

look at Venezuela, which has more oil than Saudi Arabia has. Their economy is in shambles, and children are dying because they can't get food and medical treatment.

That is what socialism gives the people, Mr. Speaker.

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I am deeply concerned about the homelessness crisis that is plaguing our country.

Homelessness affects the very fabric of our communities, and it degrades the values upon which our country was built. Every American has the right to safe, decent, and affordable housing; but according to the latest estimates, nearly 600,000 Americans are currently homeless, over 83,000 of whom are chronically homeless and nearly 130,000 of whom are children who are under the age of 18, and these numbers are increasing in some of our major cities. Sadly, in my own hometown, in Los Angeles, homelessness increased by a staggering 20 percent between 2014 and 2015, and it continues to rise.

But this is not just about the numbers. When I visit our homeless neighbors on Skid Row in Los Angeles, I see how these Americans are facing chronic mental and physical problems that make it even harder to rehabilitate their lives. When I speak to families that are dealing with homelessness, I see the toll this housing insecurity is taking on their children, who can't concentrate in school because they are sleeping in cars at night.

There is a solution to this problem, Mr. Speaker. We just need the political will and resources. That is why earlier this year I introduced comprehensive legislation to provide the resources we need to truly end homelessness in America.

My bill, H.R. 4888, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2016, would provide over \$13 billion over 5 years to strengthen programs and initiatives that will help us end homelessness in this country. The money will help to create approximately 410,000 units of housing to end homelessness for the estimated 407,000 homeless households in the country. This includes permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher units, and deeply affordable units through the National Housing Trust Fund.

My bill would also provide the resources to increase the number of outreach workers on the streets, working with homeless populations. Furthermore, my bill would provide technical assistance to help States and localities align their health and housing systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has

reported that major progress toward ending homelessness in this country has virtually stalled without new funding. So there is a real need to invest in our Federal housing programs and to support our local service providers who are on the streets helping the homeless every day.

Passing H.R. 4888 would be an investment that would pay dividends in the long run. Research has shown that when we provide housing to chronically homeless individuals, the cost to the taxpayer is significantly less than if we allowed them to remain homeless. For example, Los Angeles County's Project 50 found that providing permanent supportive housing to 50 chronically homeless individuals saved the county close to \$250,000 over 2 years. Similar results have been found in other major cities as well as in small cities and in rural areas alike.

But this isn't just about the cost or the savings, Mr. Speaker. It is about recognizing the crisis that we face as a Nation and having an honest conversation about what we really need to do to put an end to homelessness.

We are the richest country in the world, and every person should have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. This should be a bipartisan issue. We must, all of us, Democrats and Republicans, work together to finally end homelessness in this country once and for all.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I will be on this floor every chance I get to force the real debate and the real conversation about this crisis that we are confronted with in America. We cannot continue to walk past homeless, helpless, mentally ill, physically ill homeless people on the streets and pretend we don't see them. They are there. It is unconscionable that we allow this homelessness to continue to grow and to be on our streets.

In Los Angeles, when you go to so-called Skid Row, we have people on the streets who are lined all the way up to the steps of City Hall.

Elected officials, ministers, community organizations, let's get together with our legislators, let's pass H.R. 4888, and stop the homelessness in America.

ECONOMIC, RETIREMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I want to discuss the issue of security with my colleagues—economic security, retirement security, and national security—three issues that probably right now in my conversations with constituents is what we hear the most about.

Let's look at the picture of economic security, or the lack thereof, that exists in our country and in our communities.

What I hear from my constituents is that the 5 percent unemployment rate is indeed misleading because over 90 million Americans have dropped out of the workforce. They are losing hope and are unemployed. The Obama malaise, as I have constituents who like to term it, has created a workforce participation rate of 62.8 percent. Now, I want you to think about that. Of the eligible adults who are ready for the workforce, 62.8 percent have a job and are able to work. That is the worst level since the Carter administration.

Our GDP is declining. Our economy grew at only half of a percent—half of a percent in the first quarter of 2016. That is lower than a 1.4 percent expansion in the previous period, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. President Obama had a chance to create 40,000 jobs, and he took a pass on it. He vetoed the Keystone pipeline so that he could cement his legacy and stature as a liberal icon.

The American people are tired of being broke; they are tired of work permits that go to illegal aliens; and they are tired of \$19.2 trillion in Federal debt. We need to get the government off the backs and out of the pocketbooks of the American people. It is time to loosen regulations and lower taxes.

The issue of retirement security comes up so often in the conversations I have, especially with women, and it is important to note what is happening with Social Security and Medicare. The Social Security retirement trust fund is set to run out of money by the year 2034. That is not that far away. According to the Tax Foundation, under the current wage indexing formula, benefits are projected to climb by more than 150 percent, in real terms, over the next 75 years.

I have introduced H.R. 603, the Savings for Seniors Act, which establishes within the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund a Social Security Surplus Protection Account to hold the Social Security surplus and prohibit it from being spent. Medicare has to be addressed as well. It is supposed to run out of money and be insolvent by 2030. We must make sure that seniors are secure, and we have to make certain that the money they have already paid into the system, they are able to receive.

On the national security front, President Obama's very, very timid foreign policy has emboldened our enemies from the rise of ISIS, to Russian aggression in Ukraine and in the Middle East, to the Chinese military expansion in the South China Sea. It has also left our allies asking: Where are you? You are not present as we try to address these issues.

