

Although we are facing challenging times and political divide in our Nation, one thing we can absolutely agree on is this: Child abuse and neglect are heartbreaking, immoral, and simply inexcusable.

As many of you know, the opioid epidemic has devastated families and communities across our country, which has been a major factor in the recent uptick in child abuse and neglect cases.

H.R. 2480 assists States in addressing this recent increase in child neglect by improving data collaboration between States, strengthening accountability, supporting evidence-based services, and developing best practices for reducing child neglect linked to parental substance abuse.

Most importantly, it provides parents with parental education and leadership skills developed to help keep them and their families safe and together.

We have a duty to ensure that American children are protected from maltreatment and neglect, and the Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act sets us on the right path to do so.

CELEBRATING CENTENNIAL OF SECURING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate the centennial of the House passing an amendment granting women the right to vote in all States in this country.

One hundred years ago, the unrelenting efforts of women suffragists over the course of a 72-year campaign paid off in the passage of the 19th Amendment.

For example, the first woman to hold Federal office, Republican Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana, was actually elected 3 years before women were allowed to vote at the Federal level in all the States at the time. She went on to introduce legislation similar to what would eventually become the 19th Amendment.

My home State Republican Senator, Aaron Sargent from California, introduced the first legislation to amend the Constitution and grant women the right to vote. It failed on the Senate floor, but it represented the beginning of an unstoppable movement that culminated in the ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 1920.

This Chamber is where it all began. I am proud to be standing here today and joining my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to celebrate the 100th anniversary of this great victory for women and the values of our Republic.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: HONORING JUDGE DAMON J. KEITH, DISCUSSING ROLLBACK OF SAFETY NET PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to co-anchor the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour. For the next 60 minutes, we have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

Tonight, we will discuss and honor the legacy of Judge Damon J. Keith from Detroit, Michigan, and discuss, as well, this administration's, President Trump's, recent attempts to roll back safety net programs.

Damon Keith, a Federal judge in the Midwest whose rulings championed equality and civil rights, notably in a landmark Supreme Court decision striking down Nixon administration wiretapping in domestic security cases without a court order, died April 28 of this year in Detroit, Michigan. He was 96 years old.

In one of the Federal judiciary's longest and most prolific careers, Judge Keith was a fountainhead of regional rulings with national implications. He attacked racial segregation in education, housing, and employment; conservative efforts to limit African American voting; and after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, secret hearings to deport hundreds of immigrants deemed suspicious.

Judge Keith's tenure spanned more than a half century, first as President Lyndon B. Johnson's choice for a district court judgeship in Detroit, with jurisdiction in eastern Michigan, and then as President Jimmy Carter's selection for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, presiding in Cincinnati over cases arising in Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, and Tennessee.

In a blistering 2016 dissent in an Ohio case that restricted early and absentee voting, Judge Keith, even in the later years, worked tirelessly and accused two circuit court colleagues of scorning African American voters and the memory of Black people slain in the struggle for voting rights.

In a, frankly, emotional rebuke, he incorporated into his opinion photo-

graphs and biographies of 36 such victims, including the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "By denying the most vulnerable the right to vote, the majority shuts minorities out of our political process. . . . The unfettered right to vote is the bedrock of a free and democratic society. Without it, such a society cannot stand."

One of America's oldest Federal jurists, Mr. Keith served in the segregated Army in World War II, cleaned bathrooms at the Detroit News, attended historically Black undergraduate and law schools, and witnessed deadly riots in Detroit in 1967.

□ 1945

My colleagues are here with me today to discuss his legacy and the work of Judge Keith, not just for African Americans, but for the American people.

I am happy to be coanchored in the CBC Special Order by my friend and colleague from Nevada, STEVEN HORSFORD.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague, Congresswoman PLASKETT, and I am very honored to be able to join with her as one of the coanchors for the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Tonight, as my colleague indicated, we are here to honor the life and legacy of a civil rights icon, the honorable Judge Damon Keith, who was also a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated.

Judge Keith was born on July 4, 1922, the grandson of slaves, who went on to become an internationally revered champion of justice. Judge Keith has vigorously enforced the Nation's civil rights laws, most notably in the areas of employment and education.

In *Stamps v. Detroit Edison Company*, Judge Keith ruled the Detroit Edison Company had practiced systemic racial discrimination, resulting in fines against the company of \$4 million and against the employee union of \$250,000. He ordered the company to institute an aggressive affirmative action program.

In 2016, Judge Keith wrote a searing dissent when an appeals panel ruled that Ohio's voting rights laws did not discriminate against minorities by restricting early and absentee ballots. He said in that dissent: "The birth of this Nation was founded upon the radical principle that we, as a people, would govern ourselves. And voting is the ultimate expression of self-government. Instead of making it easier for all persons, unrestrained and unfettered, to exercise this fundamental right to vote, legislators are making it harder."

He concluded by saying: "With every gain in equality, there is often an equally robust and reactive retrenchment. We must never forget that constant dialectical tension. For every action, there is a reaction. The majority's decision is a fateful reminder that we can never fool ourselves into believing that we have arrived as a nation."

That is a statement that is ever so true even today.

Judge Keith recalled many of the civil rights activists and innocent children who were slain to make sure minorities had access to the voting polls.

They include: Emmett Till, Herbert Lee, Medgar Evers, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Benjamin Brown, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the four little girls who were, sadly, killed in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama.

