

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS:
HUNGER IN AMERICA

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the stance of the Congressional Black Caucus in their daily fight to preserve, support and increase funding for initiatives to end hunger in America. The Congressional Black Caucus has proposed a fiscally sound and morally responsible budget that protects the SNAP program as well as other programs that are vital to vulnerable communities.

As a member of the House Hunger Caucus, Out of Poverty Caucus, and proud co-sponsor of H.R. 3353, the "Extend Not Cut SNAP Benefits Act" I am dedicated to educating my fellow Members on hunger-related issues as I understand the devastating impact hunger has on millions of children and families in our country.

The cuts in SNAP benefits implemented on November 1, 2013, reduce the amount per meal that beneficiaries receive to \$1.40, affecting not only the families that rely on SNAP but also straining the resources of local food pantries that will be pressed to fill the gap, to keep people from going hungry. Together, the SNAP meals lost in 2014 from the scheduled cuts—nearly 3.4 billion meals—would exceed the projected annual meal distribution by Feeding America food banks around the country.

Further, a family of 4 will receive \$36 less each month which translates into a week of groceries that will be taken away from poor working families, disabled persons, the elderly and children.

This reduction in benefits is the largest wholesale cut in the program since Congress passed the first Food Stamps Act in 1964 and affects nearly one in seven Americans or more than 47 million people. The cut is equivalent to 16 meals a month for a family of three.

SNAP programs lifted 4.7 million Americans above the poverty line in 2011, including 2.1 million children. Approximately 91% of SNAP benefits go to households with incomes below the poverty line. SNAP is also a win for the economy because every \$1 in benefits generates \$1.70 in economic activity.

In the 18th Congressional District of Texas, my constituency, there are 154,741 persons who will suffer because of the reduction in food assistance to an average of \$1.40 meal. Studies have documented the inadequacy of this level of funding to meet the minimal nutrition requirements for children and families. Hundreds of thousands of Texans may go hungry if the cuts to the SNAP programs are not restored.

As I stated earlier I am a strong advocate for H.R. 3353, the "Extend Not Cut SNAP Benefits Act", which maintains SNAP benefits at the pre-November 1, 2013 levels and allows the House and Senate to work to reach agreement on the Fiscal Year 2014 budget for food programs.

Congress has the power to enact supporting legislation for the individuals, families, and communities that struggle with food security in our country. I encourage the collaboration of both sides of the aisle to work for this common good.

FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND
ENERGY SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1965, a bill that would unnecessarily and irresponsibly give away public lands to Big Oil, even as U.S. oil production is at a 24-year high and the oil industry receives billions of dollars in tax breaks per year.

H.R. 1965 would remove the safeguards that protect taxpayers and public lands by requiring the Interior Department to grant leases on 25 percent of the land requested by oil companies every year and imposing strict deadlines on application review, automatically approving leases after just 60 days even if safety and environmental reviews are not yet complete. It would also enact barriers to public review—if a community wanted to challenge a leasing decision, it would have to pay a \$5,000 fee to be heard. If a case took more than 60 days to adjudicate, it would be automatically denied.

Mr. Chairman, under this Administration, domestic oil production has increased by 35 percent on Western public and Indian lands. Oil and gas companies are currently only developing about a third of the public lands they already lease. This bill, which would prioritize energy production over hunting, fishing, grazing, conservation, and every other use of public lands, will not reduce energy prices or increase energy security. It would simply cede control of natural resources held in public trust to already-profitable big oil companies. I urge a no vote.

PROTECTING STATES' RIGHTS TO
PROMOTE AMERICAN ENERGY
SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2728) to recognize States' authority to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2728, which would prevent the federal government from ever implementing a uniform baseline level of safety and environmental protection in hydraulic fracturing operations across the country.

Today's bill would preempt a rulemaking process that is not yet completed and require the federal government to defer to state regulations of fracking on public lands, no matter

what those regulations may be. Moreover, because the bill forbids the Department of the Interior from exercising oversight over "any component of the fracking process, it could prevent application of basic protections under a variety of existing environmental laws.

States vary widely in their efforts to manage the expanded use of hydraulic fracturing and the federal government has a responsibility to provide a minimum baseline of oversight to protect our public lands, public safety, and public health. H.R. 2728 would block any proposed standards and impede existing law, and I urge a no vote.

FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND
ENERGY SECURITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes:

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1965, the so-called Federal Lands, Jobs, and Energy Security Act. This bill would fundamentally undermine the way our public lands are managed by forcing us to prioritize oil drilling over all other land uses. Current law requires the federal government to manage public lands by taking into account a variety of uses, including recreation, wildlife habitats, and indeed, oil exploration. This bill would throw this successful historical precedent out the window and put the destructive practice of oil drilling at the top of the list. If this would happen in my home state of Florida, we would see devastating effects to the Florida panther—an iconic symbol of our state and also one of the most threatened species in the world. Panthers play a critical role in our ecosystem, but their habitat has been greatly diminished and now there are only 160 panthers. Fortunately, the government recognizes that we need to consider important species like the Florida panther when making land-use decisions. Today's legislation could destroy efforts to protect endangered species like the beloved Florida panther. That's why I urge a "no" vote and yield back my time.

RECOGNIZING THE 90TH YEAR AN-
NIVERSARY OF THE ST. GEORGE
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. George Greek Orthodox Church during their 90th Year Anniversary.

The Valley's Greek population has roots dating back to the late 1800s. Weekly religious services were not available at the time, so a