

the number of livable-wage jobs, we are gutting re-training and reemployment opportunities. These policies will pull the rug out from under people's lives in the name of some kind of pseudo-fiscal discipline that legislators declare will do this Nation some good.

For yet another week, the Republican-led Congress has turned its back on the number one issue in this country—jobs. Instead of brainstorming a way to fix the massive problems sequestration presents, the House is considering legislation which guts 40 years of bipartisan engagement in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. This bill would consolidate or eliminate successful initiatives like YouthBuild, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Women in Apprenticeship and Non-traditional Occupations, and Community-Based Job Training Grants.

Last week, House Republicans also passed H.R. 890, the partisan welfare bill that would overturn the Obama Administration proposal to allow States the flexibility to move more Americans from welfare to work.

Looking forward to the week ahead, this Congress will move closer to making massive sequestration cuts permanent for millions of Americans. Instead of alleviating suffering, these bills will add to the woes of my constituents and Americans across the country.

We need to come together to find a way to help the people in this country keep their jobs and become gainfully employed, not slashing and cutting when there is no emergency that really warrants these measures. We must not balance the budget on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable Americans, especially when closing common-sense loopholes could easily raise the revenue we need.

Every day, millions of Americans go to bed hungry because they have fallen into poverty. They were evicted from their homes and have lost their jobs. This Congress has turned a blind eye to their suffering and seems to be determined to pile on more. When will we do the work of policy and put aside partisan politics? How can we look our constituents in the eye, knowing these changes will do them harm?

We are here to help solve the problems of America, not create more problems for this country. Legislators can do better; we must do better.

BRIANNA ESQUIBEL

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 18, 2013*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brianna Esquibel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brianna Esquibel is an 8th grader at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brianna Esquibel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brianna Esquibel for winning the Arvada

Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

# SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFELONG SKILLS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 15, 2013*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 803) to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, today's legislation is a missed opportunity. As our economy recovers, job training services are more essential than ever, and we should be reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act to ensure that these services are delivered efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, H.R. 803 will not do that.

This bill establishes a single block grant for Workforce Investment Act funds, creating a one-size-fits-all model and jeopardizing services for the most at-risk populations, including workers with disabilities, older workers, disabled veterans, and youth. It also weakens Workforce Investment Boards by eliminating representation requirements for community-based organizations, community colleges, and labor. Without these important stakeholders, Boards will lose vital expertise in training and placement.

While Democrats believe the Workforce Investment Act needs to be updated to meet today's job training needs, H.R. 803 is not the way to do it. I support the substitute offered by Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. MILLER that would streamline programs and improve accountability without threatening services for underserved populations. It would authorize the President's Community College Fund to expand the role of community colleges in job training and allow them to offer specialized skills and recognized credentials. It would increase access for work experience programs, including summer employment, internships, and pre-apprenticeship programs, so workers can receive training on the job. And it would establish common reporting and performance measures across all programs so we can better assess what is working. It is a better approach and I regret that the Republican Majority did not work with us to incorporate these ideas into the final bill.

Unfortunately, H.R. 803 on the floor today is a step backwards, dismantling protections and access for underserved populations and weakening community involvement in job training and placement. I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation and come together to in a bipartisan way to responsibly reform our workforce development programs.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. PATRICK T. McHENRY**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 18, 2013*

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, on March 14, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72.

On March 15, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 73, 74, and 75. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 73 and 74, and I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 75.

BRANDON HELLER

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 18, 2013*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brandon Heller for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brandon Heller is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brandon Heller is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brandon Heller for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SYLVIA MEHAS

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 18, 2013*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleague, Mr. NUNES, we pay tribute to the life of Sylvia Mehas who passed away on March 9, 2013 at the age of 94. Sylvia will be remembered in the hearts of many as a passionate woman who loved her heritage, family, and faith.

