

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes and that Senator DURBIN be recognized following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENIOR HUNGER AND GAO REPORT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to touch on an issue that I think does not get the attention it deserves. My view is that a nation is judged not by how many billionaires and millionaires it has but by how it treats the most vulnerable people among us. If we look at the greatness of a nation in that respect, the sad truth is that the United States today does not get particularly high marks. That is true not only in the way we treat our children, but it is also true in the way we treat our seniors.

Yesterday, at my request, the Government Accountability Office—the GAO—released a new report that found that nearly 4 million seniors in our country are what they call food insecure. That means these seniors do not know where their next meal is coming from. What that means is that nearly 4 million American seniors may skip dinner tonight because they do not have enough money to buy food today.

Every day in my State of Vermont and around this country, millions of seniors have to juggle with their limited budgets their ability to buy food, their ability to buy medicine, or, in the wintertime, their ability to keep themselves warm in their homes. Those are not the choices seniors in this country should be forced to make.

There is a myth out there pushed by corporate and moneyed interests suggesting that seniors in this country are doing just great, that all seniors are comfortably middle class. But those people who hold those views have not looked at the reality of life for many seniors in this country. The truth is—and this is really a shocking truth—that 20 percent of seniors in America live on an average income of \$7,600 a year. Between us, I don't know how anybody can live on \$7,600 a year, let alone older people who need more medicine and more health care.

The GAO recently found that more than half of all older American households have absolutely no retirement savings. So we are looking at families where people 55 or 60 have zero saved for retirement because for many years they have been working for wages that have been totally inadequate, preventing them from putting money into the bank.

Many seniors obviously have worked their whole lives. They have raised kids. But, sadly, many of them do not have the resources they need to live a secure retirement.

As I mentioned a moment ago, we have seniors in this country who are

going hungry. The GAO report found that fewer than 10 percent of low-income seniors who needed a home-delivered meal in 2013 received one. In other words, what we have created here in Congress over the years are good and effective programs, such as the Meals on Wheels program, that provide nutritious food to the most vulnerable people in this country—seniors who cannot leave their homes; yet, what the GAO report discovered is that fewer than 10 percent of low-income seniors who needed a home-delivered meal in 2013 received one.

I have gone to many senior citizen locations around this country, and I know that many senior citizens enjoy coming out and getting a congregate meal. They go to senior centers, and they are able to socialize with their friends. They get a good and nutritious meal at a reasonable price. Unfortunately, fewer than 10 percent of low-income seniors who need a congregate meal receive one.

The need, in fact, is growing amongst seniors. GAO found that a higher percentage of low-income seniors are food insecure now—24 percent in 2013—than were in 2008, when the number was 19 percent. So the problem is becoming more acute. One in three low-income seniors aged 60 to 69 is food insecure; yet, fewer than 5 percent receive a meal at home and fewer than 5 percent receive a congregate meal in a senior center.

GAO found that seniors with a disability, minorities, and older adults living on less than \$10,000 a year were even more likely to be hungry. Overwhelmingly, those seniors are not getting the help they need.

The report also found that 16 million older adults from all income levels report difficulties with one or more daily activity, such as shopping, bathing, or getting dressed. More than two-thirds of these seniors do not get the help they need.

Many of the programs designed to provide support to seniors—in terms of Meals on Wheels, in terms of the Congregate Meal Program, and in terms of a variety of other programs—are funded by the Older Americans Act. The Older Americans Act was first passed by Congress in 1965, which is the same year Medicare and Medicaid were passed. This year, all three programs are celebrating their 50th anniversary.

I requested this study to see how seniors have been faring in recent years. GAO reported that while the number of older adults in America has increased from 56 to 63 million Americans, the Older Americans Act funding provided to States has gone down since 2009. In other words, the need has gone up, but the funding has gone down. At current funding levels, less than two-tenths percent of Federal discretionary spending is going to achieve its original purpose.

Common sense tells us that putting money into prevention and keeping seniors healthy in the end run not only

prevents human suffering, but it also saves us money. If a senior is malnourished, that senior is more likely to fall, break a hip, end up in the hospital, at huge expense for Medicaid and Medicare. It makes sense to me, it seems, that if we fund adequately this important program which keeps seniors healthy, independent, and out of hospitals and nursing homes—that is what we should be doing. That is why I sent a letter to my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee calling for a 12-percent increase in funding for the Older Americans Act programs, such as the nutrition programs. Thirty-two colleagues joined me on that letter. I hope that when we receive the funding level for the Older Americans Act this year, we will see an increase on these important programs. We should not be giving more tax breaks to those who don't need them. Instead, we should be expanding nutrition programs and other services for seniors.

I also encourage my colleagues to support the bill reauthorizing the Older Americans Act, S. 192, and I look forward to working with the Presiding Officer to reauthorize and expand these critical programs for seniors.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOLY GHOST UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. Holy Ghost Ukrainian Church was founded in Akron, OH by a small group of faithful and passionate Ukrainian Christians.

In 1915, the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church began when two organizations came together to create a place where Ukrainian immigrants could practice the beliefs and traditions they cherished in the new country they called home. The parish has grown and prospered over the years, and continues to flourish at its original location at 1866 Brown Street, offering a center for spiritual and cultural life to Akron and surrounding northeast Ohio communities.

On June 21, 2015, Father Vsevolod Schevchuk, "Father Sal", and parishioners will welcome honored guests His Beatitude Sviatoslav Sherchuk, Patriarch, and The Most Reverend Bohdan J. Danylo, Bishop, of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to their Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and celebration dinner. The congregation will join together on this day to celebrate the anniversary of the church, their Ukrainian cultural

traditions, and all that this parish has meant to the community throughout the years.

