

gaming the system to the tune of \$65,000, \$70,000 a year, and that they don't want to work. People want to work, but they are constantly in competition with foreign workers who earn \$3 a day. We are in a postindustrial economy, and often people cannot find work and cannot find enough work to meet their needs.

Often people find work, but those jobs do not provide them, Mr. Speaker, with healthcare. But they are being told that they need to provide a urine specimen and have a drug test to get healthcare simply because they don't have an employer that is able to provide them or willing to provide them with healthcare.

Although the claims, Mr. Speaker, have been refuted time and again with facts and research that poor people have dignity, poor people love their children, but poor people are just not getting a fair shot despite all of this.

Republicans continue to perpetuate this propaganda and these talking points that impose even more obstacles on people who are poor. They continue to promote policies that are humiliating, like the ration or harvest boxes or peeing in a cup and eliminating basic rights of Americans because they are financially poor in the richest country on the planet. We are sick and tired, Mr. Speaker, of being sick and tired.

□ 1030

And why do we think this is happening, Mr. Speaker? We think this is happening, Mr. Speaker, because you yourself, Mr. Speaker, declared that we are going to pay for the \$1.5 trillion tax cut that we just gave to the wealthiest Americans, corporations, shareholders, all over this planet, we are going to pay for them by cutting Medicaid. We are going to pay for them, Mr. Speaker, by cutting Medicare. We are going to pay for them by cutting Social Security. We are going to pay for them by cutting food stamps, thus the need to vilify people who are poor.

Mr. Speaker, how about if we really want to help people escape poverty and reduce dependency on the safety net, how about trying to raise the minimum wage so that people who are having trouble putting food on the table will actually earn enough money to be able to afford to pay for basic food needs?

If we really want to help people escape poverty, why don't we recognize that basic healthcare is a human right? And we should be trying to fortify the Affordable Care Act as opposed to 60, 70 attempts to repeal it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Americans to wake up.

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS— ANGELS ABROAD

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, America's Peace Corps volunteers are

our angels abroad. They represent the very best we have in America, but right now, we are not doing enough to protect them.

One volunteer, Jennifer Mamola, her life was forever changed after an accident while she was serving in Uganda. Early one morning, Jennifer was walking with two friends to a bus stop. Out of nowhere, a drunk driver rammed into them; one volunteer was killed and Jennifer's legs were broken.

When she returned home to America, still bedridden and loaded on pain medication, she faced an uphill battle to get treatment because of bureaucracy. After months of fighting the system, she was finally approved for disability, but her nightmare didn't end there. Her case was regularly reopened, and she struggled to get the surgeries she needed and was not always approved. Still traumatized by her experience in Uganda, she reached out for mental health treatment, only to be ignored.

I have heard too many stories like Jennifer's, volunteers eager to make a difference in the world, return home to America, seem to be abandoned by an organization they gave so much for.

Others tell of their struggle to receive quality medical care and protection while they are overseas. A brave volunteer opened up to me about the daily sexual harassment she experienced while serving in a country overseas. During broad daylight, men would grope and threaten her as she walked home from school.

One afternoon at the market, the cashier threatened to break into her house in the middle of the night, come into her bedroom, and sexually assault her. When she reported this to the Peace Corps, they assured her that the men were "simply joking."

The harassment went on for months and months. Finally, she made the decision to return to the United States. She could no longer bear the harassment, and she was threatened and afraid.

Peace Corps recorded her reason for leaving as "difficulty adapting to the culture." Are you kidding me? A culture of sexual assault in a foreign country? This meant she was not awarded the certificate of service or letter from the President of the United States that she earned.

Sexual assault and harassment should never be excused as "joking." It should never be brushed off as a cultural norm. Peace Corps has fostered this belief for too long.

Between 2010 and 2014, there were over 900 reported cases of sexual assault and rape by Peace Corps volunteers overseas. This is unacceptable. Our volunteers deserve protection. They deserve basic protections from bad guys who seek to harm them. They deserve quality medical care, both in country and when they get back to the United States.

Now, the Peace Corps has made some changes, but as a former judge, I can

tell you that it is our duty to do everything within our power to protect our angels abroad and do more.

Peace Corps volunteers are the face of our country in places where America's shining beacon of hope and liberty may not always shine so bright. They promote goodwill, a better understanding of the United States. They do so much for people overseas. This helps to secure an enduring partnership for our Nation. They change lives every day in the local communities that they serve. Their service to this country should not turn into a nightmare that interrupts or even ends their lives.

We must remember that these Peace Corps volunteers, many times, operate alone in remote areas of the world, doing the best they can to help other people.

Simple changes would greatly improve the safety and security of our Peace Corps ambassadors abroad. That is why the bill Representative JOE KENNEDY of Massachusetts and I have introduced—the bipartisan Sam Farr Peace Corps Enhancement Act—is so important.

We must not continue to send our volunteers into remote areas of the globe without adequate protections against harm. They must have access to a qualified medical doctor and an effective healthcare system to take care of them when they come back to the United States.

There are some things that we can do and this bill will help. It is time to stand up and take action for our volunteers. They are some of the best that America has, representing America and the Peace Corps, and it is our responsibility to take care of them.

And that is just the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

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 36 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: Lord God of mercy, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Our Nation is singular and powerful by the very fact that Congress begins its workday with prayer, setting an example for all students and workers and people of this great land. It has done so from the very beginnings of Congress itself.