

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Charles William Steger, Jr., along with ROB WITTMAN, who is an alumnus of Virginia Tech. Unfortunately, Virginia Tech President Emeritus Charles William Steger, Jr., passed away last night at the age of 70. He was a Hokie through and through, and he guided the university to great achievements.

He earned three degrees himself from Virginia Tech, and before becoming president, he taught and held numerous posts. As president of Virginia Tech from 2000 to 2014, Dr. Steger led the university to new heights. He presided over growth and enrollment. Forty major new buildings were constructed. Research expenditures grew from \$192 million to \$450 million. He established the school of biomedical engineering and helped bring together the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute.

He also had the burden of leading Virginia Tech through the shooting on that horrific April day in 2007. In the aftermath, he led with remarkable dignity. He received many honors during his lifetime, and I, along with many in Virginia and across this Nation, held Dr. Charles William Steger, Jr., in the highest esteem.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Janet; his son, Christopher Steger, and wife, Elizabeth Schumann; and his son, David Steger, and fiancée, Alison Nemeth.

Mr. Speaker, if we could all pray a prayer tonight for the family of Charles Steger.

PROTECTING SOCIAL SAFETY NET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAST). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for holding this Special Order hour, the CBC Special Order hour this evening, as we discuss SNAP and other efforts by the President and the GOP to shed the social safety net.

□ 1930

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairman RICHMOND, for allowing me to have this opportunity to lead what we call the "Conscience of the Congress" of the Congressional Black Caucus, who is

the one who has led this and come up with this idea for us.

As we paint a picture of the Black community in 2018, it is clear that we have a lot to lose. Too many of our neighborhoods are, unfortunately, still plagued by rampant poverty, dysfunction, and crime. These are very serious issues that our community has to deal with.

But instead of the GOP Congress working with us side by side in a bipartisan manner, we have a group, Mr. Speaker, hell-bent on enacting jaded, outdated, economic backwards legislation in the form of SNAP that would throw thousands of recipients off the roles. According to the nonpartisan Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP is the country's most effective antihunger program helping one in five Americans afford a basic diet.

For over 15 years, State and Federal policymakers have worked on a bipartisan basis to strengthen SNAP. The GOP would take a large step backwards, reducing or eliminating benefits for more than 1 million households with more than 2 million people. And let me be clear, it is not just about programs, policies, and laws being enacted by the GOP and President Trump, it is about the overall tone that has been set by this President, who regularly raises insults, instead of engaging in meaningful policy discussions.

The President's review of welfare programs is an immoral attempt to get the programs that provide a basic standard of living for Americans struggling to make ends meet, all to pay for the massive tax cuts for himself and the richest 1 percent. Instead of taking food out of the mouths of poor children or kicking the elderly off of Medicare, President Trump and congressional Republicans should work with Democrats to put more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans.

Let me be clear: this executive order is a thinly veiled attempt to restrict access to healthcare, housing, food, and many other basic living programs by adding onerous so-called work requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), a person who I admire and had the chance of visiting with her in the great State of Alabama. She has a lot of experience firsthand and knows and understands what it means to be close to the people.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for leading this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to acknowledge the Congressional Black Caucus for always being the "Conscience of the Congress" and for taking on the topic of tonight, which is the social safety net and how important it is as a lifeline for so many Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the efforts to dismantle our social safety net and the programs that help working Americans make ends meet.

Our Federal health, antihunger, and poverty programs are the lifeline for millions of Americans and their families. Every year, our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, feeds 9.5 million families. Social Security keeps over 22 million Americans from falling into poverty. And Medicare ensures that 44 million men, women, and children have access to the care they need to stay healthy. These families are hanging by a thread, and with every cut to our health and antihunger programs, that thread becomes thinner and thinner.

In Alabama, I have seen the difference that these programs can make firsthand. I have met working parents who rely on SNAP to put food on the table for their children. I have met seniors who, after a lifetime of work, are able to get by only because of their Social Security check. I have met mothers who could not feed their children if it weren't for the maternity care that they get through Federal health programs. For these working parents, seniors, and children, our social safety net means the difference between a warm home and homelessness. It means a difference between a hot meal and going to bed hungry.

Last year in Alabama, I met a farmer named Hank, who was able to afford healthcare for the first time in his life because of the Affordable Care Act. And after Hank signed up for ObamaCare, tragedy struck. His hand was caught in a hay baler, requiring immediate emergency care. But because of the healthcare he received through the Affordable Care Act, Hank was able to pay for his trip to the emergency room and, most importantly, his family did not lose that farm.

That is what our social safety net does. It helps people when their time of need is most. It is a promise that no matter the hardship you face, we will never let you fall between the cracks. We, America, the land of plenty. We, Americans, don't let other Americans fall through the cracks. Whether your family faces a health crisis or layoffs; or you are caring for a new child, we are not going to let you fall into poverty.

Giving up on this promise is what I believe the Republican agenda has done. Giving up on this promise is what makes the Republican attacks on our social safety net so disturbing. It is a promise that we, as Americans, make to other Americans, that we will have a social safety net that will capture people in their most vulnerable time of need.

The tax bill that Congress and the Trump administration passed in December repealed the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate. That move drove healthcare costs for families and will result in 13 million more uninsured Americans. It was unnecessary, but it was a step that this administration took. It was a step that ripped from 13 million Americans their health insurance.

Just 2 months after the passage of the tax bill, President Trump proposed a budget, the President's budget, that would cut \$500 billion from Medicare, \$1.4 trillion from Medicaid, and \$72 billion from Social Security disability. If these proposals were signed into law, more children would have gone hungry, more seniors would have fallen into poverty, and more Americans would be unable to afford to get sick.

In the Ways and Means Committee this week, Republicans are holding a hearing to discuss limiting access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF. At the same time, the House is debating reauthorizing a farm bill that would eliminate food assistance for 400,000 families and cut school lunches for 265,000 students.

This Congress is not just cutting a hole in our social safety net. Republicans are selling the net in its entirety in order to pay for the tax scam bill that they passed in December.