With more than 50,000 Ukrainian Americans in Ohio, cultural and religious ties remain strong within the community and between Ohio and Ukraine. As cochair of the U.S. Senate Ukrainian Caucus, I have had the privilege of working with the Ukrainian community and know how strongly connected they remain with family and friends overseas. I am certain the continued engagement of Ukrainians in the United States is making a difference in the efforts for the independence of Ukraine. I join the members of the Holy Ghost parish and Ukrainians throughout the United States who continue to pray and work toward a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine. I am proud to stand with Ukrainian Americans and the Ukrainian people as they further their resolve and commitment to maintaining a free and independent Ukraine.

Mr. President, I would like to personally extend my congratulations to Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church on 100 years of faith, service, and worship.

TRIBUTE TO PETER BLAIR

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Peter Blair has been a highly valued and trusted member of my staff from the time I took office in 2011. He was part of the team that did the heavy lifting of getting the Senate office off the ground and was instrumental in establishing the systems, structure, and disciplines necessary to support the Senate office and serve the people of Utah.

Peter has filled a wide range of roles and responsibilities in our office, from administrative duties to correspondence and constituent services, from strategic relationships and outreach to the vital role of handling our veterans' affairs. He has approached each of these with a firm commitment to excellence, an eye toward challenging the status quo, and a determination to deliver an experience that is meaningful and memorable.

Assigning something to Peter is not only to consider it done but to know that it will be done right. His commitment to serve the office at anytime, day or night, and in whatever way is needed is extraordinary. He has been vital to the office running on all cylinders. Late night votes, townhalls, serving constituents and veterans, and coordinating with the hardworking people who really make the Senate function, were all part of a day's work for Peter.

Peter has a unique and innovative way of looking at tasks, projects and long-term opportunities—one I wish more people in Washington would embrace. Peter is a servant leader—a street-smart and savvy servant, who understands strategy, structure, and discipline and is simply determined to deliver regardless of circumstances or setbacks.

Peter is a forever learner. His quest to find a better way to do things and his inner drive to make a difference has had an impact on every aspect of my office. He is a trusted colleague who is more concerned about getting things done and done right than he is about who gets credit. Ronald Reagan often made the comment, "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit." I would add that there is no limit to Peter's impact and where he can go in the future, because he doesn't care who gets the credit.

It has been a blessing for me, my family, and my staff to have Peter as a member of our team. Having Peter around, from the early days of my service in the Senate, has given me great confidence and peace of mind. Nothing has been better than knowing that the moment an assignment was given to Peter it had begun, would soon be done, and above all, be done right.

TRIBUTE TO RYAN MCKEON

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Ryan McKeon has served as my chief advisor on economic policy for the past several years and has been an indispensable member of my staff. The old saying, "still water runs deep," is a good metaphor for Ryan. Many on Capitol Hill race about trying to call attention to themselves or create a torrent of activity to prove how smart or important they are. Ryan, on the other hand, has a style that is indicative of the depth of his substance. He is concerned with properly informing, not impressing, and is less interested in entertaining than he is in engaging in deeper dialogue on issues that matter.

I have trusted Ryan's wisdom and keen insight on a wide range of policy issues and have always had complete confidence in his thorough briefings and recommendations. He has been the driving force behind an expanding and more meaningful economic policy reach from my office.

Ryan is very perceptive. His understanding of core disciplines, principles, and policies, as well as the nuances and subtleties of his issue areas, has been priceless. Ryan is aware of not only the principle and policy ramifications of congressional business but the likely results and down-stream effect of the decisions made. Ryan's stillness allows him to present information in a concise, clear manner that informs me of vital data and impact points while filtering out the noise and chatter typical of Washington, DC, debate.

Everyone in my office knows they can approach Ryan to have him run the numbers on any piece of legislation. He understands the big picture and regularly worked in tandem with our communications team to ensure our messaging was congruent with what we had introduced legislatively. Ryan has worked well with other offices, as well as with academics and highly specialized policy experts outside of my office.

While so much of Ryan's work is centered in serious issues and tough topics, he also knows the value of some well placed humor, a wry comment, and a little levity.

Ryan is committed to adding value and making a difference. I greatly appreciate what he has done for me, for the people of Utah, and for our nation. There is a confidence that comes of stillness, a strength that comes from serenity, and quiet determination that comes from depth. Ryan McKeon runs deep, and I am confident his influence will continue to ripple and roll on in the years ahead.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOXIE SCHOOL INTEGRATION

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the resilience, determination, and courage of the community of Hoxie, AR for its leadership in school desegregation and the foundation it laid for integration across the country.

This year, the community is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the first day of school for the African-American students who became known as the Hoxie 21.

This small northeast Arkansas community voluntarily integrated its schools in the summer of 1955 in response to the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. The reasoning for the school board and Superintendent Kunkel Edward Vance's decision was simple; integration was "morally right in the sight of God."

On July 11, 1955, African-American students made history in Hoxie and helped build the momentum for integration.

This unprecedented move began with a smooth transition, and the students were welcomed into the school. The news of a small town in the South desegregating peacefully caught the attention of *Life* magazine, and in its July 1955 issue the story captured the attention of the world. Unfortunately, the media attention brought with it an avalanche of negativity despite the positive and peaceful progression.

This action was unpopular in the South and while segregationists flooded the community in protest, families of the Hoxie 21 and school leaders stood their ground and with great faith persevered against the inequality.

The Hoxie School Board fought back by filing suit on the segregationists, charging the segregationists with trespassing on school property, threatening picket lines, organizing boycotts and intimidating school officials. Citizens of Hoxie of all races peacefully waited for a resolution, and with encouragement from the NAACP were able to stand up against the verbal and physical threats from the segregationists. Their patience and fortitude was