

But you could not spend time with them without recognizing how strong the community is. And I saw it again and again last week. In the worst of circumstances, friends, neighbors, complete strangers all banded together to help those who are hurting right now. As many of you watched the news last week you no doubt learned that, while Tennessee took the hardest hit, this was not something exclusive to us. People in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Indiana also put their lives on hold to help their neighbors recover.

While we can rebuild our communities, we cannot replace human lives. Today I rise to remember the 13 lives lost in Macon County, the 7 in Sumner, the 2 in Trousdale. I also want to honor the First Responders and the volunteers who have treated the injured and who are working so hard to put our communities back together. It's going to take some time, but we're going to get there. And I want to thank President Bush and Governor Bredesen for acting so quickly to get help to our communities.

I thank my colleagues for their support last week and their continued support throughout the recovery process. As the President accurately stated a week ago, at times like these, "Prayers can help and so can the government." In Middle Tennessee and throughout the South, we will continue to need those prayers and need the President's help as we work to rebuild the lives and communities affected by these storms.

The national cameras are gone and the debris is being removed, but we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 971.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF ADDITIONAL PERSONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-95)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order taking additional steps with respect to the Government of Syria's continued engagement in certain conduct that formed the basis for the national emergency declared in Execu-

tive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, including but not limited to its efforts to undermine the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq.

This order will block the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to be responsible for, to have engaged in, to have facilitated, or to have secured improper advantage as a result of, public corruption by senior officials within the Government of Syria. The order also revises a provision in Executive Order 13338 to block the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to be responsible for or otherwise significantly contributing to actions or decisions of the Government of Syria that have the purpose or effect of undermining efforts to stabilize Iraq or of allowing the use of Syrian territory or facilities to undermine efforts to stabilize Iraq.

I delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to take such actions, after consultation with the Secretary of State, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of my order.

I wish to emphasize, as well, my ongoing concern over the destabilizing role Syria continues to play in Lebanon, including its efforts to obstruct, through intimidation and violence, Lebanon's democratic processes.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 13, 2008.

FARM BILL MUST NOT REDUCE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last year the House did its job and passed a fully funded farm bill with important improvements in the food stamp and TEFAP programs. The Senate, unfortunately, was not so responsible.

Now that the farm bill negotiations are under way, we hear that reducing funding for food stamps and food banks is on the table.

Mr. Speaker, this farm bill should not be negotiated on the backs of the hungry. Feeding hungry people is never wrong, but taking food out of their mouths is, and that's what a reduction in the House-passed domestic nutrition title would do.

Mr. Speaker, we must draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough. House farm bill negotiators must stand up to the Senate and say, "Not this time."

The recently passed stimulus package does not include food stamp provi-

sions, even though economists across the political spectrum agree that food stamps are one of the best ways to stimulate the economy.

And now food stamps may be cut below the House-passed levels? We can and must do better.

I submit for the RECORD a letter signed by 153 Democrats to the chairman of the Agriculture Committee urging him to hold the line and insist on the House-passed nutrition title in his negotiations.

JANUARY 30, 2008.

Hon. COLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PETERSON: We want to thank you and the Members of the Agriculture Committee for your hard work on H.R. 2419, the Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007. We appreciate how well you balanced the needs of farmers and consumers in the legislation. One of the key reasons for our support for the bill is the inclusion of a strong nutrition title that addresses the needs of the tens of millions of Americans, including many children and working families, who struggle against hunger by investing in and strengthening the Food Stamp Program. This bill also provides needed long-term support to our nation's food banks.

As you know, hunger is getting worse in America while the costs of food, housing and utilities are rising. We have a responsibility to help low- and middle-income families as they face these challenges. The Farm Bill is a safety net that protects people from going hungry; it represents one of the single most important opportunities we have this year to address the needs of disadvantaged children, struggling working families, seniors and people with disabilities in our communities. We will be doing a disservice to anyone who must rely on these programs if we acquiesce to provisions that ultimately deny hungry Americans food in their time of need.

New investments in the nutrition title are long overdue. The average food stamp benefit is a mere \$1 a person a meal. The \$10 minimum benefit has been stuck at the same level for 30 years. The \$2,000 limit on assets for most food stamp households has not changed in two decades. And the shortfall in TEFAP commodities purchases is leaving many food bank shelves empty. It is vital that the conference agreement secure permanent funding at no less than the House-passed levels for the food stamp and TEFAP programs, and we strongly urge to include these improvements in the conference report.

We commend you for the important improvements included in the nutrition title of the House-passed bill. While there are also many improvements in the nutrition title of the Senate-passed bill, there is a profound and very troubling difference between the House and Senate nutrition titles. The House bill would make these provisions permanent law while, under the Senate bill, all the major benefit improvements would terminate after 2012. Simply, this means that these important policy improvements would return to today's law, resulting in a major reduction in benefits to more than 10 million recipients. Should these improvements sunset in 2013 and return to the 2008 levels, more than 300,000 low-income people would be cut off from food stamps altogether. We should be working to end hunger in America. We think you would agree that a final conference agreement that sunsets and underfunds improvements in the nutrition title would be unacceptable.