When President Trump and this Congress passed the GOP tax scam bill, they mortgaged the future of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security to give massive tax breaks to Wall Street and the richest Americans. They put our health and antihunger programs into jeopardy and on a chopping block in exchange for more trickle-down economics.

Mr. Speaker, after decades of stagnant wages, my constituents are no longer willing to wait for trickle-down economics to trickle down to them, especially when it means massive cuts to the Federal programs working families rely on.

Lives are at stake, Mr. Speaker. That is why the Congressional Black Caucus, led ably tonight by my colleague from Pennsylvania, is discussing the social safety net and why we will continue to discuss those programs that are the lifeline of so many Americans.

Why am I here? I am here because I represent Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, a district which is my home district. I proudly hail from the Seventh Congressional District. The Seventh Congressional District is the poorest district in the State of Alabama. The median income for a family of four is \$32,000. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not asking for a handout, we are asking for a hand up. We need Federal assistance to make sure that our children don't go hungry, to make sure that those who work a lifetime have Social Security to live on when they are old.

It is important that we remember that these social safety net programs keep Americans afloat and keep working Americans still working, being able to provide food and nutrition to their children, being able to buy drugs that are lifesaving for them to continue to live. It is critically important that we remember that the social safety net is not just for minorities, it is for all Americans when they need it—when they need it. It is a promise that America has made and a promise that the

GOP and this administration continues to break.

Lives are on the line. That is why I am calling on this Congress and this administration to abandon its attacks on the social safety net. Instead, we should be passing legislation that puts working people first. I am calling on this Congress to help keep our promise to the American people that no one will be left behind. As the richest Nation in the world, keeping that promise is not only within our power, it is our obligation.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my colleague, Congressman EVANS from Pennsylvania, and the Congressional Black Caucus for this Special Order hour and for continuing to remind people that we are Americans and we, as Americans, don't break our promise. Let's not break our promise when it comes to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security; let's not break our promise when it comes to the nutrition of our students; and let's not break our promise when it comes to working people who have worked all their lives for Social Security and need only to live off of it now.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the Congressional Black Caucus for its courage to continue to speak power to truth.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) one quick question.

She raised a very good point about promise. Does she have any last thought about the element of promise; could she just take a minute or so, just really from her own experience and her own constituents, what the meaning of that promise means today?

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I absolutely will.

As my colleague just said, I think what I want people to remember is that we, as Americans, do make promises to other Americans. We do it all of the time.

The promise that I am talking about with social safety net is a promise that we won't leave other Americans behind. We can't be the land of plenty and have people struggling each and every day.

In my district, there are parts of my district that have water and sewer issues, sanitary issues, in 2018. No one in America should not have a flushing toilet. In my district, there are people who live like that.

I believe that the promise of America is a promise that we will do all we can to make sure that no American falls through the cracks.

We have to remember that all of us go through trying times. These programs are transitional programs. They are there to catch people when they are falling, to give people the opportunity and the training that they need to get back on their feet, to give them the opportunity to be working Americans again, and to give them a dignity to continue to be able to afford to take care of themselves.

I think that we need to remember that the American Dream comes with

it an obligation, and I believe that that obligation is an American promise to all Americans that we won't rip social safety net programs away from them, but, instead, we will thoughtfully provide opportunities for training. The skills gap is real, and I think it is really important that we, if we are to address the future of work in America, acknowledge that we are leaving lots of Americans behind, and we, as a Federal Government, should take that as a challenge and meet that challenge to close the skills gap.

In many ways, the skills gap is an opportunity gap as well. In order to provide people who need opportunities the most, we have to be willing to step up and provide the resources for them to be able to retrain and retool.

□ 1945

It is critically important. The dignity of work is something that is critically important to most Americans, all Americans.

My district has the largest unemployment. When I took office in 2011, the average unemployment in my 14 counties was near 15 percent. It was 14.7 percent. And while Tuscaloosa is doing great and Birmingham is doing great, cities like Selma, that I grew up in, had 21 percent unemployment.

What people needed was an opportunity to get back on their feet. I dare to think about all the Americans who were helped by having the Affordable Care Act, by having Medicare and Medicaid, by having the assistance of the Federal Government to get back on their feet.

I am happy to report that the average unemployment in my 14 counties is not where we want to be, but we are at 6.3 percent. So it is not at the 3.9 or so that the national average is, but we are a far cry better than we were at the 15 percent. So these people are working.

So social service programs were meant to help people get back on their feet. I just think that people think about the fraud and abuse.

None of us want fraud and abuse when it comes to our programs, but I can tell you that 70 percent of the folks who receive SNAP in my district have children under the age of 17.

So when I fight for SNAP, when I fight against the massive cuts that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to have, I am fighting for those children to have food to eat. I am fighting for the millions of seniors who are on food stamps who depend upon it to provide nutritional assistance.

So I think that that promise is something that we all should not only honor, but take as a badge of honor here in the Nation's Capital and fight every day to provide opportunities for all Americans.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the Seventh District of Alabama. I really appreciate her comments.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this next 45 minutes, I am going to be introducing

some of my colleagues, but I want to read a letter that was sent to me on April 27, 2018.

As the gentlewoman from Alabama said, I am from Pennsylvania; and being from Pennsylvania, our Governor wrote a letter, and this is what he said:

"I write today to express my concerns regarding the text of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, or the farm bill released last week. The importance of the farm bill to Pennsylvanians cannot be overstated. As you know, Pennsylvania farmers are facing the same challenges impacting the agricultural industry throughout the country. With trending towards lower farm incomes and a recent market loss for 42 Pennsylvania dairy farmers, the farm bill should be an opportunity to support our Commonwealth's most vulnerable agricultural industry. Unfortunately, the House Agriculture Committee has released a partisan bill that will punish struggling Pennsylvanians—especially seniors, individuals with disabilities, and working families in all your congressional districts.

"The farm bill has always been a bipartisan effort because hunger is not a political issue. For more than 40 years, Pennsylvanians have relied on the SNAP program to help put food on the table during tough times. Nearly 14 percent of our State's population is experiencing food insecurity. Cuts to SNAP will only increase that number."

