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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 8, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

THE WAR ON POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, there are so many acts of success of our government that many of us know it is the greatest Nation in the world. Through the years, we have had great leaders who have recognized that government can work on behalf of the American people. Today, we commemorate the 50th year of the war on poverty.

I thank my good friend, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, who will be hold-

ing a commemoration in recognition not only of Lyndon Baines Johnson, the President who declared war on poverty, but also the many workers and many Presidents since who, in many aspects, helped to build on the Nation's safety net.

Today, however, we find ourselves in a dilemma, not recognizing and accepting success where it is. Poverty has fallen significantly over the last half century. Since the mid-1960s the average incomes among the poorest fifth of Americans have risen significantly. Infant mortality has dropped sharply, and severe child malnutrition has largely disappeared, but it still exists.

In parts of my 18th Congressional District in Texas, we have very high mortality rates. It means that our job is not over. Nearly 50 million Americans, however, were poor in 2012, including 13 million children; 60 million people lived below half of the poverty line; and large racial disparities in the African American community were clear and documented. African Americans have a lower college degree graduate level than White Americans.

So the safety net has to be something for all of us. I borrowed this from my good friend from California, just to show you a line of Americans possibly looking for work. We cannot point out and we cannot know at this point which one of these are near the edge of poverty or living in poverty simply because they cannot find work.

So it is important to note that there are elements that many discard: the earned income tax credit; supplemental nutrition program; the huge job training and educational investment that President Johnson made on the war on poverty; Medicaid and Medicare, huge safety nets, not handouts but safety nets. Maybe the word "welfare" should be changed to something of a transitional living fund, for that is what it is for people to be able to live.

There has been much maligning of the Affordable Care Act. Well, I am

here to announce today that close to 9 million people have now been recipients and victors in getting health care; 3 million young people have been able to stay on their parents' insurance; and we have seen the slowest growth in health care in 50 years, safety net. As well, we have people who will no longer have lifetime caps or preexisting conditions preventing them from getting insurance or those who work as roofers or laborers who, because their work is difficult or dangerous, they cannot get insurance—safety net, part of the overall picture of the war on poverty.

Now we find ourselves in the midst of a debate about a transitional outreach to individuals who are chronically unemployed. Some would argue we should not do it. We should not do it for individuals who have looked for work actively when there are three individuals per job. Some would say we need an offset. I consider it an emergency.

But do you know, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the people in my district and across America that are tired of partisan politics. So why not a compromise? Why not a 3-month emergency extension and then a deliberation on the offset? Well, that probably will not be heard.

So what is the offset? Why are we not in the midst of a combined discussion about what would be the most effective for all of the Members to be able to vote on? It is documented that the unemployed are in everyone's district. There are 1.3 million that are chronically unemployed, who are on the brink of poverty, who are not able to secure a safety net.

Let me just make mention of the earned income tax credit that has been a vital lifeline for many around the Nation. Yet, that is looked upon as a potential cut. It is too expensive.

These are lifeline safety nets that President Johnson started. Quite frankly, of all the wealthy nations, we have the lowest safety net and the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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highest poverty because we are not willing to accept the fact that sometimes an American needs help—even a veteran, even a soldier.

Today, I honor the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty, Mr. Speaker, and I ask us not to give up the fight because the American people are looking to us to win the war.

TURN OUT THE LIGHTS, THE PARTY'S OVER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a new year. As the clock struck midnight, Americans throughout the fruited plain celebrated the end of 2013 and the start of a new year.

January 1—out with the old and in with the new—light bulb, so sayeth Uncle Sam. That is right: “turn out the lights, the party’s over” for the incandescent light bulb.

I went to H-E-B last week in Texas and the shelves were bare. Only curly fluorescent light bulbs to be found. That is because the government has now banned 75-, 100-, 60-, and 40-watt light bulbs.

Edison’s light bulb has gone from the endangered species list to near extinction. Some incandescent light bulbs will be allowed, but only if they meet new government standards. What was once the symbol for American innovation is now banned by the almighty government. Isn’t that ironic?

Why? Because it is not energy efficient, so sayeth the government. The government certainly doesn’t want Americans to have a choice with what light bulbs they purchase because the government knows best.

The new fluorescent curly light bulbs, also called CFLs, contain mercury and also are more expensive. Mr. Speaker, I thought mercury was bad for us.

Anyway, nothing gets easier when you use these light bulbs. Do you need to dispose of one of these curly light bulbs? Don’t even think about throwing it in the trash without reading the instructions in the box. Don’t throw them in the wastebasket. You are supposed to take them to a local recycling center. Yeah, right.

