

food that was grown and produced by their own hands. Some of these food products might even be from other countries.

When we have that conversation here about helping the less fortunate, do we just throw money at a problem? Is that what Washington does? Is that what we expect to have here? Is that what builds a great society? Or is it people working hard, providing for their families, educating their next generation on what it is like to actually grow food, what it is actually like to put in a hard day's work, to inspire and actually show what it is to work hard and produce something for yourself?

□ 1045

The pride that comes with earning that paycheck and purchasing that house or purchasing those vehicles or purchasing food for your family is what we want to provide for Americans. That is something that I think every single person—immigrant or American citizen by birth or who has been here for 20 generations, whatever it may be—wants to have, the opportunity to provide for their families and for a better life.

When you look at this picture, it is insane that this is going on today. And when people sign and put their names on or trash legislation that can help solve this problem, I think it is an embarrassment for this House and for this country.

There was water flowing through the delta that we had the opportunity to pump earlier this year. Would it have solved all of our problems? No, because we are in a drought. But there was still some water there. We missed out on that opportunity because of laws that are in place today.

These people don't have to be in this position. These people don't have to live like this. Their children do not have to live in those shacks and play with their toys outside of their home. Think of what type of society allows this to happen, by allowing legislation or laws to take effect that have done nothing to actually protect the species they claim to protect, as that species continues to be in decline. We see what is going on here and how it does nothing for these people.

We talk about the environment. Is this an environment to raise a family? How are these children going to be successful in school? I have got three young children of my own. I have nieces and nephews. I would never, ever want to see this happen to them, and I would never want them to see this happen to their friends.

This is something that is happening today because of the laws that this building protects. And we have got to continue to fight and we have got to continue to work together so that we can deliver solutions that actually help these people have that American Dream, just like the rest of us want for our children.

Today, at the end of my speech to a Senate committee, I invited the Sen-

ators to come take some time and meet with some of these folks or see what it is like to actually live like this. I extend that invite to every Member of this House, especially those who speak out in opposition to legislation that can help prevent things like this from happening.

I want them to come, knock on these doors, and talk to these people and see what they want more than anything. Do they want a handout or do they want the ability to produce and to provide for their families and show their children what the next generation should do, which is work hard and help build that American Dream for all of us?

I want every single person who speaks out in opposition to take a good, hard look at this and see what we have created in the United States unless we speak up and do what is right: pass legislation that can help solve this problem so we can deliver water for these families, for these farmers, for our communities, and do what is right for our Nation and do what is right for the American people.

HONORING OUR WWII MERCHANT MARINERS ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, words cannot explain the singular honor it is to stand in the well of the House of Representatives in the Congress of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today on a mission of mercy. I believe a brief vignette can best explain what a mission of mercy is as I apply it to the circumstances for which I rise.

Mr. Speaker, prior to coming to Congress, I served for more than a quarter of a century as a judge of a small claims justice court. I can remember an occasion when a mother testified on behalf of her son. Her appeal to me was along these lines. She said: Judge, I am not asking you for justice. I know he was wrong. But he is my son. I know he was wrong. I am not asking for justice. I am asking you for mercy. You have within your power to do justice or you can grant mercy, and I beg that you grant mercy to my son.

That was her hue and cry.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, I rise in support of H.R. 563, sponsored by the Honorable JANICE HAHN. I rise in support of this legislation, which is the Honoring Our WWII Merchant Mariners Act of 2015.

This bill would establish the Merchant Marine Equity Compensation Fund. It would accord each person who served between certain dates—December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946—a sum of \$25,000.

Why should they receive the \$25,000? Well, Mr. Speaker, when they served in World War II, they were not accorded the benefits other members of the various Armed Forces were. In fact, it

took litigation to bring them under the purview of benefits that the other members of the Armed Forces have received and are now receiving.

It was in 1988 that they finally, after litigation, received these benefits, but the benefits were not applied retroactively. As a result of them not being applied retroactively, some of them didn't receive GI Bill benefits. They didn't receive home loans. Many of them, still alive, can be compensated if we grant mercy.

I know that there are those who would say that they already received their just compensation as a result of the litigation and as a result of being brought within the purview of the laws that allow them to receive certain benefits, but they didn't get them retroactively.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, they served honorably. As a matter of fact, approximately 9,500 of them died in service. They served their country. They bled the same blood as others when they were attacked and assaulted and when they lost limbs and their lives.

They are Americans, Mr. Speaker. And I believe we should show some mercy to these Americans. We ought to accord them the opportunity to have these benefits because they were willing to risk their lives so that we could have the quality of life that we have today.

So I make this hue and cry and appeal. I base it upon mercy, not justice. The arguments can be made as to whether just compensation has been accorded; but I believe that, if we show mercy, we will do the right thing for people who have done the right thing for their country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 52 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

During these contentious and unsettling days during which an important transition is taking place within the House, we ask Your presence in this assembly.

Imbue each Member with confidence that they are called not to be successful in any one pursuit but, rather, faithful to the pursuit of the welfare of