Nation's most vulnerable residents. This TANF bill complements two previous bills I have introduced, which would include my constituents in SSI and SNAP. To see how Puerto Rico was hurt by its current territorial status, one need only look at the island's shocking treatment under these three key programs.

When you look at the status and well-being of all the American citizens living in the territories, you realize that what they face is geographic discrimination. It makes no sense to penalize the American residents who decide to reside in the five territories belonging to the United States. The only reason that sometimes is raised for such discrimination is that the residents of the territories do not pay Federal income taxes. But it is not right to even raise that argument when close to half of the U.S. households in the U.S. and the U.S. mainland in the 50 States are not paying Federal income taxes because of their income levels. It is also not right when most of the vast majority of the residents in the territories would not pay Federal income taxes anyway.

What we're talking about is fairness. What we're talking about is parity. There should be equal treatment for all American citizens, regardless of where they reside within America. I support statehood for Puerto Rico for several reasons, one of which is this concept of parity. Once a territory becomes a State, it doesn't have to seek parity. It automatically participates in all Federal programs.

That's one reason. But I support statehood for Puerto Rico for a more important reason. I'm talking about the lack of voting rights for the residents of Puerto Rico. I, for one, suffer the consequences. I am the one the American citizens in Puerto Rico elect to represent them in this Congress. When I come to this Chamber, I can speak, I can introduce legislation, I belong to committees. But when the time comes to vote for or against bills that benefit or affect my constituents, I cannot do so. My name doesn't even appear on the electronic board here in this Hall. That is embarrassing. It hurts me, and it hurts my constituents.

If Puerto Rico were a State, we would have at least five Members in the House of Representatives and two Senators advocating for our residents. That's one of the reasons I support statehood. But there's more to it than that.

Last year, President Obama visited Puerto Rico. I felt so proud because I had something to do with it. But you know what? It is embarrassing to say that no President had visited Puerto Rico in an official capacity in 50 years. We had to wait 50 years for a President to show up in Puerto Rico. I am sure that if the American citizens living in Puerto Rico were given the right to vote for their President, Presidents would be visiting Puerto Rico on a regular basis. They would be making commitments, they would be learning about our needs, and they would be doing the right thing with respect to the American citizens living in Puerto Rico.

On November 6, there will be a plebiscite in Puerto Rico and two questions will be posed before the voters. The first question will be whether they want Puerto Rico to continue being a territory of the United States. We have to ask that question because that's how democracy works. The second question will ask them to express their preference with respect to the three available status options we have, apart from the current territorial status: statehood, independence, and free association. I hope they answer those questions, sending a message loud and clear to this Congress that they no longer want to be a territory and they want to be the 51st State of the Union.

WE ARE NOW IN THE SILLY SYSTEM

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, despite advice to the contrary, our Constitution establishes a government with two sovereigns, the Nation and the individual States. They worried about that in Philadelphia. In fact, James Wilson wondered if this system would be like two meteors on a collision course, the collision of which would be catastrophic, or if this system would be like the solar system where the planets stayed in their sphere and course and did not interfere with one another. That latter vision we call federalism. It is stated in the 10th Amendment where each level of government had a specific and distinct responsibility.

When the States were interfering with the Federal Government, it produced historical catastrophic consequences. But also when the Federal Government interferes with the role of States, the consequences range from being catastrophic to just plain silly. We are now in the silly system.

In 2010, this Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. We were wrong to pass it for five reasons: number one, it was a Senate bill. That should have been our first tip-off; number two, it was opposed by the National Governors Association; three, it was opposed by the National School Boards Association; four, it violated the Constitution.

You see, the Federal Government's only advantage is that everyone has to do the same thing in the same way at the same time. The Federal Government can impose that. But schools are given to the States because they require creativity, efficiency, and justice.

Finally, number five: we created a one-size-fits-all Federal program not defined by us. We simply passed this grand idea and then gave power to a Secretary in some building here in Washington to come up with some kind of standards.

Two schools in my district have now been hit by those standards. I care about those schools because from one I graduated a long time ago, and the other I taught for 23 years. They were hit with a $16,000 and $19,000 fine respectively. What was the heinous crime for which these fines were levied against the funds that go to help the kids in these schools? During the lunch hour, their vending machines were plugged in. These vending machines were not in the cafeteria. That violated the standards. They were down in a different part of the school. But since the kids walked out of the cafeteria with their lunches and walked down the hallway towards the gym where the vending machines were and there was not a wall, by our standards, to stop them from doing that, the entire school was designated as a cafeteria and the schools were then penalized.

You see, by the standards that were created, if a kid buys a Coke and then takes it to lunch to drink, that's nutritional. But if he buys his lunch first and then goes down to buy a Coke, that is now, by our standards, unhealthy. Snickers by our standards are healthy food; licorice is not. Ice cream is healthy; Swedish Fish are not. Apparently by our standards, anything that could stick to your mouth is not a healthy food. Starbursts are out; Milky Ways are in.

It was wrong for Congress to pass a law without taking the time to establish standards that were rational by ourselves and giving that power to another body. It was wrong for Congress to invade the role of States. It was wrong to punish kids for these silly reasons. It is wrong to violate federalism. If a community school and their PTA wanted to create these standards themselves, fine.

Federalism means people at the local level should be free to create any decisions they want to do, even if those decisions are dumb. It is wrong for this body to think that every issue has to be decided here in this room, and it is wrong for us to forget that the 10th Amendment has a purpose. It is there for a reason. It should be respected.

□ 1100

IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR TROOPS INSTEAD OF ENDANGERING THEM

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, there are few things more important for us to deal with than the health and safety of our men and women in uniform. For everything they do, for all the courage they've shown and the sacrifices that they've made, we must be absolutely vigilant about protecting them from unnecessary risk.