality of our public school systems. Fourth is social and civic engagement. Fifth is family structure.

And for decades, low-income workers have seen their wages frozen while the profits of the Nation's wealthiest Americans have continued to explode. Now I have nothing against successful people, people who go out and put their ingenuity and entrepreneurship to work and become successful, but I also believe that it is important for this Congress to also focus on the needs of those who are part of the middle class and those who have fallen into poverty who want to be part of that middle class.

It is time that Congress acted to address the minimum wage crisis in our country. \$7.25, which is the Federal minimum wage, is not a living wage in today's America, and we need to recognize that. We need to recognize that the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013, the bill that has been introduced by our House Democratic colleague, Representative GEORGE MILLER of California, and in the Senate by Senator TOM HARKIN of Iowa, is the type of commonsense legislation that a majority of Americans expect this Congress to focus on.

Gradually increasing the Federal minimum wage from a current rate of \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10 per hour by 2016 in three 95-cent installments is the right economic step to take for our country and the people that we represent. \$10.10 is the inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage compared to what it was in the 1960s. Raising the tipped minimum wage from \$2.13 per hour to \$7.07 per hour.

Now let's talk about who these people are that we are fighting to increase the wage for. First, these are low-wage workers who will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage and are more likely to work full time. In fact, 55 percent of those who are on minimum wage today work full time. Fifty-six percent of those on minimum wage today, Mr. Speaker, are women, and 80 percent are adults who are at least 20 years of age.

Those are not the only groups that would benefit from the minimum wage. Increasing the minimum wage would also generate some \$22 billion in economic activity and create an additional 85,000 jobs nationwide. Contrary to what Republicans and some super-PACs may want the American people to believe, raising the minimum wage is good for the economy. It creates jobs, and it helps lift people out of poverty. It would raise 4.6 million Americans out of poverty and put an average of \$1,700 back into the pockets of our country's lowest-wage workers.

In Nevada alone, over 139,000 people, 20 percent of our State's children, would be directly or indirectly affected by an increase in the minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage would ac-

tually take pressure off of our government by allowing people to be in more sustaining wages that help them provide for themselves and their families rather than relying on Federal assistance to take care of themselves.

So these are the growing inequalities that we are here to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and one of the greatest threats to our Nation's future is this issue of growing income inequality. Our country's greatness was built on the foundation of the world's most prosperous middle class and on a society where those who worked hard had the opportunity to rise on that economic ladder of opportunity. That has become far from the truth over the last 30 years but particularly during the recovery from the Great Recession.

Before I turn the time back over to my colleague and engage in a little bit of back and forth, I would like to look at this graph for a moment because it charts our country's various recessions and depressions and our subsequent recoveries. In the Great Depression, everyone suffered. It devastated everyone in the economy, regardless of income. In the following years, when our economy started to grow again, all levels of income recovered at approximately the same rates that had declined. The top 1 percent share of the recovery was only about 28 percent at the time.

During the Clinton expansion years, in the 1990s, it was an economic boom for all levels of income. And although the top 1 percent held 45 percent of that growth, it was still a shared economic prosperity.

Moving ahead to the Bush expansion, after the 2001 recession, you can see more of the growth being concentrated in the top 1 percent at 65 percent. When the recession of 2007 to 2009 came about, only 49 percent of the loss belonged to the 1 percent despite the massive gains they had accrued during the Bush expansion.

So this is not the type of economic system that we want for our country, where the wealthiest elite continues to grow and the Nation's middle class shrinks and suffers, and that is what we are here to talk about tonight.

I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding to me and I yield back.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Nevada for the very precise and comprehensive analysis that was given today on the House floor.

□ 2015

There were several important points that you raised that I would like to elaborate on and perhaps have a follow-up discussion. One of the issues that you discuss relates to the failure of the economic expansion as well as the recoveries that have taken place increasingly over the last several decades to benefit in any proportional way people in the middle class and those who aspire to be part of the middle class. This has been a trend that we have seen for

the last 30-plus years. It has been particularly pronounced in the 5 years or so since the economy collapsed in 2008.

When we look at the recovery, I mentioned earlier today that it is a particularly schizophrenic and inconsistent one because we know that the stock market is way up, corporate profits are way up, CEO compensation is way up and the productivity of the American worker is way up, but middle class wages remain stagnant.

Now, why is that a problem? This chart illustrates the fact that essentially since 1950, the productivity of the American worker—our ability as workers throughout this country to produce more in a more efficient fashion, costing less in time and resources, has consistently and exponentially increased—the productivity of the American worker. But essentially over the last 30-plus years or so, wages connected to that output of the American worker have remained flat.

So what does that mean? That essentially means that while the American worker is far more efficient and effective in doing their job and in being more productive, the profits and the output generated by the American worker have not inured to the employees. It has inured to the employer and a very small percentage of individuals.