Judge Keith fought on their behalf during his tenure on this Federal court.

Some of his other rulings had a profound impact on American life as well, the biggest being his decision that prohibited the Nixon administration from warrantless wiretapping in domestic security cases.

He ordered the Nixon Justice Department to end all wiretapping that was not approved by the courts. This was in the midst of the Nixon administration's attempt to go after radicals accused of conspiring to bomb a CIA office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He stated it violated the Constitution's Fourth Amendment rights from "unreasonable searches and seizures."

The Nixon administration appealed his ruling, and the Supreme Court, with a vote of 8-0, rejected the administration's claim of constitutional authority to protect the Nation from internal subversion by wiretapping dangerous radicals without court warrants.

Along with this case, he ruled in favor of integration of the Detroit Police Department and made the decision that deportation hearings could not be held in secret after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

He has left an indelible mark on the judiciary. Judge Keith has received over 40 honorary degrees from colleges and universities across the country and is the recipient of numerous awards. He was awarded the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP, and the Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award, the highest award that can be bestowed on a member of the Federal judiciary.

Judge Keith fought on all of our behalf to make this country more just, fair, and less discriminatory.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS), my colleague.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring Judge Damon J. Keith, who passed away last month.

The grandson of slaves, Judge Keith served more than 50 years on the Federal bench, where he consistently ruled to uphold civil rights and civil liberties.

Judge Keith leaves behind a legacy of fostering equal opportunity and fighting for the little guy. Unfortunately, this legacy is under threat.

The Trump administration is proposing yet another idea that will hurt

working families. The administration wants to change the way poverty is measured to artificially reduce the number of people who are considered poor. That means fewer people will be eligible for programs like SNAP and WIC and Medicaid.

I am disappointed, but I am not surprised. The latest attempt to gut the social safety net just goes to show how out of touch this administration is with the needs of everyday Americans.

This administration has proposed cutting nutrition benefits for an estimated 755,000 people just because they cannot find jobs. They have threatened to take money away from the Pell Grant Program that provides a pathway to higher education for millions of low-income students.

The President has consistently tried to cut funding for essential programs like Medicaid, public housing, Head Start, and more. And while passing a tax cut to benefit corporations and millionaires, the little people have been left out.

We need serious solutions to combat income inequality. Pretending that poor people don't exist is not the solution at all. Instead of changing the way we measure poverty, we need to strengthen programs that help people who are struggling.

We need to raise the minimum wage. We need a living wage. Working hard is not enough if you don't make enough.

We need to expand access to quality nutrition and housing, and we need to make sure that students have equal access to higher education.

I am proud to stand tonight with my colleagues against the administration's ongoing attacks on working people and families and so proud to praise and honor Judge Damon J. Keith, who worked so hard to preserve our rights.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing our efforts to make sure that working families and low-income Americans have access to all of the services that they need.

Ms. PLASKETT. I yield to the gentleman from Nevada.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman ADAMS for her leadership on these issues and her understanding of the dire impacts that the Trump administration's proposed rule change would mean on working families and the poor.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), the Congressman and my good friend, whom I have the honor to serve with on the Ways and Means Committee. He is fighting for the people of his district in Philadelphia.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their leadership and vision for leading this effort, under the leadership of Congresswoman BASS.

I think, as the gentleman from Nevada has demonstrated along with my other colleague from the great Virgin Islands, they both have shown the kind of leadership that is extremely essential.

The passing of a civil rights icon like Judge Damon Keith is also a time to focus on one of his priorities: helping future generations to succeed. This is also a priority of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Unfortunately, it has not been a priority of the occupant of the White House.

In August 2016, he asked African Americans: What the hell do you have to lose? It has been crystal clear in the last few years that African Americans of all ages have a lot to lose as long as Donald Trump is in the White House. The latest example of this is the Trump administration's plan to strip Medicare, food assistance, and other basics away from hundreds of thousands of working-class Americans.

They are trying to change how the Census measures poverty so they can count fewer people as poor. As costs go up each year, the fake Trump poverty line will take basic benefits away: SNAP, WIC, Head Start, school lunches, legal services, and even tax credits under the Affordable Care Act that help working people to get healthcare.

It is basically a backdoor tax increase for those who can afford it least. It is an outrageous sequel to the tax cut that Trump and the Republicans gave to millionaires and big corporations. It is classic Trump: Don't actually solve the problem; just pretend that it doesn't exist anymore.

I stand with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus in opposing the Trump poverty line change. I stand with all of those who did not inherit millions of dollars from a parent like the President did.

Let us honor the work of Judge Keith and others like him by renewing our commitment to help lift our future generations. We can do this by making college affordable again, raising the minimum wage, and preserving the safety net. Each of these proposals will go a long way toward repairing the ladders of opportunity and making this a more just society.

This dedication today to Justice Damon Keith is our commitment as the Congressional Black Caucus to raise him up in his legacy that he has done for all of us in this country.

It is a real honor as one member of this body, the Congressional Black Caucus, that I stand here today to join my colleagues and show the kind of support for what Justice Keith demonstrated to all of us.

So I am here to lend my voice, to make it clear that this is not acceptable, retreating on the people, particularly African Americans.