Mr. Speaker, the exact number in my congressional district, the Second Congressional District, is 215,195 individuals. In the new district, the Third Congressional District, it is 207,441 people who will be affected by these cuts.

"Let's be clear—SNAP recipients already face work requirements. This bill increases them and institutes lengthy ineligibility periods for individuals who are noncompliant just for 1 month. In this bill, by 2021, all nondisabled individuals ages 50 to 59 would face work requirements and by 2026, the required number of work hours per week will increase from 20 to 25. Yet this legislation does not include adequate funding for States to provide job training or allow individuals a period of time to engage in educational activities to help residents meet these new threshold requirements. In Pennsylvania, that would translate to an additional 199,000 individuals who will be affected. Let me repeat that. In Pennsylvania, that will translate to 199,000 individuals between 50 and 59 who would face cuts to SNAP. It is more difficult for older individuals to find work when unemployed, and many people want to work more than 25 hours but cannot due to lack of available hours, children, or age."

Time limits on SNAP, Mr. Speaker, believe me, would have a devastating affect in Pennsylvania.

"SNAP is a critical social net for our seniors and families" and veterans. "SNAP recipients receive on average of \$126 per month, which translates to

around \$1.40 per meal," Mr. Speaker. "According to Feeding America, the average meal in Pennsylvania costs \$2.93. These cuts are an attack on our most vulnerable citizens. If the goal of the House leadership—that is, the Republican leadership—is to decrease the amount of money the Federal Government spends on SNAP, I suggest"—this is Governor Wolf—"you raise the Federal minimum wage to \$12 per hour" so that people can have a real chance.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear from the Governor of Pennsylvania that there is an attack on poor people, and the Governor of the great State of Pennsylvania has gone on record in saying that we are moving in the wrong direction.

Someone whom I have a lot of respect for, and she has served in the great State of Wisconsin in the State legislature, and I have known her before I had this opportunity to come to Congress, is a person who is not shy about the things that she expresses. She speaks truth to power. That is the great woman from the Fourth District of Wisconsin, Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman GWEN MOORE.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. EVANS for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate having time here on this Congressional Black Caucus hour to discuss so-called welfare reform and efforts on the part of the majority to shred the safety net.

Mr. Speaker, I think you just have to sort of sympathize with the majority, given the conundrum that they have put themselves into. What they did, in an effort to have some sort of win and to take advantage of having the majority in the House of Representatives, in the United States Senate, to be holding power in the White House with the new President, even seizing the Supreme Court, this was a very opportune time to do what the majority thought, and I give them credit for thinking that they wanted to implement and execute their greatest policy imperative, and that was to provide tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and to corporations. They wanted to take this one opportunity to do that because, in their opinion, that is what would move our economy forward.

In December, they were able to accomplish it over the protests of economists, over the protests of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office that said if, in fact, these \$1.9 trillion in tax cuts are given to the wealthiest Americans and corporations, that we would see deficits for the next decade at about \$1.5 trillion, and that would add to the deficit we are already experiencing.

Of course, that is the conundrum for the majority party, which out of one side of their mouth they have always been concerned about deficits, and now they were implementing a policy that would add to the deficit. Well, the ex-

planation for that was that somehow this \$1.9 trillion would materialize in a brand-new concept called trickle down; that somehow by cutting these taxes for the wealthiest Americans, that somehow this would create jobs, that wages would be raised, that there would be new capital expenditures; and although trickle down had not worked for 30, 40 years, that somehow this was going to happen.

Well, the supposition is that these tax cuts would just sort of magically pay for themselves and that we should just give it a little bit of time. So when these tax cuts were put into place, we saw companies immediately lining up to provide bonuses, one-time-only bonuses—not raising the wages of workers, not building new factories.

Now we see one of our favorite companies, one of my favorite companies—we all own a nice Apple phone—they just paid \$100 billion buying back shares. Of course, shareholders are not Americans who live on Main Street. They are the wealthiest people not only in America, but all over the world. You don't know who the shareholders are. They are probably not your next-door neighbors.

Well, you have to empathize with the majority party, because they now have to figure out how to pay for these tax cuts. They have got to pay for them.

We don't have to guess how they are going to pay for them. The Speaker has told us how he plans to pay for them. The President has told us how they plan to pay for these tax cuts.

I was so happy that the gentlewoman from Alabama was here earlier, and I just want to remind you of what she shared with us. She reminded us that the President, in his budget, his proposed budget, proposed cutting \$1.4 trillion—that is "trillion" with a T; that is like 12 zeros after that 1—out of Medicaid.

I know from sitting on the Budget Committee with the Speaker for so many years that this is a dream come true for our Speaker, who has always wanted to block grant—as in put on the chopping block—Medicaid, a program that provides security mostly for our seniors for them to have a dignified end-of-life experience instead of living like a dog in the back room somewhere living out their last days.

We know from what they have put on paper—you can't make this stuff up—they want to cut \$500 billion—that is "billion" with a B—out of Medicare, the program that has reduced and almost eliminated poverty, between that and Social Security, for our elders.

You have heard it said time and again that a nation is judged by how it treats its young and its elderly. We know now that the White House and our President is fuming because this \$1.9 trillion problem that they have created has now got to be solved.

Well, that is just not enough money. That is only \$2 trillion between Medicare and Medicaid. So they said, "Wait a minute. We can cut some out of Social Security," this so-called sacred

cow. They say, "We can cut, from Social Security Disability, \$72 billion," but that is not enough.

We have in front of us a farm bill, and proposals in that bill would cut \$23.8 billion out of it, pushing 9.5 million people deeper into poverty, food insecurity, and hunger.

□ 2000

That is the framework for paying for the wealthiest people, for these poor corporations that we have got to provide a safety net for, for these poor 1 percent of our population rich, the wealthiest 1 percent who need relief from the government. We are going to pay for it by cutting Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps.

Well, it doesn't sound like that is enough for the majority. The President has said we are going to just review any program that targets, aids, and supports low-income or hardworking people.

How about housing vouchers? So many Americans—there was a book written about my community by Mr. Matthew Desmond, titled, "Evicted," and it pointed out how so many Americans work hard, but 50 percent, 60 percent of their income has to go toward housing because, in fact, we haven't seen a raise in the minimum wage for over a decade. People are working two, three jobs.

