

We should not be talking about cuts to SNAP. We should be talking about how to increase this benefit to the American people, to American children, to our elders, to veterans who are relying on this.

Something must be done. As the Congressional Black Caucus, we are here to raise the alarm.

Raising the Federal minimum wage would save, even if we raised it to \$12 an hour, \$53 billion over the next 10 years, nearly four times as much as the proposed rule, by ensuring that workers earn more so that they are better able to afford food, instead of punishing labor market struggles with hunger, as the gentleman said.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) for any additional thoughts he may have as we close out this Special Order hour, and I thank the American people for listening.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD information from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities titled “Trump Administration Floating Changes to Poverty Measure That Would Reduce or Eliminate Assistance to Millions of Low-Income Americans.”

[From the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Tuesday, May 7, 2019]

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FLOATING CHANGES TO POVERTY MEASURE THAT WOULD REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ASSISTANCE TO MILLIONS OF LOWER-INCOME AMERICANS

(Statement by Sharon Parrott, Senior Fellow and Senior Counselor)

The Trump Administration yesterday floated a proposal to use a lower measure of inflation when adjusting the poverty line each year. Consistent with other policies the Administration has pursued, this policy would over time cut or take away entirely food assistance, health, and other forms of basic assistance from millions of people who struggle to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, and see a doctor when they need to. The reductions in assistance that this proposal would produce stand in stark contrast to the Administration’s 2017 tax law, which conferred large new benefits on the highest-income households.

If the poverty line is altered in this fashion, fewer individuals and families will qualify over time for various forms of assistance, including many who work hard but are paid low wages. That’s because using a lower measure of inflation like the chained CPI to adjust the poverty line each year would make the eligibility thresholds for various programs that serve people in need lower and lower over time, compared with what the thresholds otherwise would be. This, in turn, would lower the income eligibility limits for programs like SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and Medicaid, which are tied to the federal poverty line. It also would reduce the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) premium tax credits—and thereby increase the out-of-pocket premium charges faced by millions of people who purchase health insurance through the ACA marketplaces.

The notion that the nation does too much to help struggling families stands in contrast to a broad set of data. For example, even with our current poverty line and set of supports, the Department of Education says that more 1 million school children were

homeless in the 2016–2017 school year, and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) says that 15 million households faced food insecurity in 2017, meaning that they experienced difficulty affording food.

This proposal is entirely discretionary on the part of the Administration. No statute or regulation requires it to alter the methodology for updating the poverty line. Rather, the Administration is choosing to consider a policy that would weaken basic assistance programs and thereby increase hardship.

The Administration is considering using a lower inflation measure to adjust the poverty line while wholly ignoring other questions about the adequacy of the poverty line as a measure of whether households can meet basic needs. And, it has failed to put forward evidence about whether the chained CPI itself accurately captures changes in the cost of living for low-income households.

Indeed, the issue of what measure to use in adjusting the poverty line for inflation is only one of a number of questions about the poverty line and the official poverty measure. Considerable research over the years—including a major report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)—has identified a number of ways in which the poverty line appears to be inadequate. For example, the poverty line doesn’t fully include certain costs that many low-income families face like child care. In accordance with the guidance of the NAS panel, federal analysts worked carefully with researchers over a number of years to develop the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which more fully measures the cost of current basic living expenses. With this more careful accounting, the SPM’s poverty line is higher than the official poverty line for most types of households, and its poverty rate is slightly higher than the official poverty rate.

Another indication that the poverty line is too low is the high rate of hardship among families with incomes just above that marker. Near-poor families, using today’s poverty line, face high rates of food insecurity, difficulty paying rent and utilities, and high rates of uninsurance.

The Administration’s announcement, however, ignores all other issues regarding poverty measurement that the NAS and other analysts have raised and cherry-picks just one issue—the measure used to adjust for inflation—to focus on in isolation. Simply switching to a lower inflation measure would likely make the poverty line less rather than more accurate as a measure of what families need to get by.