Since the President made that statement in August of 2016—and he made it in the city of Philadelphia—it is clear to me that this is not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, we, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, will not stand for this.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and colleague from Philadelphia who always stands

up for the rights of the working class of those in cities and elsewhere who are struggling, the working poor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him so much for the work he is doing and for trying to maintain working neighborhoods in our many cities that are, through so much of these rule changes, so much of these executive orders, the ones who are being most affected.

□ 2000

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), who is from the city of Newark, New Jersey, our good friend, my good friend, and champion as well, of those in the urban areas, as well as to others. He has recently taken on issues related to healthcare.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my colleagues, Delegate Plaskett and Congressman HORSFORD for hosting tonight's Special Order hour on Judge Keith's legacy and the Trump administration's recent attempts to roll back the social safety nets in our country.

Judge Keith's legacy cannot be overstated. He was an icon for African Americans and, indeed, all Americans. He was a Black pioneer in the legal field whose rulings took on Presidents from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush. For 60 years he sat on the Federal bench and consistently ruled in favor of expansive civil rights in this country. It is because of Judge Keith and others like him that thousands of young Black people have entered the legal profession and rose to the top.

He was a judge who always extended a hand down to help lift others up. That is the American way, and it is worth fighting for. Sadly, we live in a time when people in power don't always help uplift others. We have a President who is doing his best to beat down everyone who doesn't think, look, or vote like him.

Now we see that the President has set his sights on America's neediest people. He and his cronies are peddling a myth that the vulnerable people who rely on our social safety net are lazy folks who just want a government handout.

But we know that is not true. Some people just need a hand up every once in a while. The Trump administration's attempts to roll back the social safety net is a life-and-death matter for thousands of Americans who struggle to make ends meet. We live in an unpredictable world. One day you can be on top, but the next day you might be knocked down. The social safety net is our country's promise that we will help people get back up again.

Sometimes people need a little help buying food, or getting healthcare, or just scraping by. There is nothing wrong with that. We all know someone who has had hard times, and when we are having a good time, we need to look out for each other. That is the American way.

I have said this before but let me say it again: I have never met a person who

wakes up in the morning and says: "I want to be poor today." That is just not reality. And let me add this: I have never met a person who wakes up at 5 a.m. to go to her first job; comes home at 1 p.m. to take a nap; and heads out to her second job at 4 p.m., yet still lives paycheck to paycheck.

I never knew anyone that said: "I like the struggle. I like the difficulty. I like being poor." That person does not exist. That is just not how the world works.

Social safety net programs like SNAP, Medicaid, and housing assistance are supplements that help people struggle just a little bit less. Yet, my colleagues across the aisle and their friends in the White House keep pushing a false narrative that people who rely on government assistance to make ends meet are freeloaders or take government handouts and buy drugs. The 45th President keeps pushing his callous, immoral narrative in order to tear apart our social safety net.

In my district, 17.9 percent of the households rely on SNAP to feed their families. They aren't lazy. They aren't addicts. They are hardworking people; some of them with two or three jobs just trying to make ends meet.

And now the President is trying to define them out of existence. According to reports, his administration wants to change how inflation is calculated in the official poverty measure in order to define poverty out of existence and deny people access to our social safety net.

Well, Mr. President, that is not going to work for the American people. The United States Government should be making it easier for Americans to maintain a decent standard of living. The fact of the matter is that 70 percent of Americans rely on at least one Federal program at some point in time in their lives. The President's focus on ripping apart our social safety net with heartless cuts is wrong, it is immoral, and it is shameful.

It isn't about cleaning up waste, fraud, or abuse. It is about pulling the rug out from under people. Programs like SNAP are not just some unlimited handout for people who are sitting at home doing nothing.

Currently, 44 percent of the people who use SNAP have at least one person in the family working. But even though they are working, they might make minimum wage and are still below the poverty line.

When it comes to families with children who are on SNAP, more than half of them bring home wages. But the problem is, their income isn't enough to actually live on. So when the self-proclaimed billionaire in the White House talks about making people who receive SNAP benefits work or defining poverty out of existence, he is just repeating the same old fake news that the Republican Party has peddled for decades.

This is unacceptable, and as a Member of Congress, I am here to serve the

people in my communities, and that means all the people. We have to protect our most vulnerable and those in need. Let us end the administration's war on the working poor and help make their lives better for all of our constituents.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from the Virgin Islands has 33 minutes remaining.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, you can see we have had a lively discussion in recognition of Federal Judge Damon Keith. I would like include in the RECORD an article on his obituary from The New York Times dated April 28 of 2019.

[From the New York Times, April 28, 2019]

DAMON KEITH, FEDERAL JUDGE WHO CHAMPIONED CIVIL RIGHTS, DIES AT 96

(By Robert D. McFadden)

Damon Keith, a federal judge in the Midwest whose rulings championed equality and civil rights, notably in a landmark Supreme Court decision striking down Nixon administration wiretapping in domestic security cases without a court order, died on Sunday in Detroit. He was 96.

His death was confirmed by his daughter, Debbie Keith.

In one of the federal judiciary's longest and most prolific careers, Judge Keith, a Democrat, was a fountainhead of regional rulings with national implications. He attacked racial segregation in education, housing and employment; conservative efforts to limit African-American voting; and, after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, secret hearings to deport hundreds of immigrants deemed suspicious.