I have known people who have gone to work and go home at night to the homeless shelter. People cannot afford to pay 50 percent of their income, so there are hardworking Americans who have benefited from housing vouchers, Section 8, subsidized Community Development Block Grant funds.

But, of course, we have heard from our Secretary of HUD that we want to reform that program and require disabled folks, elderly folks, perhaps some of our veterans who live in subsidized housing, to pay 35 percent of their income versus 30 percent of their income.

This doesn't increase the pool of people who are eligible for housing. It does two things: It reduces the number of people who are eligible for subsidized housing, and then it raises the costs for those who are squeaking by every single day.

So I just am inflamed about this, and I guess I want to ask the gentleman from Pennsylvania some questions because I might have the wrong perspective on this.

I am a person who has benefited from these programs. I have fed my family with SNAP, food stamps. I have used Medicaid to take my children to the doctor and to give birth. I have paid my rent using welfare benefits.

I am wondering if the gentleman doesn't think that vilifying poor people is an insidious and nefarious effort to create the atmosphere where Americans would be much more willing to take these programs away from them.

I mean, there is this notion, somehow, that there are just lazy people

who refuse to go work who need SNAP; that there are just lazy people who are ne'er-do-wells, and they are fraudulent, they have 80 Social Security numbers, and they are welfare queens.

I was just wondering if the gentleman could just get it straight for me, share some things with me:

How many families receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families?

Are people eating lobsters on SNAP?

Are these homes filled with able-bodied people who refuse to work and they just want to get SNAP?

Can the gentleman just give me a profile of the kind of people who we are trying to help.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE). I will give her something that is firsthand from a mayor who is on the forefront.

I have a letter here from the mayor of the city of Philadelphia, which Philadelphia has about 1.5 million people. It is one of the biggest poor cities in America, so I am going to give you somebody specifically who can state that he wrote a letter, and I want to read what he has said.

He said: "In Philadelphia"—remember, where America started, the Liberty Bell, the Constitution Center, Ben Franklin. You remember that, right? That is where it all started, right?

This is what he said: "In Philadelphia, approximately 480,000 individuals receive SNAP to help buy food they need to survive and feed their families."

There are more SNAP recipients who can work and do not work and would prefer to work, more than if they could.

"SNAP is critical to helping low-wage and part-time workers who can't find steady employment, veterans"—those who fought for our country, those who have been out on the forefront—"people who are homeless. . . ."

The number that came from HUD in the city of Philadelphia was in the ballpark of 6,000 to 15,000 people homeless. Now remember, that is where the Liberty Bell is, Independence Hall is, Betsy Ross' house. You remember all of that, right?

So it is clear that SNAP is critical.

"It also helps families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities put food on their table." And think of this: "It doesn't cost much—the benefits average about \$1.34 per person per meal—but it helps Philadelphians fulfill basic needs. And it also has been found to have long-term positive impacts on health, as well as on children's educational attainment. SNAP also contributes to the Philadelphia economy. Every dollar spent on SNAP generates \$1.70 in economic activity in Philadelphia's grocery stores," grocers who depend a great deal on the importance of this initiative.

Remember, where America started, in Philadelphia, this is occurring. So here there is a letter from the mayor stating very clearly that cutting off SNAP will not help Philadelphians get their jobs but will just make it harder for them to pay for their food they need.

So, in other words, those work requirements and the things the gentlewoman described, we have an evidence-based letter of a mayor who is on the front line, who has to deal with these things every single day.

And the fact of the matter is you can document the statistics. In the congressional district that I represent, which is a part of the city of Philadelphia, there is 26 percent poverty, 195,000 people. There is a food bank in one of our major universities in the city of Philadelphia.

In the suburban district, which I have a letter from Montgomery County, which is supposed to be one of the richest counties outside of Philadelphia, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that you ask the right questions and you raise the right issues all on the basis, as you described, on that framework and what you described, paying for that giveaway or taxes.

It is not an accident that that tax issue was H. Res. 1 and the farm bill is H. Res. 2. So you think about the order of that, you think about H. Res. 1, H. Res. 2, you see for yourself.

So the gentlewoman's whole theory is definitely not incorrect, and what she has laid out is very clear that this is an attempt to beat up on poor people, beat up on people in these communities.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that we, as the Congressional Black Caucus, are not just going to sit silent. We are going to make sure people hear us. We are going to make sure people know that we are just not going to accept this.

So I say to the gentlewoman, I heard her message and I have described it to her.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that.

I just want to tell him how outraged I am by the propaganda against poor people. I am outraged by it.

If you look at a family that uses SNAP, formerly called food stamps, this program works perfectly well in a capitalist society, in a countercyclical economy. When we almost had a depression in 2008, the food stamp rolls went up, and now they are coming back down because people are more connected with work.

Two-thirds of these families that receive SNAP have at least one working person in it. And guess what. They have veterans in them and elders, children and disabled people. Eighty percent of the people who receive SNAP, someone has worked the year before or the year after, so it is not an issue of people not wanting to work.

And think about it: we now have given \$1.9 trillion in tax cuts to the wealthiest people. We hear the White House bragging about how we have increased those jobs, we have increased jobs by 164,000 people. Let me tell you, I happen to know in my own community people got two or three of those jobs because that is what they need to hold it down.

Before I finish, I will just say that we ought not fall for the okeydoke, because poor people are not those other people. They are you; they are your cousins; they are people who go to your church; they are your kids' classmates; they are people who worked every day and lost their jobs due to technology or downsizing. And when you are 50 years old, it is not because you don't want to work. You can't work.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the great State of Wisconsin for her comments.

I want to introduce someone else who is also on the Budget Committee, who I have watched a long time in the short period of time that I have been here. She has been a real fighter, and she speaks to the issues. I have not seen anyone intimidate her, and she is from the great 18th District of Texas.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished manager for yielding to me and for the eloquent statements of our colleagues, including Congresswoman SEWELL and Congresswoman MOORE.

