

Heights. The center was first called the Queens Independent Society because the term “Jewish” was not permitted at the time.

The original building itself was based in Woodside, an adjacent neighborhood to Jackson Heights, because at the time Jews were not welcome in the neighborhood of Jackson Heights. However, in 1928, the center was able to rename itself the Jewish Center of Jackson Heights, and in the 1950s, they officially moved their brick and mortar into the neighborhood where they are housed today.

Today, the center is known in the community as an inclusive and accepting space, hosting a number of diverse community events throughout the year, as well as housing our beloved Queens Center for Gay Seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Jewish Center of Jackson Heights.

Thank you for your ongoing service to our community.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address what is top of mind to Americans across the country, and that is the extraordinary economic and health hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout this year.

The reason I decided to rise today is because we are here convening in Washington, and just a day or two ago, the Senate majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, decided to break the Senate.

He broke the Senate as there are thousands of people in Texas lined up for food lines. He broke the Senate while hospitals no longer have beds to house the sick. He broke the Senate and dismissed the Senate while 30 million Americans are on the brink of eviction.

He dismissed the Senate when every single day when we go back to our communities, people are asking us: Is there going to be help? Is there going to be a second stimulus check? Are we going to get the resources that we need?

He broke the Senate. And in breaking the Senate, we are abandoning our people.

Thanksgiving is around the corner, and there are millions of Americans

that won't be able to afford a meal to eat, that don't know if they will be kicked out of their home, that are unsure if they are going to have to quit their job to care for their child. And we are having entire bodies, and the Senate prides itself as one of the most deliberative bodies, they abandoned them.

The number of Americans living in poverty since May has grown by 8 million people, since just May 2020. According to a study from Columbia University, this rise in poverty has been concentrated in Black and Latino children and people.

The CARES Act stimulus checks and unemployment benefits lifted more than 18 million individuals in the United States out of monthly poverty in April alone. But this number fell from 18 million to 4 million individuals in August and September after unemployment benefits were expired.

Just 44 percent of people in the United States are very confident that they can afford the needed food that will be necessary for the next 4 weeks. That means the majority of people in the United States are not very confident in their ability to eat over the next 4 weeks, according to a new Census survey data. About 10 percent, or 3.5 million households, are not at all confident in their ability to eat the week before Thanksgiving, and the Senate broke. It is unconscionable, unconscionable leadership to abandon our people.

□ 1230

And while we are arguing about negotiations, and while we are arguing about points, people are going hungry. And we are dismissing their needs as blue State needs or as bailouts depending on what party you voted for. Hunger has no party. Illness has no party. And when we allow suffering to be alleviated or concentrated based on political affiliation, we are doing a disservice to our entire Nation.

This uncertainty in food reflects food hardship across the country, with 5.6 million households with children struggling to put enough food on the table in the last 7 days.

Landlords filed at least 43,500 evictions in 17 major cities from March until September. An estimated 13.4 million adults living in rental housing today—nearly one-in-five renters—were not caught up on rent.

Small businesses don't know if they are going to survive or exist in a month, in a week, in January.

We cannot afford to wait for a new administration or another election, or a political state of play. We need to get people help now, and the Senate broke. They broke.

We are supposed to be here to work for everyday people. We are not supposed to be here to work for political donors or political favors or the powerful. We are here to serve the people who are most vulnerable, all the way up to the top. But we start with the people most in need.

Our country is going hungry on the week before Thanksgiving, and the Senate broke. I don't care what party you are. It is an abandonment of our responsibilities as elected officials who are charged with acting in the public trust.

The unemployment rate jumped in April to a level not seen since the 1930s and still stood at 6.9 percent in October. Some 10.8 percent of Black workers and 8.8 percent of Latino workers were unemployed in October compared to 6 percent of White workers. Last week, 1.1 million Americans filed new unemployment claims. Today, 4.4 million Americans are receiving pandemic emergency unemployment compensation, up from 1.4 million in August.