Judge Keith's tenure spanned more than a half-century, first as President Lyndon B. Johnson's choice for a district court judgeship in Detroit, with jurisdiction in Eastern Michigan (1967-1977), then as President Jimmy Carter's selection for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, presiding in Cincinnati over cases arising in Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Tennessee.

In a blistering 2016 dissent in an Ohio case that restricted early and absentee voting, Judge Keith accused two Circuit Court colleagues of scorning African-American voters and the memory of black people slain in the struggle for voting rights. In a frankly emotional rebuke, he incorporated into his opinion photographs and biographies of 36 such victims, including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"By denying the most vulnerable the right to vote, the majority shuts minorities out of our political process," he wrote. "The unfettered right to vote is the bedrock of a free and democratic society. Without it, such a society cannot stand."

One of America's oldest federal jurists, Mr. Keith served in the segregated Army in World War II, cleaned bathrooms at The Detroit News, attended historically black undergraduate and law schools and witnessed deadly riots in Detroit in 1967.

In the most prominent case of his tenure, Judge Keith ordered the Nixon Justice Department in 1971 to halt wiretapping without court orders in its zeal to prosecute radicals accused of conspiring to bomb a Central Intelligence Agency office in Ann Arbor, Mich.

As grounds, he cited the Constitution's Fourth Amendment freedoms from "unreasonable searches and seizures."

After the Sixth Circuit Court upheld Judge Keith's decision, the Nixon administration appealed to the Supreme Court. At stake, potentially, were warrantless wiretaps in many prosecutions that Attorney General John N. Mitchell had brought against antiwar activists and other opponents of administration policies.

The high court, by 8-0, rejected the government's claim of constitutional authority to protect the nation from internal subversion by wiretapping "dangerous" radicals without court warrants. Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., who wrote the opinion, leaned heavily on the threat to free speech that he saw in the unbridled government wiretapping of dissenters.

The American Civil Liberties Union said: "If this claim had been upheld, there would have been virtually no limits to the range of governmental intrusion on the liberty that would have been implicitly authorized once the government invoked the talisman of 'national security.'"

In another case, the Supreme Court declined to review Judge Keith's order to bus 8,700 of 23,000 students to desegregate public schools in Pontiac, Mich. His 1971 order, one of the first of its kind in the North, led to extensive busing, attacks on school buses, death threats against the judge and the convictions of Ku Klux Klansmen for dynamiting 10 school buses.

But five years after Pontiac's busing began, The New York Times reported that bitter feelings that had all but paralyzed the school district had faded, and that busing had become a fact of life. "Both blacks and whites are learning to understand each other better, to fear and distrust each other less, and to see individuals as individuals," the report said.

In 1973, a year before Nixon resigned in the Watergate scandal, Judge Keith ordered the government to disclose whether it had used sabotage, agents provocateurs and "other espionage activities," including a burglary at a law office, to make its case against militants known as the Weathermen. They were accused of plotting a campaign of bombing and terrorism.

Later, government lawyers appeared in Judge Keith's court and withdrew their case against the Weathermen rather than undergo a hearing on how their evidence had been obtained. Defense lawyers said the Nixon administration had plotted its own campaign of domestic intelligence-gathering operations, including breaking and entering and wiretapping to foster a "malicious prosecution."

In 1979, Judge Keith and the Sixth Circuit upheld the Detroit Police Department's affirmative action program. A lieutenants and sergeants group had sued to overturn the five-year-old program, saying that white officers had been unjustly passed over for promotion. But Judge Keith wrote that promotion tests had been slanted against blacks, and that affirmative action "undoes years of discrimination."

And in 2002, the Sixth Circuit Court held that the Bush administration had violated the First Amendment freedoms of speech and the press by conducting hundreds of secret hearings to deport immigrants suspected of ties to terrorism. Other courts issued contradictory rulings, and the secret hearings went on for some time. But the case yielded one of Judge Keith's more memorable opinions.

"Democracy dies behind closed doors," he wrote.

Damon Jerome Keith was born in Detroit on July 4, 1922, the youngest of six children

of Perry and Annie (Williams) Keith, who had migrated from Georgia. Mr. Keith worked at the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant for \$5 a day. Damon and his siblings, Luther, Perry, Napoleon, Marie and Annie, grew up in poverty. For a time during the Depression, the family received welfare assistance.

Mr. Keith graduated from Northwestern High School in 1939. At West Virginia State College, he waited on tables and cleaned a chapel and the college president's house to pay his way. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1943. Drafted into the wartime Army, he served in Europe in a black unit largely assigned to kitchen duties. He was discharged as a sergeant in 1946.

He received his juris doctor in 1949 at the Howard University Law School, where his mentors included Thurgood Marshall, the future first black justice of the Supreme Court, and William Hastie, the nation's first black federal judge. Mr. Keith received a master of laws degree at Wayne State University in 1956.

In 1953, he married Rachel Boone, a prominent doctor in Detroit. She died in 2007. Besides his daughter Debbie, survivors include two other daughters, Cecile Keith Brown and Gilda Keith, and two granddaughters.

In 1964, Mr. Keith helped founded one of Detroit's first African-American law firms and was named co-chairman of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Three years later, he became a federal judge. He was chief judge for Eastern Michigan from 1975 to 1977, when he joined the Sixth Circuit Court. In 1995, he assumed senior status on the appellate court, with a reduced caseload.

