

Grushcow of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; and Imam Mohamed Magid, the head of the Nation's largest Muslim organization.

The DREAM Sabbath events reflect this great religious diversity. Let me give you just a few examples of the congregations who are observing the DREAM Sabbath: the First Presbyterian Church of Cheyenne, WY; the Central United Methodist Church in Fairmont, WV; the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, NE; Galloway Memorial Episcopal Church in Elkin, NC; Grace United Methodist Church in Missoula, MT; Trinity Episcopal Church in Winner, SD; the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; the Florida Catholic Conference of Bishops; and the following Catholic dioceses, just to name a few: Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Davenport, IA; Evansville, IN; and Salt Lake City, UT. Just last night, in Tucson AZ, the DREAM Sabbath was recognized at the National Hispanic Evangelical Immigration Summit, a gathering of 1,200 Evangelical ministers. This summit was convened by Reverend Sam Rodriguez and the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference and I want to thank them for their leadership.

In my home State of Illinois, I plan to observe the DREAM Sabbath at a number of places, including: Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, a Modern Orthodox temple, where, by the way, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is a congregant; Old St. Pats Church, my home parish in Chicago; and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg.

I would like to invite all of my colleagues and everyone listening today to participate in the DREAM Sabbath. If you are interested in becoming part of this important national movement, you can visit www.dreamsabbath.org for more information or call my office at 202-224-2152.

The DREAM Sabbath will put a human face on the plight of undocumented students who grew up in this country and help build support for passage of the DREAM Act.

DREAM Act students need our prayers, but they need more than that—they need our help to pass the DREAM Act.

These young people are American in their hearts. They are willing to serve our country, if we would only give them a chance. Passing the DREAM Act is the right thing to do and it will make America stronger.

HUNGER AWARENESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of the over 50 million people, including over 17 million children in the United States, who face the day not knowing if they will have enough to eat.

Millions of families live each day not knowing if and how they will put food on the table.

Rather than thinking about what the next meal will be, these parents worry if there will be a next meal.

Rather than concentrate on homework, these children are trying not to think about their hunger pangs.

According to the USDA in 2010, 14.5 percent of households—or 1 in 6 Americans—experienced hunger. This is the highest level of hunger in our Nation since the government began tracking food insecurity in 1995.

No State or county is immune to the reality of hunger. In Illinois' three wealthiest congressional districts an average of 13.2 percent of people—or nearly 281,000 people—experienced hunger in 2009.

Hunger is a reality in all of our communities. We see it in the long lines at our food pantries. We have heard from seniors forced to choose between groceries and medication. And children are in our schools who have not had a decent meal since the previous day's school lunch.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported this month that more than 1.82 million people lived in poverty in Illinois last year. That's up from 1.69 million in 2009—making 2010 the third straight year the poverty rate in Illinois has risen.

According to Feeding America in Illinois, nearly 1.9 million people—including over 740,000 children—are food insecure and often rely on safety net programs for their next meal.

Hunger is a symptom of poverty, and where this is poverty we see greater demand for emergency food programs and support. Federal food assistance programs have responded to the growing need by helping low and middle-class families, children, and seniors maintain a healthy diet.

Throughout the country, food banks and pantries that rely on Federal assistance are the front line of the fight against hunger—providing emergency food assistance to hungry families.

Unfortunately, business at food banks has never been better. Over the past 2 years, Illinois food banks have seen a 50 percent increase in requests for food assistance. In 2009, Illinois food banks provided food to 1 in 10 residents.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, is one of the Nation's most important antihunger programs. SNAP has provided over 46 million Americans with essential food assistance.

In Illinois, 1.8 million people—that is 1 in 7 residents—rely on SNAP benefits to buy the food they need.

The benefits of SNAP reach far beyond helping households maintain a healthy diet. SNAP is a powerful tool in fighting poverty, and has lifted nearly 2.5 million children out of poverty, more than any other government program.

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, \$5 of SNAP benefits can generate \$9 in economic activity through retail demand, farm production, and jobs.

At a time when families are having trouble making ends meet, food stamps meet a basic human need.

The people using food banks or food stamps to get by are people you know—your neighbor and coworker.

I recently heard from a single mother of a 4-year old daughter who receives emergency food assistance from the Eastern Illinois Food Bank.

This young mother is also a full-time college student, who plans to use her education to provide a better life for her family.

Without the extra support from food stamps, this woman says she would have to drop out of college and work at a minimum wage job just to make ends meet.

She credits food stamps for not only providing food assistance, but for allowing her to get an education so she can move her family out of poverty.

As Congress works to rein in our Nation's debt, we will hear from all sides. The millions of Americans who rely on safety net antihunger programs like SNAP will not have the loudest voice in the debate or big PR firms, but we can't forget them.

We must protect Federal food assistance programs. These programs are not a giveaway or a handout. They are strengthening our economy and improving the lives of vulnerable families, children, and seniors at their time of need.

MORETOWN POST OFFICE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of the Senate a notable development in the community of Moretown, VT. Moretown is located near the confluence of the Mad River and the Winooski River, just down the road from my home in Middlesex, and the community was hit particularly hard by the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene. Homes were flooded, the town offices were inundated, and the Moretown School was damaged. Bridges were washed away, cutting the town off from central Vermont's highway system, and leaving some residents stranded. But through this disaster, the town pulled together, in yet another of the many stories that can be told of the great resilience shown by Vermonters in the storm's terrible aftermath.

As flood waters rose, the postmaster in charge of the Moretown Post Office, Naomi Tilton, and the two carriers who work in the Moretown Post Office managed to save every piece of mail from the rising flood waters. Every single piece of mail in their charge. Water eventually filled the entire post office lobby, and as water damage left by the flooding in Moretown demonstrated, as much as 8 feet of water filled the first floors of structures surrounding the post office.

When my staff visited the Moretown Post Office a week later, workers had already begun renovating the building.