Sylvia grew up in an immigrant family that was from a small village in Greece. Her roots were from the old country; therefore, strong values and morals were instilled in Sylvia early on. Sylvia knew the importance of hard work, and she understood that a little tough love was necessary every once in a while. Her children: Tulla, Peter, and Georgia, appreciate their mother for the lessons she taught them and for the principles that are now ingrained in them.

Sylvia was married to her late husband, George, for over 53 years. Together, they

were very involved in their church, St. George Parish. George served as a President, and Sylvia taught Sunday school, and served on the parish council for five years as Treasurer and Vice President. In addition, Sylvia was a founding member of the church choir. She sang in the choir for 25 years. Sylvia's Greek Orthodox faith was the foundation for her life, so she cherished the opportunities she had to serve at the church.

Fresno's Greek community was an integral part of Sylvia's life. She was co-chair of the Annual Grecian Food Festival, chair of the Greek Community Booth for Passport Fresno and Downtown Fresno Centennial, and she was a member of the Daughters of Penelope, where she served as President and District Lt. Governor.

Civic engagement was also very important to Sylvia. She served on numerous boards and committees. She was a past President of the Federation of Republican Women and an elected member of the Republican Central Committee. Sylvia was proud of her beliefs, but she was not against hearing other peoples' thoughts and arguments. She was happy to sit and talk with anyone. Sylvia served on the Fresno Grand Jury, Fresno County Solid Waste Committee, Fresno City Urban Design Task Force, Fresno City Citizen's Commission, Fresno County Reorganization Committee, and Fresno Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee and Local Government Committee.

Beyond her participation in the community, Sylvia also ran two successful businesses with George. The Fresno Malt Shop and the Athenian Restaurant were staples in downtown Fresno. Sylvia and George worked hard to keep them up and running because they understood the important lessons they were teaching their children about hard work.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join Mr. NUNES and myself in paying tribute to the life of Sylvia Mehas. Sylvia's leadership, guidance, and kindness will be greatly missed by many.

50 YEARS LATER, WE MUST WORK  
TO FULFILL THE PROMISE OF  
GIDEON

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 18, 2013*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*. This Supreme Court case established that all Americans have a right to counsel in criminal trials—even if they cannot afford it. The *Gideon* decision was clear: American citizens moving through the criminal justice system deserve appropriate representation under the law.

Unfortunately, fifty years after this case was decided, that promise of *Gideon* has not been fully realized. Today, ever increasing numbers of American citizens fall through the cracks in our justice system, sitting behind bars because they did not have access to legal representation.

On this important anniversary, we must commit ourselves to ensuring that all Americans have meaningful access to legal rep-

resentation so that they are not left at the mercy of a justice system that is difficult to navigate and weighted against them. As Michelle Alexander's explains in *The New Jim Crow*, "tens of thousands of poor people go to jail every year without ever talking to a lawyer." An article by Karen Houppert in this Sunday's *Washington Post* describes how "one man, accused of burglary, sat in jail for more than a year while waiting for an attorney to be assigned to him." I believe that those situations are unconscionable. Wealth should not be required buy access to a responsive justice system. All Americans should have ready, meaningful access to an attorney when their futures and interests are at risk.

We must make sure that the services aimed at assisting the poor are adequately funded. Attorney General Holder has quite accurately referred to the "crisis" facing services that provide legal services to the poor. Today, public defenders have caseloads that are often hundreds of cases above the numbers recommended by the American Bar Association. With staff stretched that thin, the level of service provided in any one case inevitably suffers. As is noted in *The New Jim Crow*, "...those who do meet with a lawyer for a drug offense often spend only a few minutes discussing their case and options before making a decision that will profoundly affect the rest of their lives." We must make sure that the attorneys who are assisting low-income individuals have the ability and resources to do so in a way that is meaningful and effective.

We must also commit ourselves to broadening the scope of cases that warrant a right to legal counsel. *Gideon* applies only to criminal cases—legal issues like home foreclosures, job loss, spousal abuse and parental custody are not covered. Individuals in these situations may lose their homes, their livelihoods, or worse, because they do not have access to representation.