A lifelong Detroit resident, Mr. Keith received some 40 honorary doctorates and was showered with honors, including the Spingarn Medal of the N.A.A.C.P. and the federal judiciary's Edward J. Devitt Award.

He was the subject of a 2016 Jesse Nesser documentary, "Walk with Me: The Trials of Damon J. Keith." One highlight: When he was 69, one of the nation's most distinguished jurists and national chairman of a Williamsburg, Va., judicial conference on the Constitution's Bicentennial, he stepped outside the hotel during a break—and was taken for a parking attendant.

"A white man drove up," he told a crowd screening the film at Howard University, "and said, 'Boy, park my car.'"

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, in looking at those things that this Federal judge fought for while he was alive, I think it is a great segue into the other discussion that the Congressional Black Caucus has been engaged in in this hour, and that is poverty. Many of the communities that this judge was fighting for were poor communities.

Unfortunately, at this day and age, it is still primarily people of color who disproportionately are affected by poverty. But the Trump administration is on the verge of making an end run around Congress now, attempting to slash the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by fiat.

The latest effort was a proposed rule that would open for public comments until April 10. This rule would restrict SNAP eligibility by limiting States' flexibility to help the jobless or underemployed workers in struggling regions. By the administration's own estimate, enacting this rule would substantially increase hunger and hardship, stripping at least 755,000 Ameri-

cans of food assistance, though other estimates suggest it could be as much as 1 million individuals and cut SNAP by \$15 billion, slashing more than 178,000 jobs over the coming decade.

In the last Congress, Republicans and Democrats had a long, protracted conference on the farm bill, much of it related to SNAP. Much of it was because of discussions about ensuring that there is a safety net for those who regularly without it would go hungry.

We see that this administration did not want to take what Congress ruled on—what the President even signed—and is now, through his own executive order, attempting to change the law. The administration's most recent attempt to cut SNAP comes on the heels of President Donald Trump's failed attempt to achieve similar SNAP cuts in that farm bill; cuts that Congress rejected on a bipartisan basis.

This proposed rule is not just cruel. It is also bad policy. Making people hungrier will not help them find work any faster. It will only kick underemployment and unemployment workers when they are down.

Most working-age SNAP participants who are not receiving disability benefits are working, but they are often in unstable jobs with volatile schedules, low wages, making them especially likely to be affected by the rule.

I want to talk about how this is going to affect rural communities. In 2010, the U.S. Census found that 22 percent of the population in the Virgin Islands lives in poverty. Fifty percent of those living under the poverty level were families led by single mothers. The Congressional Research Service discovered that on average, children living in female-headed families were more likely to live in poverty than children living in two-parent households.

Given that 76 percent of rural adults report that good jobs are scarce in their area, it is not as if they are not looking. The jobs are simply not there. Rural communities like mine in the Virgin Islands will be among the hardest hit by the President's proposed rule, as it will tie States' hands and remove the flexibility they need to help residents of high unemployment areas put food on the table.

Indeed, while the urban areas experienced a net gain of 3.6 million jobs from 2007 to 2015, rural areas lost 400,000 jobs during that same time, meaning that many rural areas have struggled to recover still from the Great Recession.

Moreover, rural populations already face additional barriers to work. For example, lack of access to broadband is impeding the growth of rural economies, hampering total employment growth, and the opening of new businesses. Additionally, rural economies have less industrial diversity than urban areas and, in some communities, in particular, the departure of a central employer has led to tremendous job loss.

In the Virgin Islands, one of the world's largest refineries based in the Virgin Islands on St. Croix shut down in 2012, driving a decrease in jobs. At the time of the shutdown, the unemployment skyrocketed to 18 percent. In the same year, refined petroleum exports for the U.S. plummeted by 90 percent.

Given these challenges, States need more flexibility, not less, in order to decide how best to protect and invest in rural areas, as the administration's economic policies have not decreased the widening urban and rural divide. I believe that my coanchor, as well, has examples how poverty is affecting Americans; not just African Americans.

□ 2015

The purpose of the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour is not solely to talk about African Americans but to really champion the issues of those Americans who do not often have a voice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) to discuss this further.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for yielding.

This is a very serious and important issue that we are talking about tonight. I really want to provide the context to what got us to this point where the Trump administration is now trying to balance the budget on the backs of working people: the poor, seniors, children, and needy families.

The President and Republicans in Congress during the last Congress passed the so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. What that Tax Cuts and Jobs Act actually did was add \$1.5 trillion to our deficit. The tax cuts that were so-called were supposed to help the working poor. Eighty-three percent of the benefit from those tax cuts went to 1 percent of the wealthiest, the well-connected, and the powerful. Now, to balance the budget, they are proposing these draconian measures—cuts and revisions—on our budget, and they are targeting the poor, those who are relying, as my colleague said, on important programs such as SNAP, Head Start funding, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the National School Lunch Program, and other anti-poverty programs.

Let me talk to you for a moment, Mr. Speaker, about what these cuts mean to the people in my home State of Nevada. Nearly 434,000 Nevadans would be at risk of losing their SNAP benefits. SNAP benefits help families put food on the table and also help contribute to our local economy because they are buying those groceries at our local grocery stores. They are ensuring that we keep workers working at our local grocery stores.

The proposed rule would impact Nevadans, by putting 633,000 Nevadans at risk of being kicked off of Medicaid.

