

those teachings and my core beliefs in humanity.

We can all do better. Some of us may need a hand up in order to get by, but that doesn't mean that they are lesser people for it. They deserve our respect, and they deserve our help while they are struggling.

It is hard to be poor, and because of many of the actions that have been taken by this Congress, it is even harder to get out of poverty.

Dr. Bosworth should apologize to the 46 million of her fellow Americans who need SNAP to put food on their tables. She should apologize to the nearly 50 million of her fellow Americans who struggle with hunger and don't know where their next meal will come from, and Republicans should repudiate her disgusting remarks.

I am an optimist. I believe we can end hunger, and I believe we can end poverty in America, if we just make the commitment to do so, but hurtful rhetoric like this simply divides us and does nothing to help us achieve the worthy goal of ending hunger now.

Hunger is a political condition. We have the food, and we have the ability to make certain that nobody in this country goes hungry, but we lack the political will; and demonizing the poor, as so many in this Chamber have done and continue to do so, is a sad commentary on this Congress.

Our government has a special obligation to the most vulnerable. It is time we lived up to that obligation. The war against the poor must stop.

IN SUPPORT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of National Charter Schools Week. In preparation for National Charter Schools Week, I visited a lot of charter schools that are in my district that I had not yet visited, and I took some time to understand what exactly they do that is unique and different from other charter schools.

What I found is that a school, a curriculum, and a student body that was fitting in one place was very different in another charter. What I learned is that diversity actually delivers a better result for those student populations.

There was Pinnacle Classical Academy in Shelby, North Carolina, a charter that utilizes a classical learning model focused on providing their students with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st Century.

Then there was Evergreen Community Charter School in Asheville. Evergreen employs a holistic education model with a goal of teaching their students the importance of environmental stewardship and community service.

Finally, this past week, I visited Mountain Island Charter School in

Mount Holly. Mountain Island has a traditional curriculum focused on building the character of students and instilling a spirit for community within them.

Each one of those three charter schools, as well as the others that are in my district and, I think, across America, have a unique learning environment. What I have found in these schools is that these students flourish in that right environment, and there is a unique environment for every student to find success. One student's successful environment is so different than another.

While each school was different, their similarities highlight the benefits of charters. Each school utilizes a challenging curriculum that encourages not just the students, but their parents as well, to stay involved. That parental involvement is such an important part of the educational process.

After each of these visits, it is clear that our educational system would hugely benefit by expanding access to charter schools. I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 10.

I look forward to voting for it this week, in the hopes of giving all American children greater access to quality charter schools and educational opportunities of their choice and their parents' choice, so that we have a better-educated workforce and a stronger America.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED A VOTE ON EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it has been 1 month since the Senate acted in a bipartisan fashion to pass emergency unemployment extension.

Just hours after the Senate acted, I introduced a bill, H.R. 4415, the same language passed by the Senate. It is fully paid for, would not increase the deficit, unlike the hundreds of billions of dollars in permanent tax breaks that the Republican leadership intends to bring to the floor this week.

A month later, we still have no vote scheduled for extending unemployment insurance for millions of Americans—no vote, despite the fact that over 150 Members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans, have cosponsored H.R. 4415; no vote, despite the fact that 2.6 million Americans have already lost this important benefit and 2.8 million will have lost that benefit by the end of the month, almost 3 million Americans; no vote, with 72,000 individuals, hardworking Americans, every week at risk of losing their unemployment insurance if we don't act.

Helping jobless Americans who are actively looking for work is not only the right thing to do, but we have done this before. We have done this under Democratic administrations and Republican administrations. It is not a

handout. It is simply a lifeline to help those folks who have lost their job stay above ground, above water, before they get their next job.

This should not be a partisan issue; yet, yesterday, the Republican leadership said no to letting some of these jobless Americans testify at a Capitol Hill hearing. We were locked out of the room that we had requested.

2.8 million jobless Americans, they may be invisible to the House Republican leadership, but they will not be silenced.

While they were locked out of the hearing room at the Rayburn House Office Building, I and other Members joined these unemployed Americans yesterday, went to the steps of the Capitol, and listened to them as they told their stories. This is their Capitol; it is not ours. It belongs to them, and their voices deserve to be heard.

I also asked hardworking Americans who are unemployed to tweet and email me their stories. My newsfeed and inbox was flooded with stories of people just trying to get by, struggling to pay their rent, struggling to feed their families as they continue to be denied a vote in the House of Representatives to renew unemployment insurance.

They have continued to be denied their voice in the House of Representatives, and this is the people's House. So what I would like to do with my remaining time is just tell a few of the stories that have come in. Lynette B. says:

We just received our foreclosure letter on our home. I am 49 years old, and this is certainly not where I see myself at this age. I am educated, and I have been applying to no less than three jobs per day, only to not get a reply to most of them, or else I am overqualified.

Jennifer S., this is Jennifer and her family:

I never thought I would be in this position, unemployed and worrying about feeding my two growing boys, 14 and 9. I have had to go to food pantries to keep food on the table. I am behind in my car payment and the utilities since my unemployment benefits stopped December 28.

Laura B. writes:

I need the extension, so I can afford to keep the Internet on to look for jobs and afford the gas to go to interviews. It's very hard out there, and there are so many unemployed people looking for each job, that the chances are slim.

Angela M. writes:

Please help with UI. I have lost almost everything, sold my car, pawned my wedding rings, selling furniture to keep a rented roof over my kids' heads.

Elaine G. writes:

I live with my 27-year-old daughter and sleep on an air mattress. I have no phone. I complete job applications now and ask employers to contact me through email. I expect, any day, that my car will be repossessed, as soon as the finance company is able to locate the car.