Last week was the 35th straight week total initial claims were greater than the worst week of the Great Recession, and the Senate broke.

You know, I want to address some of the claims, because yesterday I said that we need to make sure that people get economic relief due to these shutdowns. And I was surprised to hear so many Republicans now concerned about how we are going to pay for it or using other people's money. But the Senate majority leader wasn't concerned about other people's money when he authorized a \$4 trillion leveraged bailout for Wall Street in March. He wasn't concerned about where that money came from. He wasn't concerned about how we were going to pay for that.

It is only when we are talking about relief for working people, for children, for families, for parents, for education, for healthcare that, all of a sudden, we can't pay for any of these things. But when it comes to tax subsidies for private jets, we have got the money for that. When it comes to the endless appropriation towards more and more military spending, when we aren't even, technically, in growing elements of war, according to some people, we have money for that. But we don't have money to feed our own kids. We don't have money to educate people. We don't have money to provide healthcare.

But we have money for private jets. We have money for tax loopholes for yachts. We have money to incentivize stock buybacks. We have a billion dollars to invest in research and development for a vaccine—which was proudly invested in and a good use of public funds—just for pharmaceutical companies to take these publicly developed drugs and then sell them back to the public at no discount, so we don't even get a return on this investment. How is that fiscally responsible?

So we are living in a world and a state of play in our governance where the party who is eager to help subsidize private jets somehow can't find the dollars and the cents to get people a \$1,200 check. It is unconscionable, and it is wrong. And the Senate broke.

I am rising today, because it is extraordinarily difficult to represent a

working-class district, not a private jet district, and go home every week, just as I am about to do again, and feel as helpless in this body because the majority of its Members and the majority of the Senate can't seem to get it together and get people the help that we need. And the Senate broke.

This is what I have to do. This is what we are resorting to, speaking to an empty room because the Senate broke.

So if there is anything that I have left to say, if there is anybody out there that is listening, if you are a working family, if you are struggling to get the food that you need, if you feel like you are on the brink of eviction, we see you. We see you.

What I ask of the Senate and what I ask of our Republican colleagues in the Senate is to act as if you were the one that was going hungry. Act as if it is you getting evicted from your house. Act with that urgency.

That is all I have to say.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we have had an interesting week. Not a lot of critical votes have taken place. It was more of an organizational week we have had here. At the same time, the country's election hangs in the balance.

I think it is important to take a step back in history, though. It is very interesting when you look back and see what things have happened in the past that maybe affected our future.

Here is an article from Republican Michigander published by RedState:

Don't let Soros and the "Secretary of State Project" take over your State.

In 2010, the Secretary of State Project is so far targeting Michigan, California, Iowa, South Dakota, Ohio, and Minnesota. This post is Michigan specific, but look at the list of donors to a State level Michigan downticket race. Chances are this is happening in your state, too.

The article says:

You know comrades, says Stalin, that I think in regard to this: I consider it completely unimportant who in the party will vote, or how; but what is extraordinarily important is this—who will count the votes, and how. That is from Boris Bazhanov's, "Memoirs of Stalin's Former Secretary."

Boss Tweed says, As long as I count the votes, what are you going to do about it?

Some of the most overlooked and ultra-important positions in this state, talking about Michigan, are those who run the elections. Those are the county clerk, township/city clerk, and the secretary of state's office. It takes the work of these offices and their staffs to run the elections and make sure the process is above board—and, again, this is 10 years ago, 2010—competent, and with integrity. Livingston County does a great job

with its Bureau of Elections. While these positions shouldn't be politicized, at least when it comes to elections, they are in a big way, and this politicization is coming to Michigan.

Some people don't like it when their boys don't make the rules of the game. First and foremost is the benefactor of the Democrats, convicted insider trader George Soros, the man who broke the Bank of England. Much like his counterparts at Goldman Sachs, he makes a killing off of speculating, and what better way of doing that than by controlling elections. Other rich leftist democrats also wanted to get their people elected in their attempt to control our lives.