I thank our chairman, Mr. RICHMOND, for his persistence that members of the Congressional Black Caucus come to the floor of the House to be able to address these concerns that are very important.

I am going to be very brief, but I want to join my colleagues on what I think is a striking and provocative discourse, and it is a hurting discourse.

The reason why I want to make sure that my voice is heard is because I have constituents who are living poor, but their spirit is not poor. Their commitment to success is not poor. Their desire for better opportunities for their children is not poor. Yet we want to condemn or malign this group that may be living in poverty.

It strikes me as a difficult proposition to know that the Speaker of the House, for example, is seeking, again, welfare reform which, when I first came to the United States Congress, I enthusiastically voted against. And I was right because so many people were turned off the rolls; so many lives were ruined; so many children did not get the needs that they needed; so many poor mothers could not tend to their newborn babies because resources were lost.

□ 2015

Now we come again to a concept of welfare reform, and we are not concerned, I guess, about the different health conditions of different ethnic and racial populations.

The age 60 for some, maybe 80, in terms of a physical condition that they are facing, and so a flat number of 60, cut you off or you can't have coverage that is necessary, is a sad state on this great country.

The other point that I think is important is that the President has offered a review of the programs that help the poor.

Now, right now today, Houston is still suffering from the impact of Hurricane Harvey. And as I heard my colleague, good times today and bad times tomorrow. Or making ends meet today or yesterday, and not making them meet today.

We are still seeing students and families who were displaced during Hurricane Harvey losing everything and barely getting back on their feet, and this is May, and we are about to enter the hurricane season again.

So the idea of a safety net that the \$1.7 trillion tax cut cuts right into, that is the point. A safety net is not a handout.

This reverse Robin Hood tax bill takes from individuals who are part, again, of the greatness of America. We are always hearing of the stories of the person from the little red schoolhouse or rural America who was great and made it to a success story. They made it through the Helping Hands. They made it through the Pell grants. They made it through Medicare. They made it through Medicaid.

In 1965, we saw more seniors living after 1965, when President Johnson and the Democratic Congress passed Medicare and Medicaid.

So the idea that we are reviewing programs that are impacting people who suffer from poverty or that we would think it is more important to have this major tax cut that is creating this huge deficit so the people who are victimized are the people who, in fact, are part of America's greatness and have every right to have an opportunity of success in their lives.

Seventy percent of Americans rely on at least one means-tested Federal program. The nutrition program, the SNAP program, the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, was a lifeline for Houstonians and people in Harris County during Hurricane Harvey.

I remember getting an extension, and 30,000 people came and stood in the hot Sun for 3 days just to be able to get a voucher that would carry them through the Christmas holiday. That was what you call emergency supplemental nutrition.

What we have now, the SNAP program, \$1.40 per meal. And then the President was offering: Let's don't do that. Let's send a box. Let's send a brown box to the house and have some dry milk and whatever other non-perishables could be in there.

These people have children. They have pre-K. They need childcare.

Have you heard the fact that HUD may be tripling the rents that low-in-

come Americans are receiving that housing Federal subsidies would have to pay? So they get a Federal subsidy and they have to pay three times the rent? That seems to be a little absurd.

If we are concerned about what is a hand up, what is, in fact, the opportunity for individuals to meet their promise and their greatness, we would not have passed such an atrocious tax bill that really eats at the flesh of survival of this country and many Americans.

For example, the top 1 percent's tax cut, if they didn't get that tax cut—of which many have said: We don't want it, didn't need it—childcare would be able to be provided for 19 children, job training for 27 workers, Pell grants for 38 students, and providing substance use disorder treatment for 21 people. The CHIP program would be stronger; and, of course, the ability for individuals suffering from the opioid crisis, we would have far more dollars to be able to assist them to restore their lives.

So it is very important that the debate tonight not be, as it has been characterized, about poor people or the impoverished, or that the debate is about handouts.

It is the safety net that every single American desires but is really owed to have. It is the very safety net that has the world looking to America as the greatest Nation in the world.

I have many friends in many countries around the world, and some of these countries have a billion-plus people. The safety net that they have is a nonsafety net. So the level of disaster and devastation in populations is almost unbelievable as compared to here in this country.

But the reason why we are this country is because people expect us not to be those countries. They expect us to be the America with resources, and we do have resources.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman very much for yielding to me to explain, one, the devastation of this trillion-plus tax cut bill that we fought vigorously in the Budget Committee and offered any number of amendments to correct and protect Medicaid, Medicare, education, and benefits that really give us stair steps of opportunity.

But I hope, as we move forward, that we will not go down this very disastrous pathway of changing welfare to make it a punitive legislative initiative so that the people hurt the most are those in the sunset of their life, seniors, those who are suffering from opioid addiction, and our children.

I hope we don't totally implode the valuable safety net that brought us through the depression that FDR developed in the 1940s with the WPA and then on into the 1960s when President Johnson had the great society.

Where is the America that cares? Where is the America that understands?

Mr. Speaker, It is important for me to be standing here.

This is the Reverse Robin Hood Tax Bill. Instead of taking from the rich and giving to the poor.

This tax law takes from the very poor and gives to the very rich.

Last year, the GOP passed its tax cuts for the richest among us.

Now no one should be surprised that this happened.

It is crystal clear that President Trump, a man who comes from wealth, doesn't understand the challenges facing the working poor.

His constant effort to undermine programs that help these Americans maintain a basic standard of living does nothing more than reinforce deeply racialized myths that poor Americans are lazy and undeserving.

This couldn't be further from the truth. Millions of Americans who are beneficiaries of these programs work two or more jobs just to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads for their families.

In addition, the vast majority of full-time workers live paycheck to paycheck.

In fact, 70% of Americans rely on at least one means tested federal program throughout their lives.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) only provides \$1.40 per meal.

Not to mention that only one in five qualifying families actually receives housing assistance.

At the end of the day, our constituents should be able to support their children with one full-time job.

This requires increasing the minimum wage, strengthening job training programs, and creating good-paying jobs.

Ultimately, we need to give families the tools they need to rise out of poverty, not undercut programs that keep them afloat.

Instead, the current president has made the least of these pick up the tab.

