

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating Mr. Mike Cleary as he is honored by the Irish American Archive Society.

HONORING JOSEPH J. VINCI, SR.,  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 100TH  
BIRTHDAY

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join family, friends, and the City of Middletown in honoring one of its most outstanding community members, Joseph J. Vinci, Sr. as he celebrates his 100th birthday—a remarkable milestone for this extraordinary citizen.

A lifelong Middletown resident, J.J., as he is affectionately known, married his wife, Mary, in November of 1934. Together, they not only raised three wonderful children, Joseph J. Jr., Robert, and Rosemarie, they also opened and ran the family business, J.J. Vinci Oil. The home heating oil business is not the easiest of businesses to run, but J.J. and Mary worked hard every day to build the business and provide for their family. For more than seven decades, J.J. Vinci Oil has been a staple in the Middletown business community and its success over the years has been because of the dedication of its founder, J.J., who at 100 years young can still be found in the office every day.

J.J. has not only been an outstanding business leader, but an exemplary civic leader as well. He has always understood that his community is only as strong as those who give back to it. Throughout his life, J.J. has devoted countless hours to a variety of local service organizations. The myriad of awards and commendations which have been bestowed on him are testament to his unparalleled efforts on behalf of the community. He is a charter member of the New England Association of Fire Marshals, Connecticut Chiefs of Police Association, twenty-five year charter member of the Connecticut Independent Oil Men's Association, life member of the State of Connecticut 100 Club, one of the original founders of the Middletown Italian-American Civic Order, twenty-five year Chairman of the St. Sebastian Cadillac Committee, member of the St. Sebastian Renovation Committee, lifetime member of the Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks, Moose Club, and Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree, to name but a few. Through his work with each of these organizations, J.J. has made a difference in the lives of others and has enriched the community.

Marking decades of hard work, this birthday celebration reflects J.J.'s extraordinary resilience and strength of spirit. Over the course of his life, he has not only witnessed remarkable changes and tremendous progress he has helped to shape the very character of the City of Middletown. It is with my warmest regards that I join his children, Joseph Jr., Robert, and Rosemarie, his grandson, Michael, and his great-grandchildren, Nicholas, Lauren, and Christian in extending my heartfelt congratulations to Joseph J. Vinci, Sr. as he celebrates his 100th birthday. Happy birthday J.J.! My very best wishes for many more years of health and happiness.

“STOP DEMAGOGUING THE  
HUNGRY”

**HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, demagoguing the hungry, unfortunately, has become a regular occurrence during this Republican presidential primary season. The truth is that the majority of the hungry struggle to put food on their table not because they are lazy but because of circumstances outside of their control. Many are unemployed at no fault of their own. Others simply don't earn enough and need help supplementing their monthly budget. But all of the hungry, all of those who are relying on America's anti-hunger safety net programs, deserve the helping hand they are receiving. And none of these 50 million food insecure people deserve to be demagogued simply because they have trouble putting food on their kitchen tables.

Last week, I met with Andrew Morehouse, the executive director of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Mr. Morehouse shared with me an op-ed he wrote for the Daily Hampshire Gazette titled “Stop demagoguing our food safety net.” Mr. Morehouse makes a clear, coherent and smart argument that attacking the hungry is wrong for both moral and economic reasons. I respectfully urge my colleagues to read this important op-ed.

I submit this op-ed into the RECORD.

[From the GazetteNET, Feb. 7, 2012]

ANDREW MOREHOUSE: STOP DEMAGOGUING OUR  
FOOD SAFETY NET

HATFIELD.—Former Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins made some eloquent points about hunger and food stamps in her recent column, “Beyond food stamp buzzwords” (Jan. 28).

I, too, feel compelled to set the record straight so that the general public has a more complete picture of this critical issue at this juncture in our nation's history. Attacks on SNAP (the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) are rampant in some corners of the public discourse these days. Republican presidential candidates have blamed entitlement programs such as SNAP—and those Americans who receive benefits from them—for the country's deficit problem.

Newt Gingrich has even claimed that “more people are on food stamps today because of Obama's policies than ever in history.”

It's true that the number of food stamp recipients has risen over the past few years, but the unemployment rate has also increased 110 percent since 2006. As millions of Americans find themselves out of work, those same Americans seek assistance from programs like SNAP to help meet their basic needs. The Census Bureau estimates that food stamps helped to keep 3.9 million people above the poverty line in 2010.

Equally misleading is Gingrich's characterization of SNAP as a race issue, with comments like, “I'm prepared, if the NAACP invites me, I'll go to their convention and talk about why the African-American community should demand paychecks and not be satisfied with food stamps.”

This statement reinforces a false perception that people of color are the primary recipients of SNAP benefits. The truth is that

49 percent of SNAP recipients are white, while blacks comprise 26 percent and Latinos 20 percent of recipients.

SNAP received more biased criticism in a recent Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Warren Kozak (Jan. 30), which declared hunger in America a myth.

Kozak claims that federal government programs like SNAP waste billions of dollars providing food to people that are not really in need of help. Tell that to the 110,000 people in western Massachusetts alone—primarily children, elders, or the disabled—who wouldn't have a meal tonight without their SNAP benefits or food assistance from our region's emergency food network.

What Gingrich and Kozak don't seem to understand is that SNAP is not only a lifeline for millions of households facing hunger, it is also an economic stimulus. SNAP allows families to put food on their table, and provides food dollars that are spent locally.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, SNAP generates approximately \$406 million annually in total economic activity in western Massachusetts. SNAP doesn't cause recessions, it responds to them until the economy turns around by supporting vulnerable households while injecting much-needed revenue for local food businesses that employ thousands of residents in our communities.

The fact is that hunger is a very real problem in our country—and right here in Western Massachusetts. At least one in every eight residents of western Massachusetts relies on emergency food to avert hunger. More than 45,000 people seek food assistance each month in our region, a 25 percent increase compared just three years ago.

Here at the Food Bank, we believe that no one should have to go hungry. Without jobs that provide the necessary income to support households, SNAP and other government nutrition programs are essential to solving the hunger crisis facing our country. Without these programs, thousands more households in our region would find their cupboards empty on a regular basis.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MR.  
STEPHEN O'CONNOR DIEMERT, JR.

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mr. Stephen O'Connor Diemert, Jr.

Born in 1932, Stephen was destined to serve his country and the Greater Cleveland community. He served as a private in the United States Army from July 1953 through March of 1955. After returning home, Mr. Diemert began his career as a firefighter in January of 1961. He served as a fireman for 24 years until January of 1985. Mr. Diemert was also a long-time member of the American Legion Firefighter Post 339 and served as the Director of Fire Affairs for Silver and Gold, a fraternal organization dedicated to “supporting the Safety Forces of Northeast Ohio.”

I offer my condolences to his wife, Carol; children, Stephen (deceased) and Cindy, Robert, Laura and Tony, Mary Lou and Mike and Matthew and Vicki; grandchildren, A.J., Sara, Stephanie, Hanna, Katie and Gary; great-grandchildren, Karen, Fallon and Brucey (deceased) and eight siblings.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring the memory of Mr. Stephen O'Connor Diemert, Jr.