

a month in a food benefit, but the good news for them is there will be some that won't be adversely impacted. They should take some satisfaction in that.

We talk about numbers all the time. We talk about statistics. Let me read to you a couple of real life examples.

William, an elderly man from Salem, Massachusetts, currently receives \$181 a month in SNAP. He lives in senior housing, where heat and utilities are included, but the rent exceeds 35 percent of his \$802 a month supplemental Social Security income.

His SNAP benefit of \$181 a month is based on the Heat and Eat option. He incurs other health-related expenses not covered by Medicaid, but he has had significant difficulty producing the detailed verification required by the State.

His current SNAP would be significantly reduced by more than \$80 a month if he lost this Heat and Eat option.

Pamela, a severely disabled woman from Northborough, Massachusetts, currently receives \$115 a month as SNAP benefits. She gets \$1,007 in monthly Social Security disability benefits. In addition to other medical conditions, she is a diabetic and requires a special diet to meet her daily nutritional needs.

While she lives in public housing, she must pay for her own appliances and maintenance fees, including her air conditioning unit, essential to her health. She does not have a car, but uses her limited income for private transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping and pharmacy trips, as she is not near any public transportation.

With the loss of the Heat and Eat SNAP option, her SNAP benefit will be reduced by \$100 a month, so from \$115 to the minimum of \$15 a month, significantly impacting her ability to maintain her special diet.

Let me say to my colleagues here, the cut that went into effect last November will cost the average family of three about \$30 a month in benefits. Those who will be impacted by the cuts of this Heat and Eat program will lose an additional \$80 to \$90 a month. So their reduction in their monthly benefit for food should be between \$120 and \$130 a month.

Where are they going to find the food?

Who is going to make up the difference?

My colleagues on the Republican side say, well, they can go beg to the States; the States ought to do more; or if the States say no, go to the churches or the synagogues or the mosques. Maybe they will do more.

The bottom line is, if any of my colleagues took the time to go back to their districts and visit their food banks, they would realize they are at capacity. Food banks can't give out any more.

So I would urge my colleagues, vote against this farm bill. Do not make hunger worse in America.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, for the past 40 years, my work in this House has been guided by my firm belief that every child, regardless of his or her ZIP code, deserves access to a quality education that will prepare them for future success; and every parent deserves to know that their child's school is helping their son or daughter achieve his or her full potential.

That is why, under No Child Left Behind, we demanded the accountability include transparency on school performance. We share the collective responsibility, at all levels of government, to make good on the promise of high-quality education for all students. Unfortunately, we all know that not every school is living up to that promise.

When any school fails its students, it is our responsibility, not only to give those students a high-quality public school option, but to also improve the low-performing schools. It is simple: no child should be stuck in a failing school.

This week is National School Choice Week. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and their strategists have embraced the so-called "school choice" as a part of their re-branding effort to appear more caring.

Politico reported just last week that the Republican strategists have been counseling the Republicans that talking about helping poor minority children softens the Republican image. Talking about it, not doing something about it.

Conservative advocacy groups have declared in planning documents that it is an excellent media opportunity to focus on kids and the future. It is a media opportunity to focus on children, not to do something about it.

This new effort even has a warm and fuzzy name, the Growth and Opportunity Project. This is political posturing at its worst, and it does nothing to provide actual choice for our Nation's students.

The cornerstone of true school choice is the principle that every child has the right to attend a great school. Not only should the students have high-quality options, but we need to demand that low-performing schools improve, and support that improvement.

Without quality schools to pick from, families face an empty choice. Yet that is all the Republican majority has offered Americans so far.

Neither school choice nor quality of schools was on their agenda when they voted for the Republican rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That bill abandoned our responsibility to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education. It undercut Federal support for schools.

The majority leader pledged that Republicans remain vigilant in protecting

and promoting school choice; yet their bill removed the school choice mechanisms that were already in current law. And their bill failed to require that schools in districts improve when they are failing to effectively educate students.

With the Republicans' Elementary and Secondary Education bill, along with sequestration, the majority turned its back on the Nation's most vulnerable students. They took money away from America's poorest schools, and they took money away from America's poorest students.

The very people that the majority's school choice media opportunity pretends to support are the same ones that are hurt by the majority's actual votes in this Chamber. Not a media conversation, not the posturing to appear to soften the image, but the actual votes taken in this Chamber harm the very children that they now say they want to support with this media opportunity to soften their image.

It was the Democratic Elementary and Secondary Education bill that held schools accountable for improvement and demanded that children be afforded new education opportunities when stuck in a failing school.

School choice should not be an empty promise. It should not be a political tag line that frees my colleagues from taking responsibility for our Nation's education system.

Mr. Speaker, if you want meaningful school choice, you must demand schools be held accountable for equitably serving all students, and you must provide the support that the schools need to provide that quality education.

Without that accountability for school quality, what choices would parents really have when their schools are failing?

An option between two low-performing schools? Not a good option.

An option between low-performing neighborhood schools and figuring out how to get your child across town to a different school, providing the transportation, and still hold down the job, that is not a fair option.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that if you ask parents all across America, they will tell you that their first choice in school choice is to have a neighborhood school that is high-performing; have a neighborhood school that meets the demands of that family and those children to get a first-class education; not to drive across town; not to spend time putting their kids in transit or putting their kids in harm's way trying to walk to that better school.

Fix the neighborhood schools; and if you don't, then provide that child the alternative to go to another school, as we did in current law, not as we do in the media release.

I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to go beyond the rhetoric and posturing and sit down with me and others to make real, sustainable improvements in public education for all students.

Poor and minority kids are not a media opportunity. These are real children who deserve an equal shot at a bright future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS. ADELFA CALLEJO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Adelfa Callejo, a well-respected civil rights leader and attorney in Texas.