If a person decides to take the risk and throw the light bulb out at home, listen closely, because, of course, it is more complicated. The light bulb should be sealed in two plastic bags and then placed in the trash outdoors so as not to pollute landfills if it breaks.

There are more regulations. If a CFL is dropped, well, disaster strikes, in my opinion. You can’t just pick up the pieces and throw them away. The EPA has generously told us in more detailed instructions what we do if one is broken: “Have people and pets leave the room, and don’t let anyone walk through the area.”

So, Mr. Speaker, if I accidentally drop this light bulb here on the House

floor and it breaks, does that mean we have to evacuate the House floor? According to the EPA, at least we should do that.

I give you more: “Open a window”—don’t have any in here—“and leave the room for 15 minutes or more. Shut off the central heating and air-conditioning system. Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a glass jar with a metal lid.” Mr. Speaker, I hope you have some of those old mason jars around here.

There is more. The EPA says: “Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder. Wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel or disposable wet wipes and place them in the glass jar or plastic bag. Do not use a vacuum or broom.” Next thing you know, we are going to need a HAZMAT crew to come in to someone’s home if they accidentally drop a light bulb.

There is a lot more: “These light bulbs may cause interference to radios, televisions, wireless telephones and remote controls.” Okay, I will be sure to turn off the lights tonight when I watch “Duck Dynasty.” I don’t want to miss it because I have these curly light bulbs.

I forgot to mention—guess where these little spiral light bulbs are made. China. Now isn’t that lovely?

The power of choice has been taken away from the American people, even the choice of a light bulb, because government is controlling our lives and it knows better. The Federal Government should not have the authority to force Americans to buy anything, whether it is health care, a box of donuts, or even CFL light bulbs.

As Willie Nelson has said: “Turn out the lights, the party’s over. They say that all good things must end. Turn out the lights, the party’s over” for at least Thomas Edison’s light bulb.

May it rest in peace, Mr. Speaker. And that’s just the way it is.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR ON POVERTY

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today we mark the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty—a dedicated legislative and policy effort by President Lyndon Johnson to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty in America. Yet, despite the many successes of the war on poverty—and there have been many successes over the past 50 years—there are those in this country and in this House who would destroy the programs that help people in need, those who have replaced the war on poverty with a new war on poor people.

Unfortunately, that is what is happening right now with the farm bill. I am honored to serve on the Agriculture Committee and as a member of the

farm bill conference committee. I want—and America needs—a strong, comprehensive, and forward-thinking bill. I represent farmers and farms, conservationists, and agriculture research institutions, and like every other Member of Congress, I represent people who rely on the nutrition programs in the farm bill to put food on their tables.

That has been my primary focus as a conferee—to support and fight for the hungry in America. I believe the nutrition title—where SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, is authorized—is the most important part of the farm bill. This program provides food to 47 million food-insecure Americans—people who don’t know where their next meal is coming from. Food insecurity, Mr. Speaker, is another way to say hunger. These people are hungry and they get food because they are on SNAP.

We have been told that the House may vote on a farm bill conference report as early as next week. According to some reports, the bill would cut \$8 billion from SNAP. Unlike the cut that took effect on November 1, where all 47 million SNAP beneficiaries saw their benefits cut by an average of \$30 a month for a family of three, this \$8 billion cut is more targeted. That doesn’t mean it is any less harmful.

This cut would change the way SNAP benefits are affected when a beneficiary gets a LIHEAP benefit. Many have described the application of this SNAP/LIHEAP connection—sometimes called “Heat and Eat”—as a loophole, but calling this a loophole avoids the real issue at hand.

The truth is that changing the way that Heat and Eat works—closing this so-called loophole—will reduce an already meager benefit for millions of Americans, a benefit that didn’t last a full month even before the November 1 across-the-board cuts took effect.

□ 1015

Even worse, closing this so-called “loophole” would disproportionately affect poor seniors and the disabled—precisely the kinds of Americans we should be looking out for during difficult economic times. There has to be a better way.

SNAP has been cut twice to pay for other programs—first, to offset programs that help teachers, firefighters and other social services, and a second time to offset improvements in the Child Nutrition Act. Now, these are good programs that deserve to be funded, although not at the expense of the hungry. I am all for compromise when all sides negotiate in good faith, but why does compromise in Washington always mean helping those who are well off at the expense of the poor?

Remember, Mr. Speaker, this cut will reduce the SNAP benefit by about \$90 a month for “heat and eat” households. Three million poor families would see their food assistance cut by an average of \$90 a month. And would these billions of dollars in cuts go back to helping other needy people? No. In a farm