Moreover, it is not at all clear that the chained CPI is a better measure of inflation for low-income households’ basic living expenses, even if we had a poverty measure that measured those living expenses more adequately. Research on different inflation measures generally focuses on the best way to measure inflation for the economy and consumers overall. But the consumption patterns of low-income households—and their ability to change their consumption in response to changes in prices—may be different from those of typical consumers. A recent study indicates that inflation tends to rise faster for low-income households than for the population as a whole. As just one example, housing costs comprise a significantly larger share of low-income households’ budgets, on average, than they do for middle- and upper-income households. And Labor Department data show that costs for rental housing, which low-income people rely on disproportionately, have been rising faster than the overall CPI.

The Administration has floated this proposal through a “Request for Comment”—essentially a request for the public to provide information and views to the federal govern-

ment on this potential change. But the Administration presented no research on how low-income families’ costs for basic necessities has changed over time, the adequacy of the poverty line itself as compared to the cost of basic necessities, or the implications of changing the poverty line for individuals’ and families’ access to needed assistance. Asking for public comment in apparent preparation for a policy change that could harm millions of struggling Americans over time, without providing the public with research and data on these basic questions, suggests this is not a serious effort to explore the important substantive issues that poverty measurement presents.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs. It is supported primarily by foundation grants.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the co-anchor for this hour. This has been a very enlightening topic for us to bring attention to.

Each one of us has constituents who are impacted, to whom we speak on a regular basis. We cannot allow this administration to make this type of an executive order and not have the consequences explained to the American people.

That is what tonight was all about.

Sometimes the other side questioned President Obama making executive orders. Well, this executive order that President Trump is proposing directly impacts the working poor in this country. We cannot allow that to happen.

We cannot allow children who are homeless, families who are struggling, and the working poor who are trying to do everything they can to keep it together to be impacted by this misguided, reckless, and totally unnecessary rule change being proposed by the Trump administration.

Again, we urge the American public to have their voice heard and submit their comments by June 21 or contact their Member of Congress.

We are fighting on their behalf, but we need to make sure that every Member in this body understands the implications of this proposed rule change.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1500, CONSUMERS FIRST ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1994, SETTING EVERY COMMUNITY UP FOR RETIREMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2019; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY 24, 2019, THROUGH MAY 31, 2019; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. PERLMUTTER (during the Special Order of Ms. PLASKETT), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-79) on the resolution (H. Res. 389) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1500) to require the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to meet its statutory

purpose, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1994) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage retirement savings, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from May 24, 2019, through May 31, 2019; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

RECOGNIZING RACQUEL ASA IN HONOR OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I want to recognize Racquel Asa.

Racquel Asa is an anchor and reporter for WFTV Eyewitness News in Orlando, Florida.

Racquel's parents both came from the Philippines in pursuit of careers in the medical profession. She is a wife and mother to two young children, and she is proud to call central Florida her home.

She has been a journalist for nearly 15 years in New York and Florida. During her time in Orlando, she covers all things transportation in central Florida, from I-4 to SunRail to the growing need to make roads safer. She has been tapped by the Central Florida Expressway Authority and DriveSmartFlorida.org to create a regional campaign to make our roads safer.

She was recently recognized, in May, by the Federal Highway Administration for her efforts to raise awareness for both drivers and construction workers in work zones.

She is also an Emmy-nominated journalist who has been recognized for her investigations into red light cameras and breaking news traffic reports.

She is active in the community and participates in events every year to help organize and raise money for good organizations, causes, and missions. She has helped Second Harvest Food Bank, Embrace Families, and the local chapters of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and American Diabetes Association raise hundreds of thousands of dollars by emceeing their events. Most recently, she helped Tour de Cure Lake Nona break national records, raising more than \$1 million to help fund diabetes research.

For that, we recognize Ms. Racquel Asa.

RECOGNIZING COCO JOHNSTON IN HONOR OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I want to recognize Coco Johnston.

