

And then about the terrorists. As I mentioned, they are really on both sides. And we hear from the administration, with all due respect, that the minority of fighters on the rebel side are al Qaeda. I respectfully disagree with the Secretary of State. What seems to be happening is the Free Syrian Army is going through Syria liberating Syrians, and al Qaeda is in the background, coming in and occupying the territory and imposing strict Islamic sharia law. We can see this play out. If the rebels eventually are successful, then we may have a second civil war between the Free Syrian Army and al Qaeda.

All of that may be down the road. And why would the United States want to get involved in this situation?

So today, Madam Speaker, I have filed a resolution stating that no U.S. funds will be used for this war with Syria. This religious civil war is not our war. So no money for the “Peace President’s” war. And if he starts a war with Syria, I suggest the President return the Nobel Peace Prize. If he really wants to send a message, he should follow Samuel Goldwyn’s advice: “try Western Union.”

And that’s just the way it is.

USDA FOOD INSECURITY FIGURES

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, last week, the United States Department of Agriculture released its annual report on food security in the United States. The report documents the levels of food security and insecurity in this country. In this report, the USDA measured the amount of food available or unavailable to households and individuals. In other words, Madam Speaker, the USDA measured the amount of hunger in the United States. It measured the ability of Americans to put food on their tables.

The good news is that hunger isn’t getting worse. The bad news is that there are still 49 million people living in our great country who are food insecure; 49 million people who don’t know where their next meal will come from; 49 million people who are forced to choose between basic needs like rent, utilities, and food; 49 million people who don’t have the resources necessary to make ends meet; 49 million people who are hungry. That’s one out of every six people living in this country who is food insecure—a figure that hasn’t changed since 2008.

While it’s a good thing that food insecurity isn’t getting worse, that’s simply not good enough. We must do more to ensure that healthy and nutritious food is available to everyone in America. We must ensure that 49 million people are not left behind when it comes to buying food.

The fact remains that millions of Americans are still struggling to make

ends meet. Millions of Americans continue to feel the effects of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. As a result of the staggering loss of jobs and reduced wages that came from the recession, millions of Americans were forced to turn to the Federal Government’s preeminent anti-hunger program, SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, in order to put food on their tables.

SNAP participation rates skyrocketed precisely because of the recession. SNAP is a safety net. It’s designed to increase in participation in times of need. That means the cost of the program goes up as more people need help buying food while they’re either unemployed or struggling with lower wages. That’s precisely what happened during the recession. And that’s why there are so many people relying on SNAP today. These food insecurity numbers confirm that hunger is a problem in America; that there are millions of people—49 million—who don’t know where their next meals are coming from and need helping buying food for themselves and their families.

This is a sobering report, Madam Speaker, and one that would normally result in congressional hearings on the problem and possible ways to reduce hunger in America. But we’re not living in normal times. That’s because, Madam Speaker, even with the release of this report showing that rates of food insecurity are unchanged since the end of the Bush administration, this Republican-controlled House is preparing to consider a bill that would cut at least \$40 billion from the SNAP program. That’s right. The response to this report is to make hunger in America even worse than it is today.

I want to remind my colleagues there is not one single town, city, county, or congressional district in America that is hunger free. For the life of me, I can’t understand why the Republicans want to cut this program that provides food to millions of Americans. I cannot understand why the Republican leadership wants to balance the budget on the backs of the working poor.

SNAP is not only successful; it’s efficient and effective. The error rate for SNAP is among the lowest, if not the lowest, error rates of any Federal program. That’s right. Fraud, waste, and abuse in SNAP is at an all-time low, which means that SNAP dollars are going exactly where they should be going—to food-hungry Americans. On top of that, SNAP kept 4.7 million people out of poverty in 2011, including 2.1 million children. That means that cutting SNAP will also result in increased poverty in America. The irony is there are some Members of this House who are collecting millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded farm subsidies while at the same time they vote to take away food from hungry Americans.

Madam Speaker, hunger in America is real. It must be addressed. That’s why I’ve called for a White House conference on food nutrition, a conference

where we can explore hunger and nutrition and develop a plan to end this scourge once and for all. We will not end hunger by cutting the most efficient and effective anti-hunger program in the country. We will not end hunger through arbitrary, harmful, and spiteful budget cuts.

We can end hunger now if we decide to take that step. The USDA food security report provides evidence that we’re not doing enough to end hunger now. The upcoming vote to cut the anti-hunger safety net shows how truly harmful the Republican leadership is when it comes to the working poor in America. We can do more. We can do better. We can—and we must—end hunger now.

MEDICARE DME-POS MARKET PRICING PROGRAM ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on August 22, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General, Daniel Levinson, announced his decision to initiate an investigation into the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, aka Medicare, and its handling of the Competitive Bidding Program for durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies.

I initiated a request on June 20, 2013, following disclosures that CMS awarded contracts nationwide to suppliers that lacked the proper licensure and accreditation—clear violations of the agency’s program guidelines for participation in the Competitive Bidding Program.

The so-called “competitive” bidding model is being used by the government to procure goods and services for our Nation’s seniors and those facing life-altering disease and disability. While CMS makes claims the Competitive Bidding Program will increase market competition and lower costs, in practice it’s shown to be anything but competitive. Over the past several years, we’ve seen the program negatively affect seniors and force small medical companies, many that are local and the only entity capable of providing quality goods and a high level of service, out of the market and out of business.

In 2011, more than 240 economists and market auction design experts wrote to President Obama concerning the flawed bidding model. The experts wrote:

The current program is the antithesis of science and contradicts all that is known about proper market design.

These warnings have become reality over the past several years. The licensure and accreditation abuses are just the latest among a long list of program failures.

For many of these reasons, on June 12, 2013, 227 bipartisan Members of the House—a full majority—including 82