

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