Since we have adopted the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion in my home State of Nevada in 2008, we have cut the rate of uninsured in half. Prior to the Affordable Care Act and the Medicaid expansion, our uninsured rate among children was over 30 percent. Now it is below 14 percent and continuing to decline. This administration wants to take us backward. We won't go backward.

Over 3,000 young toddlers in Nevada would be at risk of being removed from the Early Head Start and Head Start programs. That is unconscionable to me because the Acelero program that helps administer Head Start in my district already has a waiting list. There are already families who can't get into the program because there is not adequate funding based on this administration's lack of priorities around the poor.

So while this rule may seem mundane to some, the impact on families is real. So we are bringing attention to this issue so the voters and constituents across the United States can have a voice in this process. The rule that the President is proposing to make has a 45-day window for the American public to comment on just how harmful this rule would be. The deadline to submit comments is June 21 of this year, and I would encourage all of the public to make sure that their voices are being heard.

So just to underline again, the Trump administration has proposed a rule that would recalculate how we measure poverty, a move that would more than likely kick people off of certain Federal programs that are meant to assist poor and low-income families.

So why would they do that?

Because they have targeted the working poor in order to balance the budget to pay for the tax cuts that they gave to big corporations, the wealthy, and the well-connected.

The administration is considering switching to a different inflation measure that rises more slowly, a change that over time would make it harder to qualify for assistance. It is already hard enough for many constituents in my district to receive aid.

Mr. Speaker, I talked to you about the waiting list of families at Acelero Head Start program. It is right there on the corner of Martin Luther King and Carey in my district. I have talked to the parents at that program, and those families that are in it depend on the Head Start program in order to give their children a good head start and be able to prepare them for school. But without it, they would be left without adequate childcare and without adequate support for their families.

The Children's Health Insurance Program is something that I had worked on when I was in the State senate. This is not a partisan issue. In fact, many of my colleagues on the other side have supported funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, but the proposed Trump administration rule

that would recalculate how we measure poverty would actually impact 633,000 Nevadans who would be kicked off of Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

So I would ask my colleagues on the other side why they would support the administration impacting their constituents in this way?

It is not just the constituents in my district. It is not just the constituents in Delegate PLASKETT's district. Every Member of this body has constituents who would be negatively impacted if this rule by the Trump administration is enacted.

By allowing for these additional substitutions, chained CPI, which is the measurement by which the administration is looking to measure poverty, shows a slower rate of inflation. But for many families who are already choosing between paying the rent and buying food, they are already living as frugally as possible.

Time and time again, the Trump administration has attacked programs that help struggling American families put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. But they ran and passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. They did it in 51 days without one hearing, and now there are all these unintended consequences from that measure that was passed in the previous Congress, and they want to come back here and balance the budget on the backs of the poor. We say, No.

The Department of Education has said that more than 1 million schoolchildren were homeless in the 2016–2017 school year. One million schoolchildren in America are homeless, and this administration wants to deny them health insurance coverage under Medicaid and a school lunch during the school day?

The Department of Agriculture said that 15 million households faced food insecurity in 2017, meaning that they experienced difficulty affording food, and this administration—the Trump administration—wants to pass a rule that would recalculate how we measure poverty in order to deny more children and families receiving this care. Despite that, 70 percent of voters indicated that they had experienced at least one form of economic hardship last year—70 percent. But we can find ways to give tax cuts to big corporations, to the wealthy, and to the well-connected.

The President's proposed rule would be harmful. It is misguided and unfair to so many Nevada families and families all across the country. Again, I would urge the public to write their Member of Congress and ask them what they are doing to protect the public on this issue. After the public has written their Member, they should submit their comment before the June 21 date to the administration so that we can rescind this proposed rule and protect working families and the poor.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell the gentleman that his remarks

were very enlightening and thoughtful. The logic of this administration and what they are thinking just does not make sense. In the end, it is going to cost us more. As you said, how is denying 1 million children lunch benefiting us as a country?

Mr. HORSFORD. I am at a loss for words how we choose to balance the budget on 1 million homeless children, but find a way to give tax cuts to the wealthy. We added \$1.5 trillion to our Federal deficit, but now we have 1 million homeless children in last year's school year whom we are struggling to make sure they get adequate support in their schools and a nutritious meal. And this administration wants to deny them that by this rule change.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, if you want to be calculating about it, how is it helpful to us in the long run?

If you don't want to do it out of Christian goodness, out of the depths of humanity, then think about the long-term ramifications. Think about what it does to us to have 1 million children not being fed properly, not being able to think in a classroom, to be able to function, and to be able to do their work.

What will that do to us 10 years from now?

How many dropouts will there be?

How many young people will be unable to function, to be able to read and write, and to be able to find a job?

That will cost us, I am sure, entirely more money.

Mr. HORSFORD. We have to have a more balanced discussion in this body. I believe that we need to be competitive, and we need to make sure that we are doing things to help incentivize our private sector. There is a way to do that, but, unfortunately, our colleagues took the approach to ram this measure through in 51 days with not one hearing. They didn't discuss the impacts, and none of the issues that we are now bringing forward on how the working poor, the middle class, and those who are struggling and aspiring to be part of the middle class are being negatively impacted by these policies.