What we have seen with President Obama, I think, is inexcusable. For example, when the evil blade of ISIS decapitated Steven Sotloff in 2014, President Obama was on the golf course minutes after telling the American people: We will be relentless, and we

will be vigilant to see that justice is done. Or, as he also calls it, leading from behind.

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Two other glaring issues we face are the Syrian refugee program and our southern border.

There is currently no way to vet Syrian refugees, and I think this President is delusional if he thinks there is. I have introduced H.R. 4218 to suspend refugee admissions until Congress passes a joint resolution approving the President's plan.

Meanwhile, our southern border is overrun again. Through the first 6 months of fiscal year 2016, which ended on March 31, border officials apprehended 27,754 unaccompanied children. That is just shy of the 28,579 number apprehended for all of 2014. Think about that comparison.

Mr. Speaker, we must provide economic, retirement, and national security for all Americans. We must rise to the occasion and make certain our Nation is secure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to engage in personalities toward the President.

CALIFORNIA WATER LEGISLATION

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to work together on behalf of the people of California to get water legislation passed that will help fix California's broken water system.

Yes, Californians have been divided historically for decades for a number of reasons on how to fix our broken water system, but that must change because we are living on borrowed time, and nothing has explained that more clearly than the last 4 years of drought conditions.

Yesterday, the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing on Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's water legislation, the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act. This week, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI introduced the House companion bill, legislation that I support as well.

The California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act would provide \$1.3 billion in funding and support for desalinization, recycling efforts, and water storage projects like Temperance Flat and the expansion of San Luis Reservoir.

The bill would also direct State and Federal agencies to maximize water supplies during the short term, while not violating existing environmental laws that protect threatened and endangered species.

Additionally, the legislation includes language that would generate and pro-

vide for scientifically managed reservoir operations which would allow us to, for example, raise the spillway gates at New Exchequer Dam in Merced County, providing an additional 50,000 acre-feet of water storage for the Merced Irrigation District.

Finally, the bill would complement the ongoing efforts made by the recent passage of a State water bond that I supported—\$2.7 billion for additional water storage in California.

In order to get California's water bill passed and signed into law, our Nation's Senators must understand that there is support for Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN's legislation among California Representatives in the House. That is why I am a cosponsor of the House companion legislation, H.R. 5247.

Now, there is room for modifications and changes in Senator FEINSTEIN's legislation as well as the House bill, especially provisions that deal with short-term fixes that would provide more accountability on how California's water system is operated year to year. But if Congress is going to be able to provide some relief to the people of California, which is a template for Western States—and, I would say, the world—we must continue to move forward, and the passage of S. 2533 would undoubtedly be an important step in the right direction.

Once S. 2533 is passed out of the Senate, the House and the Senate will have the opportunity to go to conference to resolve the differences that exist in these water bills by each of the Chambers. That is the normal process under which we usually conduct business.

I have consistently fought to bring more water to our San Joaquin Valley, and that includes supporting the California water bill that the House passed last year, but we need to use all the water tools in our water toolbox to fix the entire State's water needs.

It is my hope that my colleagues will put aside their political differences which, for too long, have been a part of the problem and join me in supporting the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act, because fixing California's water system is dependent upon it. If we don't pass this legislation and we don't work with Governor Brown in California, we cannot fix this broken water system.

So, finally, what is this about? It is about investing in our infrastructure. We are living off the investments our parents and our grandparents made a generation ago. This is Infrastructure Week. We ought to be talking about investing in our infrastructure, not only in California, but around the country.

What else is this about? It is about helping the environment because, notwithstanding the opposition to this legislation, the status quo is only resulting in further deterioration of the environment.

Finally, what else is this about? It is about the reliability of our water sup-

ply to maintain our farms. Maintaining our farms, after all, is a part of America's national security. We don't think about it that way, but having reliable, cost-effective food on America's dinner table every night is about our national security. So it is about the sustainability, therefore, of our food supply and our way of life.

If we are going to fix this, we have to come together. We have to work together. We have to get beyond our differences and beyond our talking points.

If Congress is going to get anything done, we, in California, on our water fixes, must come together.

BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark Building Safety Month, to recognize the importance of building safety, and to congratulate the leadership of the International Code Council that develops and publishes the model building safety and energy efficiency model codes used in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and across the country. Increasingly, these codes, developed in the United States, are being adopted in other nations as a model of safe construction.

Every year, there are sobering reminders about the key role that building codes can have. Foreign nations still experience catastrophic losses of life and property due to natural events and poor construction practices. These losses have been greatly reduced in this country thanks to the adoption of sound building practices.

Deadly fires, tornados, windstorms, floods, earthquakes, and other events remind us of the critical need for strong buildings. As Congress discusses the need for resilience and greater energy efficiency in our communities, we are reminded in May that key elements of resilience and energy efficiency are sound building and energy codes.

I want to congratulate the leaders of the ICC, which has sponsored Building Safety Month in May every year for over 30 years. The theme of this year's Building Safety Month, appropriately, is "Driving Growth Through Innovation, Resilience, and Safety."

The leadership board of the ICC, including my constituent, President Alex Olszowy, building inspection supervisor for the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government in Kentucky, will join ICC's chief executive officer, Dominic Sims, in Washington next week to discuss the critical need to support the adoption and enforcement of current building codes to make sure Americans are safe at home, at work, at school, and at play.

On this occasion, I also want to highlight the good work of the Code Administrators Association of Kentucky, including president Jeff Camp and the other leaders of the Commonwealth's ICC chapter, and to thank the thousands of men and women who work