So when we talk about income inequality, we are not saying that we have a problem with success. We are saying everyone should benefit from the success that the American worker has created as opposed to just a small number of individuals—the so-called job creators. We are thankful for their ingenuity and their effort; but the reality is the productivity of the American worker has increased, yet the middle class has not benefited.

Back between 1978 and 2001, CEO compensation had increased 876 percent—CEO compensation between 1978 and 2001. And what has happened as it relates to compensation for the average American worker during that same time period? It has increased 5.4 percent. That is a shameful difference, one that we should not tolerate in this great country.

The other observation that my distinguished colleague made related to the fact that if we increase the minimum wage, it will not just benefit millions of Americans by lifting them out of poverty. Parenthetically, why in the world would we want a society where people work full-time throughout an entire year yet find themselves in poverty? That makes no sense. But increasing the minimum wage benefits the economy, as my colleague indicated, because it increases consumer demand. An increase in consumer demand leads to economic growth, an increase in economic growth leads to additional job creation, and everybody benefits. It is a commonsense solution.

So let me now turn to my colleague from Nevada for some parting thoughts. And I appreciate, as always, your comprehensive analysis and observation.

Mr. HORSFORD. And I appreciate yours. Just to reinforce the point you were making, this chart illustrates the very facts of the matter. Why is it okay that Wall Street profits are at record highs over the last 3 years since 2009, at 720 percent, but it is not okay to increase the minimum wage for millions upon millions of Americans who are using that minimum-wage job to provide for themselves and their family? Why is it okay that the unemployment rate is over 102 percent during this period, but it is not okay to increase the minimum wage for workers in this country? Why is it okay that CEO pay is 185 times bigger than the average worker according to the Economic Policy Institute, but it is not okay to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25, incrementally, to \$10.10 in order to lift people out of poverty? And why is it okay that Americans' home equity has dropped 35 percent during 2007–2009 thereby affecting the very income wealth that the majority of middle class Americans did have and yet not help to lift our economy by raising the minimum wage?

These are the questions that we would like to pose to our friends and colleagues on the other side. These are the questions that the American public expect this House of Representatives to debate, and these are the issues that would really go to the crux of closing the income inequality and moving economic mobility forward in this country.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on these and other measures. We have introduced legislation to increase the minimum wage, to extend unemployment insurance benefits, to provide training to workers to move into high-growth sectors and to invest in our infrastructure to create the type of jobs that our country desperately needs. But we need our colleagues on the other side to work with us and our President to move these legislative proposals forward and to stop the continued obstructionism that has plagued this Congress for far too long.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my colleague.

In summation, income inequality is a threat to our economy and the integrity of our democracy, and we must do everything possible to right this wrong in America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to income inequality in the United States. As millions of Americans remain without work, while others are underpaid or underemployed, it is imperative that we address the growing threat to our country that is income inequality.

Since the 1970s, we have witnessed a dangerous trend develop where wage growth for middle and lower income households has become stagnant while incomes at the very top continue to rise sharply. From 1973 to 2005, real hourly wages for the top 10 percent rose by 30 percent or more, whereas the bottom 50 percent of all Americans experienced only marginal real wage increases of a little more than 5 percent.

The income gap is further amplified when comparing races. Overall, Caucasian males earn a median income of more than \$40,000 per year while African American males average roughly \$30,000 during the same period. Hispanic Americans average just over \$26,000 in the same category. These discrepancies among demographics is alarming, considering those figures are even lower for women.

The percentage of wealth controlled by the richest Americans is another disturbing fact that is often overlooked. The top 1 percent of Americans own 40 percent of our entire nation's wealth, while the bottom 80 percent of Americans share only 7 percent of the nation's wealth. In historical terms, the last time our nation faced such a wide income gap was during the 1920s leading up to the Great Depression.

Mr. Speaker, while Congress struggles with raising the minimum wage, millions of working individuals and families across the country continue to struggle with stagnant pay and rising inflation. Unless we take a serious approach that transcends simply raising the minimum wage in order to curb income inequality, the consequences could prove catastrophic for our economy.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2642, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. LUCAS (during the Special Order of Mr. JEFFRIES) submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2642) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 113-333)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2642), to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its amendment to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Agricultural Act of 2014”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definition of Secretary of Agriculture.

TITLE I—COMMODITIES

Subtitle A—Repeals and Reforms

PART I—REPEALS

Sec. 1101. Repeal of direct payments.

Sec. 1102. Repeal of counter-cyclical payments.

Sec. 1103. Repeal of average crop revenue election program.

PART II—COMMODITY POLICY

Sec. 1111. Definitions.

Sec. 1112. Base acres.

Sec. 1113. Payment yields.