Mrs. Callejo was 90 years old when she passed last week. She developed into her role as an advocate for justice at an early age. As the oldest daughter of a father who did not speak English, Mrs. Callejo often had to serve as an intermediary in the defense of her family against intimidation from Federal immigration agents or unfair treatment in schools targeted at Mexican American immigrants.

As the first Hispanic woman to graduate from law school at Southern Methodist University, her background and education have not gone unnoticed. Mrs. Callejo emerged as a prominent civil rights attorney in Texas, battling questionable city council redistricting in the late 1980s, and staunchly opposing illegal immigration policies in Farmers Branch, among other prominent legal battles, that have helped to shape our State.

Mrs. Callejo was known best for her forceful advocacy and fiery personality. She overcame tremendous adversity as a female and as a Hispanic, although nothing would deter her from becoming a powerful financial and social force in Texas.

She once said: Only through education will we make the world a better place than we found it. She lived true to these words and worked with the Dallas Independent School District to ensure a better education was offered to a more diverse range of students; and for that, she was honored by a school being named for her in the Dallas Independent School District.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Callejo was an inspirational character who offered her talent and her resources to those who were less fortunate. While she had an incredible presence in Dallas, her reputation as "the Godmother" extended far beyond the city limits.

While her passing comes as a great loss to many, we may continue to look to her life for an inspiration. I am proud to call her my friend and supporter.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost a warrior.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, a gunman walked into a

mall in Columbia, Maryland, and opened fire, killing two people before taking his own life. Prior to the mall shooting, we saw six school shootings take place nationwide in just 10 days.

Countless other Americans are terrorized each day on streets that have become shooting galleries where kids aren't safe to walk to school or go to the corner store or sit on their front porches. And yet we do nothing.

Time and time again, despite the headlines and the bloodshed and the pleas from the parents of the victims to act, Congress has failed to pass commonsense gun reforms that would save thousands of American lives, including background checks, which are supported by 90 percent of Americans.

□ 1045

Somehow, in the years between Columbine and Newtown, we have developed a collective indifference to the killings. After each shooting, we are in disbelief; but then we shrug and move on, dismissing the mass shootings as isolated incidents and ignoring the everyday shootings altogether.

Sadly, a callus has formed where our compassion should be. Or is it that the gun lobby's agenda has taken the place of our country's conscience?

I am at a loss because I truly do not understand how we can continue to ignore the public health epidemic that is gun violence in America. What will it take? How many more must die? How many parents must weep before we do the right thing?

Make no mistake, gun violence is robbing us of a generation. It is a slow-motion plague that is killing our kids one day at a time.

In the Chicagoland area, gun violence has claimed some of our best and our brightest, like 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton, who was shot and killed a year ago this week while standing in a park with friends. You may remember, she was killed a week after performing for President Obama's inauguration.

She was certainly one of my district's shining stars. But she was, by far, not the only one. There were many Hadiyas, young people with promise and potential who were felled by gun violence. They had family and friends who loved them, communities who mourned them, and they are:

Eva Casara, 17; Tyrone Lawson, 17; Maurice Knowles, 16; Darnell Williams, 17; Abdullah Trull, 16; Leonard Anderson, 17; Jaleel Pearson, 18; Malcolm Whitney, 16; Fearro Denard, 18; Tyshon Anderson, 18; Tyrone Hart, 18; Ashaya Miller, 15; Equiel Velasquez, 17; Christopher Lattin, Jr., 15; Rey Donantas, 14; Victor Vegas, 15; Tyrone Lawson, 17; Antonio Fenner, 16; Frances Colon, 18; Jorge Valdez-Benitez, 18; Oscar Marquez, 17; Jonyla Watkins, 6 months; Arrell Monegan, 16; Victor Damian, 15; Clifton Barney, 17; Miguel Delaluz, 17; Leetema Daniels, 17; Fearro Denard, 18; Patrick Sykes, 15; Dionte Maxwell, 18; Miguel Villegas, 15; April McDaniel, 18; Fernando Mondragon, 18; Kevin Rivera,

16; Ricardo Herrera, 17; and Alexander Lagunas, 18.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here in honor of their memories, asking my colleagues to get serious about gun reform and to pass legislation to help them stem the tide of shootings in this country. I hope one day never to have to add another name to that list.

RECOGNIZING BART OFFICER TOMMY SMITH

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, there is no person more worthy of respect and tribute than he or she who lays down their own life while working to protect others. Today it is with great sadness that I wish to honor Bay Area Rapid Transit Sergeant Thomas Smith, whose end of watch came too early when he was tragically killed on January 21 of this year.

Sergeant Smith, known as Tommy to his family and friends, is from a law enforcement family that knows all too well the daily risks of wearing a badge and serving the community as a police officer. Sergeant Smith's wife, Kellie, also works as a police officer, as do his two brothers, Ed and Pat, and also his brother-in-law Todd. So aware were Sergeant Smith and his family of the personal danger they faced in their jobs that they had a rule of what they would say to each other whenever they would leave each other's company: Never say good-bye. You only tell each other, "Be safe."

But Sergeant Smith is not a hero because of how he died; he is a hero because of how he lived. On the job, Sergeant Smith worked honorably every day—not just the day that we lost him—to protect our community.

Sergeant Smith cared most about his family, and nothing else was even a close second, as his own lieutenant described earlier last week. Sergeant Smith took every opportunity to spend time with whom he called his "girls"—his wife, Kellie, and their 6-year-old daughter, Summer.

May we always remember Sergeant Smith and how he lived so honorably for us. And may Sergeant Smith now watch over us from above, as he always did on Earth, to make sure that all of us can be safe.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.