enough food to end hunger now; we just don't have the political will to do so. This effort to cut SNAP—to make hunger worse—must not stand.

I hope my colleagues will join me in restoring these senseless cuts. Should that effort fail, I hope my colleagues will join me in defeating the farm bill when it is considered on the House floor. We can and we must do better.

[From The New York Times, May 20, 2013]

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN ENDING HUNGER WAS A NATIONAL GOAL FOR REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

(By Dorothy Samuels)

''That hunger and malnutrition should persist in a land such as ours is embarrassing and intolerable.'' So declared Richard Nixon in May 1969 in his now widely forgotten ''Special Message to the Congress Recommending a Program to End Hunger in America.'' In that document, he summoned the country to a new level of generosity and concern and laid out a series of strong legislative steps and executive actions, including a significant expansion of the food-stamps program.

While campaigning for the White House in 1968, Mr. Nixon did not focus on the existence of a serious hunger problem. His conversion came as public calls to do something about hunger rose—driven, in part, by Senator Robert Kennedy's highly publicized trip to Mississippi in 1967 where he encountered nearly starving children and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s focus on hunger as part of the Poor People's Campaign.

During the '70s, another Republican leader, Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, forged a partnership with George McGovern, the South Dakota Democrat defeated by Mr. Nixon in 1972. They helped pass legislation to improve the accessibility and antifraud provisions of the food-stamps program. For example, it eliminated a requirement that recipients buy food-stamp coupons, a prohibitive burden for the lowest-income Americans.

That kind of dedicated bipartisan commitment to ending hunger was light-years ago in American politics—before President Ronald Reagan and, later, Speaker Newt Gingrich made attacking food stamps a prime Republican obsession, and certainly before moderate Republicans, a disappearing breed, lived in fear of making any move that might provoke a primary challenge from a Tea Party-supported candidate. The modern food-stamps program, built with Republican and Democratic support, succeeded in eliminating the most extreme pockets of hunger in parts of the country.

Today, the program remains an immensely important source of support for low-income families and children living below or near the poverty line. Still, some 50 million Americans live in households that cannot consistently afford enough food, even with the food-stamps program, now formally called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

Come November, temporary increases for food-stamp aid approved in the 2009 economic recovery act are scheduled to expire, which would result in a loss of about $25 in monthly food stamps for a family of four. If anything, Washington should be allocating more money to address tremendous unmet needs.

Yet, every Republican on the House Agriculture Committee voted to approve an omnibus farm bill containing a $20 billion cut in food stamps over the next decade in the program's $800 billion or so 10-year budget. While less devastating than turning the program into a capped block grant to the states, which the House Republicans have previously endorsed, the cut is nearly five times the reduction approved by the Democratic-controlled Senate Agriculture Committee, which already is too much.

The House bill's cuts would end food-stamp assistance for nearly two million people, with the pain falling mainly on low-income working families with kids and older Americans, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. And as many as 210,000 children would lose access to free school lunches and breakfasts because eligibility for those meals is tied to their family's receipt of food-stamp benefits.

''It is just not right,'' said Representative Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat (no relation to George McGovern) before his amendment to strike the cut was defeated. Not a single Republican voted to approve it.

A MORE SECURE ENERGY FUTURE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, again and again we have heard from this President and this administration that we need to embrace an ''all-of-the-above'' approach when it comes to meeting and supplying our country's energy needs. At the end of the day, this has simply turned into a ''none-of-the-above'' strategy of failure by this administration.

Mr. Speaker, this is not complicated. Approving construction of the Keystone XL pipeline is the first and easiest step that we can take in order to embrace our energy future immediately, build jobs, and gain economic security.

The application to build the Keystone XL pipeline has been gaining dust at the U.S. State Department for more than 4 years awaiting approval. Each subsequent day that decision isn't made further denies this country greater energy security and the creation of over half a million jobs by 2035.

By the State Department's own calculations, the number of potential jobs through construction alone stands at over 42,000. With the unemployment rate being above 7.5 percent for 4 of the years that the Presidential permit has been pending, this just economically is irresponsible.

With over 15,500 pages already produced in its National Environmental Policy Act review over the past 4½ years, under the President's schedule, we must still wait for yet another report and even more pages to determine whether construction of the pipeline would be in the ''national interest.''

At any moment, the President could step in and immediately order approval of the pipeline, yet he continues to sit idly by while more and more people, including a majority of the general public and even members of his own party, come out in support of the XL pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, it is beyond a reasonable doubt that creating thousands of jobs and providing the American people more sources of oil by approving this infrastructure project that costs the American taxpayers no money is definitely in the national interest. So what are we waiting for?

Today, the House of Representatives will take up H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act, which will approve the Keystone XL construction application without a Presidential permit and let the American people know that we will not wait around any longer. At the end of the day, this crude will find its way to foreign markets one way or another, and construction of this pipeline will guarantee our access to it and help secure energy independence in North America.

Today, the average price for a gallon of gas in America is around $3.60, which is nearly $2 more than when President Obama first took office. As the summer driving season approaches, that historically threatens to bring even higher gas prices for American families and businesses. Ensuring that every environmentally safe source of oil is available in order to maintain an adequate domestic supply is absolutely vital.

Because the President, yet again, refuses to act on an issue of such great importance for the Nation, this Congress will lead by sending a clear message to the families of this great Nation that we stand with you, we stand with jobs, and we stand for a more secure energy future here in America.

MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this weekend throughout America, in cemeteries across the land, we will celebrate and memorialize those men and women who have served, who are serving, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives to protect our Nation's freedoms embodied in our Constitution and our Bill of Rights that we hold most dear. While Memorial Day is a time when family and friends gather to be together, we know it is much more than that.

This Memorial Day, we should all give thanks to the sacrifices that our men and women have made who have served in our Nation's military. We should say thanks to our family members, to our neighbors, to all those who have served, and we must always, always remember those who are no longer with us. We in our country, I believe, can never say thank you enough, for this great country we live in is made dear for all of those who have made those sacrifices over 238 years.

So this weekend, as we gather across the land to be with our families and friends, let us pay thanks, let us take evidence of what it means to be an American, knowing that at the end of the day the bonds that we share in common as American citizens are much stronger than whatever differences we may have.

God bless those who are serving and those that have served and those who