So there is a direct correlation. We can't just talk about the budget or the cuts to the budget that this administration is making without talking about what this administration and Republicans in Congress did last Congress by adding \$1.5 trillion to our Federal deficit. It is not just these Federal programs that we are talking about tonight. It is Medicare, it is Social Security, and it is the Affordable Care Act. I am sure we will have a Special Order on those topics as well, but we wanted to bring attention to this tonight, because we only have 45 days for the public to get their comments in to, hopefully, reverse this rule so that it won't go into effect.

Ms. PLASKETT. In the last Congress, and again in this one, I am a member of the Agriculture Committee. I recall that when that farm bill initially was presented, the ranking member at that

time and now the chair, COLLIN PETERSON, and many of the Democrats were aghast that we weren't going to have hearings, that there wasn't going to be a markup, and that there wasn't going to be discussion on the farm bill which contains essential nutrition programs in there. It wasn't until it got to the Senate that we were able to have in conference a discussion about SNAP because the Republicans over here decided that that was not important. They didn't want to fund it, they didn't want to take care of children, and they didn't want to take care of families of those with disabilities and of veterans who rely on SNAP programs, on supplemental nutrition programs. It wasn't until we got to conference that that happened.

The President signed the farm bill, and lo and behold, here comes the boomerang where he is trying to ram this through by executive order and by proposed rule changes to the law.

People in this law it doesn't just affect, and if you are not interested in families that are single-parent families, female-run families, African American families, what about those veterans who are affected?

What about those with disabilities?

The proposed rule purports to apply only to able-bodied adults without dependents. But what people are unaware of is that under the rule, 11 million people with disabilities who receive SNAP assistance could lose that assistance under the rule as people who face limited work capacity due to disability or poor health are regularly misclassified as able-bodied for the purpose of SNAP.

□ 2030

That means those individuals between the ages of 18 and 59 who have at least one physical, functional, or working limitation and are not counted as disabled under SNAP may, in fact, be affected. So this is cutting across so many individuals.

Mr. HORSFORD. Would the gentleman yield on that point?

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

Mr. HORSFORD. There was a recent article that showed many of the workers of large employers who don't pay a livable wage are on SNAP benefits. These are people who are working, but because they are not being paid an adequate wage, they are eligible for SNAP benefits.

On top of that, based on the rule change and the discussion the gentleman just outlined, 11 million could lose their benefits. These are people, some of whom are working but because employers aren't willing to pay them a living wage, they are on benefits, Federal benefits, being subsidized by the Federal Government.

Either we need these employers to step up and give America a raise so they don't have to be on SNAP benefits or we need this administration to un-

derstand that balancing the budget on the working poor isn't the solution.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman talks about the working poor, I think about those individuals in the Virgin Islands where we have limited jobs. Many of these individuals have jobs in government.

You have an individual who is the head of a house, a husband-and-wife house, making \$20,000—three children, a wife—trying to make ends meet off that kind of salary. They qualify, as we now have it functioning, for assistance for their family—for Medicaid, in some instances. But this administration is trying to take that away.

Are they going to take it away from those people who are doing what they say they are supposed to do? They are out there working as best they can. They are trying to take care of their families. This Congress has provided a safety net to them, and now we are going to strip that away.

This is untenable, and this has to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I would inquire of Mr. HORSFORD the timeframe that individuals have to send a letter to their Member of Congress, to send a letter to this administration to let them know what their thoughts are.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, the comment period for the American public for this proposed rule by the administration ends on June 21.

The Trump administration floated this proposal through what is called a request for comment, essentially a request for the public to provide information and views to the Federal Government on this potential change. They are expecting them not to know that this is happening.

This administration presented no research on how low-income families' costs for basic necessities has changed over time, nor did they provide information on the implications of changing the poverty line for individuals' and families' access to needed assistance.

That is why tonight's Special Order was so important and timely, for us to bring awareness to this. I don't know how many Members of this body know that the administration is doing this.

Again, I would ask my colleagues on the other side, who have constituents just like we do who will be impacted, whether they support this administration in this proposed rule change that will take away fundamental benefits from their constituents, just like it will ours.

This is not a handout. This is a hand up. It is a hand up in order to help individuals bridge, if you will, while they are going through difficult times.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I think people don't understand that SNAP benefits represent \$1.40 per person, per meal—\$1.40. I can't get a cup of coffee in Washington, D.C., with \$1.40, but that is the benefit we are giving per person, per meal, for SNAP benefits.

We should not be talking about cuts to SNAP. We should be talking about how to increase this benefit to the American people, to American children, to our elders, to veterans who are relying on this.

Something must be done. As the Congressional Black Caucus, we are here to raise the alarm.

Raising the Federal minimum wage would save, even if we raised it to \$12 an hour, \$53 billion over the next 10 years, nearly four times as much as the proposed rule, by ensuring that workers earn more so that they are better able to afford food, instead of punishing labor market struggles with hunger, as the gentleman said.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) for any additional thoughts he may have as we close out this Special Order hour, and I thank the American people for listening.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD information from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities titled “Trump Administration Floating Changes to Poverty Measure That Would Reduce or Eliminate Assistance to Millions of Low-Income Americans.”