And he's doing this while his cabinet nominated officials are feeding at the trough.

Take for example the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Just last week, HUD indicated that they would triple the rents that low-income Americans receiving housing federal subsidies would have to pay.

This was done while Secretary Carson spent \$30,000 in taxpayer money on a dining room table, proposed tripling the rent for low-income Americans receiving federal housing subsidies.

Last month, the president issued an executive order to restrict access to healthcare, housing, food, and many other programs that help the working poor.

President Trump's plan to cut funding for healthcare, food, and housing programs in order to give tax cuts to billionaires will do nothing more than make a bad situation worse.

The fact of the matter is that programs that help the working poor have been under constant attack for the last 30 years and, in many cases, don't go far enough.

Only one in four qualifying families with children actually receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) only provides \$1.40 per meal.

Not to mention that only one in five qualifying families actually receives housing assistance.

Federal programs should do more to help the working poor who are forced to spend 70-80% of their income on rent and utilities.

To give you a snapshot of who is harmed by this tax scam, and how it harms those needing a hand up, consider that the average tax cut for someone in the Top 0.1%, that money could mean:

Childcare for 19 children.

Job training for 27 workers.

Pell grants or 38 students.

Providing substance use disorder treatment for 21 people.

Health coverage through the Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

So when we consider who this helps and who this hurts, it is clear that this bill hurts those seeking help caring for their families.

It hurts those seeking training and a professional gateway to another profession.

It seeks those looking for assistance to education.

And in this age of the Opioid crisis, where tomorrow we will be having a hearing on this matter, an average tax cut would provide substance use disorder treatment for 21 people.

So it is clear that this bill is not for the middle class.

By now, the GOP's playbook is well known: campaign as if you support the middle class and those striving to enter it, but once elected use the levers of government to favor the rich and the powerful.

That's why time on the GOP is coming up.

The American People are watching and they know that the Democrats offer a better deal.

And Democrats stand ready to offer #ABetterDeal.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good colleague from the great State of Texas in the 18th District for her comments adding to this discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Governor of Pennsylvania, who indicated 1.8 million people are on SNAP; the city of Philadelphia, where it all started here in terms of America, 400,000 individuals on SNAP, a letter from the mayor of the city of Philadelphia; and a letter from the chair, Chairwoman Arkoosh, who is chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, the third largest county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where 50,000 people are on SNAP.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
Harrisburg, PA, April 17, 2018.

Hon. DWIGHT EVANS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN EVANS: I write today to express my concerns regarding the text of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 or the Farm Bill released last week. The importance of the Farm Bill to Pennsylvanians cannot be overstated. As you know, Pennsylvania farmers are facing the same challenges impacting the agricultural industry throughout the country. With trending low farm incomes and a recent market loss for 42 Pennsylvania dairy farmers, the Farm Bill should be an opportunity to support our commonwealth's valuable agricultural industry. Unfortunately, the House Agriculture committee has released a partisan bill that will punish struggling Pennsylvanians especially seniors, individuals with disabilities, and working families in your congressional district.

The Farm Bill has always been a bipartisan effort because hunger is not a political issue. For more than 40 years, Pennsylvanians have relied on the Supplemental Nutri-

tion Assistance Program (SNAP) to help put food on the table during tough times. Nearly 14 percent of our state's population is experiencing food insecurity. Cuts to SNAP will only increase that number. In February of this year, over 1.8 million Pennsylvanians were enrolled in SNAP, including 215,195 individuals in the 2nd Congressional District and 207,411 in the new 3rd Congressional District. Over 80% of SNAP dollars are distributed to households with children, seniors, or an individual with a disability according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Let's be clear—SNAP recipients already face work requirements. This bill increases them and institutes lengthy ineligibility periods for individuals who are non-compliant for just one month. In this bill, by 2021 all nondisabled individuals ages 50 to 59 would face work requirements and by 2026 the required number of work hours per week will increase from 20 to 25. Yet this legislation does not include adequate funding for states to provide job training or allow individuals a period of time to engage in educational activities to help residents meet these new threshold requirements. In Pennsylvania that would translate to an additional 199,000 individuals between 50-59 who would face cuts to SNAP. It is more difficult for older individuals to find work when unemployed and many people want to work more than 25 hours but cannot due to lack of available hours, children, or age. Time limits on SNAP would now apply to parents of children older than 6. Over 20% of Pennsylvania's SNAP recipients have children in the household. These parents already face significant barriers to meet the current work requirements. Increasing them makes it more likely their children will face hunger which creates barriers to academic success and results in poorer health outcomes and a higher risk of chronic conditions. Combined, each of these things contributes to a cycle of poverty that can be almost impossible to break.

Cuts to SNAP do not just affect those who receive SNAP benefits. In the 2017 fiscal year, SNAP recipients in Pennsylvania spent more than \$2.7 billion in benefits. These dollars do not only benefit the recipient but flow to local business that provide jobs and economic stability to the commonwealth. SNAP spending currently accounts for more than 10 percent of all spending on food purchased to be eaten at home. It is estimated that each SNAP dollar spent provides nearly double the impact in local communities. Cuts to SNAP are cuts to cuts farms, food processors, and grocery stores as well.

SNAP is a critical safety net for our seniors and families. SNAP recipients receive on average of \$126 per month, which translates to around \$1.40 per meal. According to Feeding America, the average meal in Pennsylvania costs \$2.93. These cuts are an attack on our most vulnerable citizens. If the goal of House leadership is to decrease the amount of money the federal government spends on SNAP, I suggest you raise the federal minimum wage to \$12.00 per hour and lift millions of Americans out of poverty that way instead of taking food off the table for Pennsylvanians. I urge you to reject this partisan legislation and instead work together on a bill that can pass both chambers with bipartisan support. My administration is ready and eager to engage in conversations on legislation to benefit all Pennsylvanians. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue.

