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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DRIEHAUS).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,  
November 17, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE DRIEHAUS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, 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 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

### HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the U.S. Department of Agriculture released the annual Household Food Security in the United States report for 2008. The findings of this report are nothing short of alarming and frightening. This report found the highest level of food insecurity since the study began in 1995. While just over 85 percent of U.S. households were food secure in 2008, the bad news, the fright-

ening news, is that 14.6 percent, 17 million households, were food insecure in 2008. This means that at some point during 2008, these households "had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources."

According to the USDA, over 49 million people lived in those 17 million households. In other words, Mr. Speaker, according to this report, 49 million Americans went hungry in 2008. We should be ashamed of ourselves. In the richest, most prosperous nation in the world, a country where we have the means to end hunger, a country where we have the food readily available, we continue to allow 49 million people to be hungry in this country. And if that weren't bad enough, food insecurity is likely to get worse, not better, next year.

Mr. Speaker, this report also found that 17 million children, more than one in five, went without food at some point during the year. That's an increase of 5 million children over the previous year. Even worse, the number of children living in very low food insecure households—the hungriest of the hungry—rose from 323,000 in 2007 to 506,000 in 2008. That means that almost 2 million children are among the hungriest of the hungry in America.

Race and gender are also factors. About 37 percent of single mothers struggled for food in 2008. And more disturbing, more than one in seven said that someone in their household had been hungry. The report found that African Americans and Hispanics were more than twice as likely as whites to report food insecurity at home.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better. We must do better. I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Vilsack for their dedication to combating hunger in America. Secretary Vilsack personally released this report yesterday, and President Obama released a statement, two actions that the previous adminis-

tration declined to make. I don't say this to place blame, but rather to say that admitting there is a problem is the first step towards addressing that problem. President Obama has committed his administration to ending child hunger by 2015. That's something we can and should do. Continuing to raise awareness of this issue is critical, no matter how bad the statistics may be.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have in place a safety net system that prevents more people from going without food. Undoubtedly, even more Americans would go hungry if it weren't for SNAP—formerly known as food stamps—WIC, school and summer meals, and the other Federal anti-hunger programs.

Later this week, I will be introducing legislation that will expand these programs to better combat hunger in the United States. The End Childhood Hunger by 2015 Act will not only expand the purchasing power of SNAP, but it will increase the number of people who are eligible for these Federal anti-hunger programs. For example, under this bill, every child who goes to school, regardless of income, will receive a quality, nutritious breakfast and lunch. We know that children learn better and develop properly when they eat nutritious meals. Unfortunately, many children don't have access to nutritious meals either at home or at school. We provide textbooks for all children. Why shouldn't we provide at least two nutritious meals too?

Now is the time for us to refocus our energy on ending hunger once and for all, and it will require Presidential leadership. I introduced legislation calling for a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition. I will be working with Speaker PELOSI, Chairman PETERSON and Chairman MILLER to pass this important legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2297.

□ 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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