[From the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Tuesday, May 7, 2019]

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FLOATING CHANGES TO POVERTY MEASURE THAT WOULD REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ASSISTANCE TO MILLIONS OF LOWER-INCOME AMERICANS

(Statement by Sharon Parrott, Senior Fellow and Senior Counselor)

The Trump Administration yesterday floated a proposal to use a lower measure of inflation when adjusting the poverty line each year. Consistent with other policies the Administration has pursued, this policy would over time cut or take away entirely food assistance, health, and other forms of basic assistance from millions of people who struggle to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, and see a doctor when they need to. The reductions in assistance that this proposal would produce stand in stark contrast to the Administration's 2017 tax law, which conferred large new benefits on the highest-income households.

If the poverty line is altered in this fashion, fewer individuals and families will qualify over time for various forms of assistance, including many who work hard but are paid low wages. That's because using a lower measure of inflation like the chained CPI to adjust the poverty line each year would make the eligibility thresholds for various programs that serve people in need lower and lower over time, compared with what the thresholds otherwise would be. This, in turn, would lower the income eligibility limits for programs like SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and Medicaid, which are tied to the federal poverty line. It also would reduce the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) premium tax credits—and thereby increase the out-of-pocket premium charges faced by millions of people who purchase health insurance through the ACA marketplaces.

The notion that the nation does too much to help struggling families stands in contrast to a broad set of data. For example, even with our current poverty line and set of supports, the Department of Education says that more 1 million school children were

homeless in the 2016-2017 school year, and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) says that 15 million households faced food insecurity in 2017, meaning that they experienced difficulty affording food.

This proposal is entirely discretionary on the part of the Administration. No statute or regulation requires it to alter the methodology for updating the poverty line. Rather, the Administration is choosing to consider a policy that would weaken basic assistance programs and thereby increase hardship.

The Administration is considering using a lower inflation measure to adjust the poverty line while wholly ignoring other questions about the adequacy of the poverty line as a measure of whether households can meet basic needs. And, it has failed to put forward evidence about whether the chained CPI itself accurately captures changes in the cost of living for low-income households.

Indeed, the issue of what measure to use in adjusting the poverty line for inflation is only one of a number of questions about the poverty line and the official poverty measure. Considerable research over the years—including a major report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)—has identified a number of ways in which the poverty line appears to be inadequate. For example, the poverty line doesn't fully include certain costs that many low-income families face like child care. In accordance with the guidance of the NAS panel, federal analysts worked carefully with researchers over a number of years to develop the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which more fully measures the cost of current basic living expenses. With this more careful accounting, the SPM's poverty line is higher than the official poverty line for most types of households, and its poverty rate is slightly higher than the official poverty rate.

Another indication that the poverty line is too low is the high rate of hardship among families with incomes just above that marker. Near-poor families, using today's poverty line, face high rates of food insecurity, difficulty paying rent and utilities, and high rates of uninsurance.

The Administration's announcement, however, ignores all other issues regarding poverty measurement that the NAS and other analysts have raised and cherry-picks just one issue—the measure used to adjust for inflation—to focus on in isolation. Simply switching to a lower inflation measure would likely make the poverty line less rather than more accurate as a measure of what families need to get by.

Moreover, it is not at all clear that the chained CPI is a better measure of inflation for low-income households' basic living expenses, even if we had a poverty measure that measured those living expenses more adequately. Research on different inflation measures generally focuses on the best way to measure inflation for the economy and consumers overall. But the consumption patterns of low-income households—and their ability to change their consumption in response to changes in prices—may be different from those of typical consumers. A recent study indicates that inflation tends to rise faster for low-income households than for the population as a whole. As just one example, housing costs comprise a significantly larger share of low-income households' budgets, on average, than they do for middle- and upper-income households. And Labor Department data show that costs for rental housing, which low-income people rely on disproportionately, have been rising faster than the overall CPI.

The Administration has floated this proposal through a “Request for Comment”—essentially a request for the public to provide information and views to the federal govern-

ment on this potential change. But the Administration presented no research on how low-income families' costs for basic necessities has changed over time, the adequacy of the poverty line itself as compared to the cost of basic necessities, or the implications of changing the poverty line for individuals' and families' access to needed assistance. Asking for public comment in apparent preparation for a policy change that could harm millions of struggling Americans over time, without providing the public with research and data on these basic questions, suggests this is not a serious effort to explore the important substantive issues that poverty measurement presents.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs. It is supported primarily by foundation grants.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the co-anchor for this hour. This has been a very enlightening topic for us to bring attention to.

Each one of us has constituents who are impacted, to whom we speak on a regular basis. We cannot allow this administration to make this type of an executive order and not have the consequences explained to the American people.

That is what tonight was all about.

Sometimes the other side questioned President Obama making executive orders. Well, this executive order that President Trump is proposing directly impacts the working poor in this country. We cannot allow that to happen.

We cannot allow children who are homeless, families who are struggling, and the working poor who are trying to do everything they can to keep it together to be impacted by this misguided, reckless, and totally unnecessary rule change being proposed by the Trump administration.

Again, we urge the American public to have their voice heard and submit their comments by June 21 or contact their Member of Congress.

We are fighting on their behalf, but we need to make sure that every Member in this body understands the implications of this proposed rule change.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1500, CONSUMERS FIRST ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1994, SETTING EVERY COMMUNITY UP FOR RETIREMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2019; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY 24, 2019, THROUGH MAY 31, 2019; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. PERLMUTTER (during the Special Order of Ms. PLASKETT), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-79) on the resolution (H. Res. 389) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1500) to require the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to meet its statutory