Sincerely,

TOM WOLF,
Governor.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,
Philadelphia, PA.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: I am writing to provide you with information about the

impacts of changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that are proposed in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 under consideration in the House, which include cuts to SNAP benefits and expansion of time limits and work requirement. My administration has made work and workforce a priority—in fact we recently announced the City's workforce strategy: Fueling the Philadelphia's Talent Engine. We believe that work is key to success for families and for our communities. But adding bureaucratic requirements and harsh penalties to a program that helps people stave off hunger is not the way to increase employment.

In Philadelphia approximately 480,000 individuals receive SNAP to help buy the food they need to survive and feed their families. Most SNAP recipients who can work do work, and would prefer to work more hours if they could. This bill expands SNAP time-limits and work requirements and adds harsh penalties—12 and 36 months ineligibility for food assistance—for those who are not in compliance, even if they are trying to find work. The bill proposes reducing the spending on direct food assistance to needy families in order to pay for implementation of these bureaucratic new requirements. Research indicates aggressive new work requirements are likely to cause families in need to lose food assistance, while doing little to increase employment.

SNAP is critical to helping low-wage and part-time workers who can't find steady employment, veterans, people who are homeless, and people struggling with addictions. It also helps families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities put food on the table. It doesn't cost much—the benefits average about \$1.34 per person per meal—but it helps Philadelphians fulfil basic needs. And it also has been found to have long-term positive impacts on health, as well as on children's educational attainment. SNAP also contributes to the Philadelphia economy. Every dollar spent in SNAP generates \$1.70 in economic activity in Philadelphia's grocery stores and farmer's markets.

We believe that one group of Philadelphians who would be disproportionately impacted by the penalties related to work requirements is people with criminal records. Having an arrest any time in one's life continues to decrease a job seeker's prospects more than any other factor. Returning residents want work, but if their criminal record prevents them from finding employment they would be unable to fulfil the work requirement and would lose SNAP benefits as a penalty.

Cutting off SNAP will not help Philadelphians get jobs but will just make it harder for them to pay for the food they need while they struggle to find work.

I urge you and your colleagues in Congress to focus on policies that help create jobs and boost wages rather than punishing people who are already facing economic hardship.

Sincerely,

JAMES F. KENNEY,
Mayor.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS,
Norristown, PA, April 17, 2018.

Hon. DWIGHT EVANS:
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN EVANS: I am writing today to oppose the changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that are outlined in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. The proposed strict eligibility requirements would eliminate as many as one million recipients that rely on SNAP to feed themselves and their families.

In Montgomery County, more than 50,000 residents receive SNAP benefits, and more

than 21,000 of those recipients are children. Another 8,000 are senior citizens, and more than 7,500 are disabled adults. For these residents, the SNAP program makes the difference as to whether or not these vulnerable individuals have a meal each day.

With an average monthly benefit of \$123.51 for SNAP recipients, it is already difficult for recipients to receive proper nutrition. Not only that, but Montgomery County has a large population that is food insecure, but earn just enough to disqualify them for SNAP benefits. An estimated 58 percent of those who experience hunger in our county are ineligible for assistance. We need to extend SNAP benefits, not shrink them, for our most vulnerable county residents.

In Pennsylvania, one in 12 workers use SNAP to supplement their nutritional needs. Many of the workers on SNAP earn low wages, have unstable schedules and cannot rely on enough hours to feed their families each week, or are in between jobs. SNAP assists workers in the service industry, sales and retail workers, teaching assistants, construction and other seasonal workers, and agricultural workers among many others. These individuals are a critical component of our local economy and yet still struggle to put food on the table for their families.

As a doctor, I know that access to healthy, affordable food and safe housing are key factors in the health of children and adults. SNAP has an impact on the health of its recipients—they have lower healthcare costs than people who are eligible for SNAP, but do not use it. Food insecurity also has a particularly negative impact on children, who account for nearly half of SNAP recipients in Montgomery County, and pregnant women, as it is linked to infant mortality.

Any cuts to SNAP benefits, or restrictions that attempt to broaden the circle of who legislators believe deserve to go hungry, are bad for our residents. No one deserves to go hungry—not the children in our county, and not their parents who may sacrifice their own meals so there is more food for their little ones.

SNAP is helping many families keep their heads above water, and we should be finding more ways to expand the program to assist those families, instead of trying to cut the rope. Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH,
Chair, Montgomery County Board
of Commissioners.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a little bit from Ms. Arkoosh's letter.

"In Montgomery County, more than 50,000 residents receive SNAP benefits, and more than 21,000 of those recipients are children. Another 8,000 are senior citizens, and more than 7,500 are disabled adults. For these residents, the SNAP program makes the difference as to whether or not these vulnerable individuals have a meal each day.

"With an average monthly benefit of \$123.51 for SNAP recipients, it is already difficult for recipients to receive proper nutrition. Not only that, but Montgomery County has a large population that is food insecure, but earn just enough to disqualify them for SNAP benefits. An estimated 58 percent of those who experience hunger in our county are ineligible for assistance. We need to extend SNAP benefits, not shrink them, for our most vulnerable county residents.

"In Pennsylvania, 1 in 12 workers use SNAP to supplement their nutritional needs. Many of the workers on SNAP earn low wages, have unstable schedules, and cannot rely on enough hours to feed their families each week. . . ."

This is a major county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, I give this as further evidence that clearly we are going in the wrong direction. So let's be clear. With the President's executive order, which is a thinly veiled attempt to restrict access to healthcare, housing, food, and many other basic living programs, by adding on onerous work requirements, it is not surprising that this President is ordering a mass review of the social safety net programs that help the poorest of the poor the same week that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected a massive deficit as a result of the Republican's tax scam.

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. Democrats sounded the alarm months ago when the Republicans passed a massive \$1.9 trillion tax cut. That is because Republicans employed this terrible three-step process before.

First, cut the tax rate for top income earners and corporations. Claim that it will magically pay enough through economic growth. We have heard that before.

Second, balloon the deficit when economic growth does not pay for the tax cut and pretend to be shocked.

Third, insist on massive cuts in critical programs that provide a basic standard of living for all Americans, like eliminating Meals on Wheels for seniors and benefits for Americans with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen this plan before, and it is very unfortunate. We all need to understand, as Dr. King talked about, a beloved community. We are our brothers' and sisters' keeper.