Their project is called the Secretary of State Project. Its goal is to get their type of democrats in charge, and then look the other way when ACORN and PIRG to commit voter fraud, rigging the election for the democrats. They had some success in 2006. . . .

And people can go online and find back in 2006 a report that George Soros and Democrats were going to be funding elections and selections of people, who would be involved in counting the votes in important places.

Most of us didn't pay much attention to that. I know in Texas I thought, well, we are Texas. We elect Republican Governors, and they appoint our Secretary of State, so we are safe from this effort by the Soros Democrats.

What I didn't think about back in 2006 and 2010 was the fact that county clerks are really responsible for the vote counting in their county. In most of east Texas, west Texas, south, and the Panhandle, if a county clerk and her or his staff did not do the counting of the ballots, we might get upset and vote them out. But in our biggest cities, biggest counties, like Dallas, Harris County where Houston is, Austin area, San Antonio area, they hire firms that come in, some of which we find out had Soros-type money that helped start these things. Maybe it is his, maybe it wasn't, maybe it was through Open Source or Tidewater, different groups that launder the money through different organizations, so it is hard to tell where it really came from, but we know it is people that wanted to control elections that got involved in deciding who would be in charge of counting the votes. Just like brother Stalin and brother Boss Tweed, they had figured out it doesn't matter who votes. What matters is who counts the votes.

□ 1245

So this article goes on. This is 2010. FOX News reported: "Since 2006 the Democracy Alliance, a left leaning influence group funded by George Soros among others, has had remarkable success in targeting and claiming Secretary of State's offices in 11 of 13 critical States they targeted, including Ohio, Minnesota and Iowa.

"Called the Secretary of State Project (SOSP) its aim is to target and capture the obscure, often overlooked office and implement election rules changes that give democrats a better chance of winning a plurality. Among those changes that the Secretary of State Project calls 'election protec-

tion,' are a loosening of voter registration requirements and a lessening of efforts to prevent fraudulent voting, according to Matthew Vadum, a political analyst with the Capital Research Center.

"The thing that is amazing is that they can get the office for as little as \$100,000 in campaign funding because no one pays attention to it, and they get to control election opportunities in a State. It is cheap,' Vadum said. He said SOSP is currently targeting three States in the 2010 election: California, Michigan, and Minnesota. In total they count for 82 electoral votes.

"Vadum says that because of chaos and demoralization the Republican Party has not formulated a response to the Secretary of State Project or tried to match their efforts."

That was 2010. We did not learn. And those campaigns, the project, had a profound effect.

"Brunner has been a disaster in Ohio, unless you are trying to rig the game for the Dems. There was tons of shadiness in Ohio for the 2008 election. The good news about Brunner is that she is running for U.S. Senate where she can do less damage, even if she wins.

"Brunner made news in October 2008 when she declined to hand over to county election boards 200,000 names on voter registration forms where the drivers license or Social Security number on the forms did not match the name. The Secretary of State Project praised her actions."

This is another report: "Blackwell's office was one of the first and most critical offices claimed by the Secretary of State Project. He was succeeded in 2006 by Jennifer Brunner, who received \$167,000 in campaign contributions from the Secretary of State Project, and immediately began a complete overhaul of Ohio's voting system. Among the changes she made were allowing election day registration and the failure to purge election rolls of ineligible and dead voters."

As Lyndon Johnson famously told his campaign manager:

No, sir. This man has every bit as much right to vote as anybody else in this cemetery.

Back to the article. "Her most memorable moment was when a Federal court judge ruled that she had violated Federal law for 'not taking adequate steps to validate the identity of newly registered voters.' At the time she admitted that there were 'discrepancies' in about 200,000 new registrations but refused to allow polling workers to take action on the questionable ballots."

Mr. Speaker, if someone begins to see a pattern—gee, this was 2010. I didn't wake up until late in 2018. But this went on around the country, getting people in positions that they would be responsible for counting the votes and making rules, though that is supposed to be left to the legislature of each State, according to the Constitution, making rules as to what votes count and what votes don't.