Carol C. writes:

Come June 1, I will have to leave my apartment. My car, phone, Internet will be gone.

I have no money for essentials like good toilet paper and soap. How does somebody find a job?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to raise these voices. These are real Americans. They are real stories.

Some of the questions we face in this Congress are complicated. This one is simple. Take up H.R. 4415, and we can take away the pain that so many Americans—almost 3 million Americans—are facing.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF JONI EARECKSON TADA

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

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary life of Joni Eareckson Tada.

When Joni was 17 years old, she was just like any other high school graduate. She was thrilled to be on the brink of college, and she was excited to spend a summer swimming in the near-by Chesapeake Bay.

With high school behind her, she was ready to really begin her life. She was not prepared, however, to have her fourth cervical vertebrae crushed in a terrible accident, an accident which would render her a paralyzed quadriplegic and shatter her mobility and independence forever.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened. On July 30, 1967, while diving with her sister, Joni misjudged the depth of the water and snapped her neck at the bottom of the water. She lost all movement in her hands and legs and was rushed, motionless, to the hospital.

Joni spent many grueling months there and often thought about killing herself. She thought her life was not worth living, and she didn't want to be a burden on her loved ones.

"There were many nights I would wrench my head back and forth on the pillow, hoping to break my neck up at a higher level. I wanted to die," Joni later said.

There were times she even asked her friends to help her commit suicide. She was desperate to end her life; but despite her intense depression, despite her intense physical suffering, it was during this time that Joni turned to her Christian faith and began to search for new purpose in her tragedy.

She studied her Bible, leaned on her friends and family, and prayed for guidance, until she realized, almost overnight, that while she would never be able to walk again, she could choose to live through her disability. The Lord could use her to inspire and encourage others.

So she resolved, "One night, lying there in the hospital, I said, 'God, if I can't die, please show me how to live.'"

I am glad to say, Mr. Speaker, that she has lived well, is one of the most inspirational figures I know, and has touched so many lives with her incred-

ible story. Let me briefly outline some of her many accomplishments and undertakings.

During a 2-year rehabilitation period after she left the hospital, Joni learned how to hold a paintbrush using her teeth. She labored away at this skill and often struggled, until she mastered the technique. Today, her artwork is prized around the world and is just one of the many ways she has provided inspiration.

In 1979, she founded Joni and Friends, a Christian ministry dedicated to serving the disabled community around the world. It partners with local churches to provide resources and support for thousands of families afflicted by disabilities. In fact, her organization has served families in 47 countries and, in 2006, opened a new facility in the United States.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to meet and talk with Joni about her ministry and was privileged to introduce her before she spoke at Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi.

□ 1030

The ministry does such incredible work. And let me tell you, I don't think she has any plans of slowing down.

In addition to all this, she has somehow found time to publish over 50 books, many of which are critically acclaimed and rank on bestseller lists. Her radio show, "Joni and Friends," is broadcast in over 1,000 outlets and, in 2002, won the Radio Program of the Year award from the National Religious Broadcasters Association.

Joni has even helped us get things done here in Washington. She has represented the disabled on numerous government committees and was instrumental in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. And she continues to help.

As for awards, her list is very long. She is the recipient of the Victory Award from the National Rehabilitation Hospital, the Golden Word Award from the International Bible Society, and the Courage Award from the Courage Rehabilitation Center. She is a member of the Christian Booksellers Association's Hall of Honor and is a recipient of the William Wilberforce Award.

Joni holds honorary degrees from Westminster Theological Seminary, Biola University, Indiana Wesleyan University, Columbia International University, Lancaster Bible College, Gordon College, and Western Maryland College.

As I said, she is quite the achiever. And how does she really do it? Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I think something that C.S. Lewis once said helps to answer that. He said:

If you read history, you will find that the people who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since people have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this world.

I think Joni understands this. Her mind is truly set on another place. Her life has been extraordinary.

So, again, on behalf of the House of Representatives, I would like to recognize and celebrate the life of Joni Eareckson Tada, a courageous woman who truly knows how to live.

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, May is Older Americans Month, and today I rise to call attention to historic legislation that has for decades served as a lifeline to our country's seniors.

The Older Americans Act is responsible for critical services, like housing, nutrition, and employment assistance. For many seniors, the Older Americans Act is responsible for the delivery of their only warm meal of the day and their only social interaction.

The legislation expired in 2011; and today I am speaking in support of H.R. 4122, the bill I introduced with the gentleman from Texas, Congressman RUBÉN HINOJOSA, to reauthorize the Older Americans Act.

Congress first passed the Older Americans Act in 1965 as one of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. Its goal is to ensure that our seniors age with dignity, maintain independence for as long as possible, and do not grow old in poverty.

Over the years, the OAA has been reauthorized and improved upon to meet the needs of the changing population. As Americans live longer, our policy needs to keep pace.

Our legislation includes stronger elder abuse protections, modernized senior centers, improved transportation services, and other programs that promote seniors' independence.

One of the titles in the Older Americans Act provides important employment support to the country's seniors, something they need now more than ever. The Senior Community Service Employment Program provides job training and job placement for low-income seniors. Many of the people who use this important program were laid off during the recession, only to see their position disappear altogether during the recovery. Now they find that they lack the necessary skills to fill the new jobs that have been created, and they must compete with a younger, inexperienced workforce willing to accept wages lower than their earning potential.

This important program, known as SCSEP, provides specialized training for these mature workers. By partnering with local nonprofits and State agencies, SCSEP helps older Americans develop new skills and then pairs them with employers.

I recently met with several SCSEP participants at the Forest Grove, Oregon, senior center in my district, and I heard firsthand how the program