What is worse, Mr. Speaker, the President's budget and executive action to make it harder for struggling Americans to get the help they need is officially step three.

The President and the conservatives who control this agenda paint a racist and inadequate portrait of poor people as lazy welfare queens who would rather depend on the government than pull themselves up by the boot straps.

But nothing could be further from the truth. It is a reality that a million Americans face. Everybody would like to work, Mr. Speaker. So let's be very clear. Everybody, if they have a good, decent job and a decent income, no one—no one, Mr. Speaker—wants to be on the SNAP program.

However, Mr. Speaker, understanding the cyclical nature of our economy, there is a need. Food banks cannot do it alone. We all know, the reality is there is a direct connection between what is happening in our economy.

So let's be clear. Our Nation's societal safety net already has failed to help the families they need. Already, in

the State of Pennsylvania, nearly 14 percent of our population, many of them in Philadelphia, are hungry. And, unfortunately, they will be joined by more Pennsylvanians if this farm bill is to pass.

Mr. Speaker, this is not something to be taken lightly. This is not something that we should smile and joke about because this is no joke. There are an awful lot of people out here, Mr. Speaker. And the Congressional Black Caucus stands today to work with anyone who is trying to move us forward and not backward.

So it is clear, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the effects that we are having, this is something that we shouldn't take lightly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a little announcement about the person who does all the staff work, because it is important to recognize staff.

She has been the guiding force behind these Special Orders, and I want to thank her personally and go on the record that Caren Street has been a fantastic person. She is just leaving the Congressional Black Caucus, but she will still be around and be available.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Caren for all she has done for the people of this country and particularly for the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2030

BENEFITS OF TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks, and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, this evening, we will hear from myself and a colleague from Tennessee, and he is joining me today to talk about how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has benefited our States.

In my congressional district, Kentucky's Second, I have heard from constituents who have seen more money in their paychecks and from businesses that have been able to grow and pass along the benefits of tax reform directly to their employees.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act doubled the standard deduction for both individuals and couples. For the 75 percent of residents in Kentucky's Second District who take the standard deduction,

this is an automatic tax cut. Additionally, individuals in every tax bracket are paying lower rates.

When I visited Owensboro in February, I met Cheri and Ray Middleton, who own On Time Fab, a small business that provides fabrication services for agricultural, industrial, and commercial productions. Cheri and Ray shared with me that, during the first week of the implementation of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, each of the 20 employees of On Time Fab took home more pay as a result of tax reform.

One employee took home as much as \$56 a week and more than \$200 a month. A single dad working for On Time Fab is bringing home an extra \$40 each week. Some thought there was a mistake in their paychecks because they are able to keep so much of their hard-earned money, and \$40 a week is over \$160 a month.

By cutting the corporate tax rate to make the U.S. competitive globally, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has given businesses the opportunity to pass along savings to their customers. For example, residents of 48 States, plus the District of Columbia, are seeing their utility bills go down because of tax reform.

In Kentucky, the Public Service Commission has ordered investor-owned utilities to track their tax savings and to reduce rates for hundreds of thousands of Kentucky customers. In fact, the Public Service Commission has already announced that Kentucky Utilities' and Louisville Gas & Electric's residential electric customers will see their average monthly bills decreased by 6 percent.

Atmos Energy, which serves western Kentucky, announced in March that it will be cutting the average residential bill by just over 3 percent. Other savings from tax reform will fund infrastructure upgrades across the Commonwealth. Companies in Kentucky have been able to expand their operation because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Owl's Head Alloys in my hometown of Bowling Green recently announced a \$3 million expansion which would create 17 new jobs, bringing their total employment in the Second District to nearly 100 good-paying jobs. When I visited their facility in March, Owl's Head owner and president, David Bradford, told me that the economic outlook resulting from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act helped lead to their decision to expand.

This is exactly why we passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act: to give American businesses the confidence to grow and expand right in our communities, and to help individual taxpayers keep more of their money. Some might say that an extra \$200 a month is just crumbs. For hardworking Kentucky taxpayers, the extra money can go toward a car payment or a mortgage. It can help pay for a child's braces or even for regular expenses like groceries.

The bottom line is that, with more expendable income in their pockets, Americans across the country have more freedom to choose how they spend their hard-earned money. A typical family of four earning \$75,000 can expect to pay \$2,000 less in taxes this year compared to last year.

I was proud to support the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and I am proud to report that tax reform is making a real difference in the lives of Kentuckians.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a neighbor to the south of me here today to talk about how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is having a big effect on the lives of not just Kentuckians but all Americans—particularly Kentucky and Tennessee—so I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF), my good friend from suburban Memphis, which is one of the great cities in our area, to talk about the effects of the tax cuts in Tennessee.

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Kentucky for organizing this evening and talking about how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is helping the hardworking people of Tennessee.

I think we all know that, in December, with President Trump's strong support, this Congress passed the first major reform of our Tax Code in 31 years. We all knew that bringing these historic changes to the Tax Code would improve the quality of life for Tennesseans and millions of Americans. Quite frankly, the Tax Code is simpler and fairer to everyone.

Jobs are being created, and paychecks are bigger. We are all enjoying a robust economy that is the best it has been in a long time. Just last week, in my district in west Tennessee, in the Eighth Congressional District of Tennessee, two major announcements were made in my district. In Lake County, Excel Boat Company announced they will be opening a manufacturing plant that will bring 200 good-paying jobs and a total economic development investment of \$9 million.

Additionally, in my district, a South Korean manufacturer announced a \$13 million investment in Martin, Tennessee, and 220 job opportunities at the company's first United States-based location.

Prior to that, just 1 month after the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, FedEx announced an investment of more than \$200 million to raise wages for their employees. Then 2 months later, FedEx continued their post-tax reform action and committed over \$1 billion to expand their express hub in Memphis.

Another company in the Eighth Congressional District, Dot Foods, which has a location in Dyersburg, Tennessee, announced \$500 in bonuses for each of their 4,800 full-time employees nationwide.

I am also proud of First Horizon Corporation, also known as First Tennessee Bank, which is based in Tennessee, with branches all across the