While these cases are "civil" in nature, they often carry a very real risk of jail time. I believe that *Gideon* should be applicable in these situations, because individuals facing a potential loss of liberty deserve the right to representation.

The Legal Services Corporation, which provides civil legal services to people who cannot otherwise afford them, received \$70 million less in fiscal year 2012 than it did at its peak funding. This comes as the Legal Services Corporation is more strained than ever, helping low-income families dealing with the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. According to the *New York Times*, over 60 million Americans qualify for the Corporation's services, but 80% of the legal needs of the poor go unmet. Those numbers are disheartening and unacceptable and must be addressed.

I urge my colleagues to read the attached articles and to work to restore the meaning of the *Gideon* decision by ensuring that all individuals have meaningful access to legal counsel.

[From the *Washington Post*, Mar. 15, 2013]

INDIGENT CLIENTS SUFFER AS PUBLIC DEFENDERS STRUGGLE TO KEEP UP WITH CASELOADS

(By Karen Houppert),

In 1961, an itinerant man named Clarence Earl Gideon was accused of breaking into a pool hall in Florida and stealing some liquor, as well as money from a jukebox and a ciga-

rette machine. He asked the judge in his burglary trial for a lawyer. He was too poor to hire one himself. *Gideon* said, but he needed help with his case. The judge said the state was under no obligation to provide him with an attorney. So *Gideon* represented himself, badly, and ended up in prison. But he fought his conviction—all the way to the Supreme Court, insisting that there was no such thing as a "fair trial" if both sides didn't have representation.

Monday marks the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in that case, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which established the constitutional right to free counsel for poor people accused of serious crimes. Most Americans are familiar with this result, thanks to television and movies; police officers say as they arrest someone: "You have a right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you."

In the 1960s, complying with the ruling seemed quite possible. Sure, it would be expensive for local governments that had to oversee and fund such efforts. But the number of indigent folks accused of crimes was smaller and, arguably, more manageable. Cities and counties established public-defender offices, staffed by salaried lawyers who were paid by the city, county, state or some combination of these; they also developed a roster of private attorneys whom judges appointed on an as-needed basis, paying an hourly rate; and some contracted with a single law firm or attorney for all local public defense.

It sort of worked.

But over time the war on drugs, the "three strikes" laws and the lock-'em-up mentality of politicians have led to indigent clients flooding the courts. Courts are overburdened, and across the country, lawyers for the poor are routinely buried beneath crushing caseloads and working in underfunded offices. Without adequate resources, it's hard to hire the investigators, experts or paralegals to mount a good defense. The stakes are high—for the man on death row to the teen picked up for marijuana possession.

Attorney General Eric Holder decried the "crisis" in indigent defense when he spoke to the American Bar Association last year. Programs across the country were "underfunded and understaffed," he said. Citing "insufficient resources, overwhelming caseloads and inadequate oversight," he worried about a breakdown: "Far too many public defender systems lack the basic tools they need to function properly."

The problems have been well documented. A 2009 investigation by the Constitution Project, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association and the National Right to Counsel Committee concluded that the system of providing counsel for the poor was broken and that defendants' constitutional rights were routinely violated. The groups drew from news articles, law reviews and myriad panicked reports that cities, counties and states had generated. Their report, "Justice Denied: America's Continuing Neglect of Our Constitutional Right to Counsel," documented instances in which public defenders carried as many as 500 active felony cases at a time (the American Bar Association recommends 150) and as many as 2,225 misdemeanor cases (the ABA recommends 400).

The recent economic crisis has exacerbated the problem. In New Orleans last year, the chief public defender had to lay off a third of his staff. Hundreds of people languished in jail for months, waiting for a lawyer to be appointed. One man had been there two months for possessing a joint. Another man, accused of burglary, sat in jail for more than a year while waiting for an attorney to be assigned to him.

These shortcomings greatly affect people's lives every day. In Washington state in 2004,