Coco Johnston moved from Honolulu, Hawaii, to southern California and has called Clermont, Florida, her home for the past 12 years.

She currently works in marketing for Metro Title Group, located in Metro West, where she facilitates real estate closings. She has been in the title closing and home warranty industry for over 40 years.

Her activities include being the current president of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce in central Florida. The organization's vision is to help its members prosper, grow, and serve as a bridge between many Asian American communities. They provide leadership, support, and encouragement to the Asian American business community of the greater Orlando region.

She is also a member of the Asian Real Estate Association of America, where she is dedicated to promoting sustainable homeownership opportunities in Asian American communities by creating a powerful national voice for housing and real estate professionals who serve the market.

Ms. Johnston and her husband, John, have been married for 33 years. They have a blended family with their daughter, Amber, and their two granddaughters, Bailey and Charlie.

For that, we honor Ms. Coco Johnston.

RECOGNIZING DR. YALCIN AKIN IN HONOR OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I want to recognize Dr. Yalcin Akin.

Dr. Yalcin Akin is the founder and executive director of Orlando, Seminole, and Osceola science charter schools, a group of tuition-free public charter schools that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math education.

Dr. Akin earned his master's of science and Ph.D. from the University of Florida in materials science and engineering.

Prior to founding Orlando Science Schools, Dr. Akin worked with the National Science Foundation and Department of Energy, supporting numerous projects at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory in Tallahassee.

The Orlando Science Schools serve a diverse K-12 population of more than 2,500 students at four campuses in Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties.

Since opening in 2008, Orlando Science Schools has been consistently ranked as one of the best schools in the State of Florida and is also ranked among the top 100 most challenging high schools by The Washington Post. It currently stands in the top 15 percent of all schools in the State of Florida. It also has been ranked in the top 500 by U.S. News & World Report.

Dr. Akin is an active member of the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools. He is a frequent speaker on the topic of high-quality charter school education and regularly participates in the annual Florida charter school conferences.

For that, we honor Dr. Akin.

RECOGNIZING NUREN DURRE HAIDER IN HONOR OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I want to recognize Nuren Durre Haider.

Nuren Durre Haider, Esq., is a proud American-born Muslim Bangladeshi woman. She is a wife, the mother of three beautiful children, and an attorney.

She received her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in business administration and education from the University of Florida and her juris doctorate degree from Florida A&M University College of Law.

Nuren Durre Haider is a believer in empowerment and representation for all. She is focused on getting her community involved in the electoral and political process and was the first Bangladeshi and Muslim to run for Orange County Commission in her district.

She is an advocate for equality, the environment, a living wage, affordable healthcare, banning assault weapons, raising awareness for mental health issues, raising teacher salaries, and other issues that affect the day-to-day lives of Americans. Along with this, Nuren dedicates her time to various interfaith and cultural events.

□ 2045

Currently, Nuren practices transactional law and is serving her second term as vice chairwoman of the Orange County Democratic Party. She is appointed to the Judiciary Committee of the Florida Democratic Party, the central Florida regional director for the American Muslim Democratic Caucus, an active member of the Democratic Women's Club of West Orange, and holds many other memberships and board positions.

And for that, Ms. Nuren Durre Haider, Esq., we honor you.

RECOGNIZING AKM HOSSAIN IN HONOR OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I want to recognize Akm Hossain. Akm Hossain was born in Bangladesh in September of 1961. He went to school and college in Bangladesh. He came to the United States as a foreign student at Daytona Beach Community College, where he finished his AA degree in business management.

He is a business professional, currently living in Osceola County with his wife, Roksana Hossain, and their children. He has been involved with different kinds of social and cultural activities since day one in America. He was elected president of the largest Bangladeshi American social organization in central Florida.

Akm Hossain is the first Bangladeshi American ever to run for public office in the city of Kissimmee, and he is an active member of the Osceola Democratic Party. He has also organized the Asian Food Music and Cultural Festival, the largest multicultural event in central Florida.