

from Veronica, who lives in northern California, who has turned her life around under these vital safety net programs. Her story is one of hardship and survival. It's a story of getting back up when life knocks you down. It's a story of America. She is the American Dream. But she and her spouse were teenage parents. They relied on public assistance to bring up their children. They were able to get good jobs and they got off of Federal assistance.

Well, in 1995, the bottom fell out. Their son was diagnosed with diabetes. Her world imploded. She tried to go back to work full time. Her son needed more care at home. She was given child care assistance so she could support her family and her son. She was offered counseling and job training and, in the fall of 2009, the opportunity to work at Second Harvest Food Bank as an administrative assistant through the Federal stimulus program. She said she's still married to her husband. They have three beautiful children. And there's no way she could have kept her family together without the help of such programs such as SNAP food stamps, Medi-Cal, and job training. She said, "We found unknown strength, faith, and resilience in our downfall. We'll do everything that we can do to stay self-sufficient but cannot say enough about the blessed safety net."

Mr. Speaker, we understand that even when you work hard and do things right, sometimes everyone needs a helping hand, especially when there are no jobs. I personally needed this helping hand in years past when I was forced during many hardships that I was faced with that I had to rely on for many years public assistance and food stamps and Medi-Cal just to get through school, to take care of my kids, to get a job. And if it weren't for that safety net, I would not be here today.

And so let me just ask all of you to remember the poor, remember those struggling to survive, and to support those people who have exhausted their benefits, their unemployment benefits. They hit the wall in 99 weeks. We need to add more weeks of unemployment compensation for individuals who deserve this help. The 99ers need help. We need to do this. We need to do more to create jobs. We need to help people survive until we have the vision and the backbone to do that here.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 5, 2011.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA,
President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.,
Vice President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.
Hon. HARRY REID,
Senate Majority Leader, Washington, DC.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House Minority Leader, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT; MR. VICE PRESIDENT;
SPEAKER BOEHNER; MINORITY LEADER PELOSI;

MAJORITY LEADER REID; MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: As you and your colleagues work to consider solutions to our nation's fiscal challenges, we urge you to ensure the protection of social service programs that serve as a life line for our nation's low income and poor communities who continue to feel the detrimental impact of the economic downturn.

As co-chairs of the Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus (COPC) working to eradicate poverty, it has always been our goal to ensure critical programs protecting the impoverished remain viable while also keeping poverty at the forefront of debate and action here in Washington. Programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, low-income housing benefits, and earned income tax credit benefits must not be put in jeopardy in the name of deficit reduction, which will only create a greater cost burden to us in the future.

Poverty has taken on an entirely new face as a result of the financial crisis, the recession, and our nation's slow economic recovery. The latest statistics estimate 14.3 percent or 43.6 million Americans living in poverty as of 2009, up from 39.8 million in 2008. Furthermore, the poverty rate for Blacks is 25.8 percent, for Hispanics is 25.3 percent, and for children under age 18 is 20.7 percent. According to the U.S. Census, "the number of people in poverty in 2009 (43.6 million) is the largest number in the 51 years for which poverty estimates have been published." The recession has also left 13.9 million people unemployed, thereby putting another population at risk of falling into poverty.

We simply cannot afford to balance the budget on the backs of the poor. The COPC shares the concerns of an earlier letter sent to you in late June 27, 2011 by a list of think tank and nonprofit organizations advocating that deficit reduction efforts do not result in an increase in poverty. While we understand the need for fiscal responsibility, we also recognize the need to invest in programs that protect poor and vulnerable communities, especially in the face of economic hardship. Therefore, staying committed to safety net programs in health, education, housing, and employment is both a moral and economic responsibility that we cannot afford to ignore in the midst of deficit reduction efforts.

Sincerely,

BARBARA LEE,
Co-Chair, COPC.
JOE BACA,
Co-Chair, COPC.
G.K. BUTTERFIELD,
Co-Chair, COPC.
JOHN CONYERS,
Co-Chair, COPC.
MIKE HONDA,
Co-Chair, COPC.

VERONICA'S STORY ABOUT SNAP, MEDI-CAL
AND JOB TRAINING, CALIFORNIA
(By Veronica of San Jose, CA)

I am the American Dream!

My name is Veronica, and I have such an immense gratitude for federal programs such as SNAP/Food Stamps and Medi-Cal.* I am ESPECIALLY grateful for the Federal Stimulus programs that finally got my family off welfare.

My spouse and I were teenage parents in 1990 and relied on welfare to bring up our daughter until 1993, when we were able to get good jobs and get off federal assistance.

We had our son in 1995 and thought we would never need welfare again. We were wrong. I cannot pinpoint an exact time when we crumbled, because we cracked slowly. My husband's two closest cousins were murdered and he began abusing drugs to cope. I pretended it wasn't happening and kept working harder.

The bottom fell out when my son was diagnosed with Diabetes (type 1) in 2001. My world imploded. I was on leave from work through the Family and Medical Leave Act because both of my parents had been diagnosed with diabetes earlier that year—and then my son. So I went back on welfare, because I could not go back to work.

Thank God I was given the opportunity to help myself and my family through the assistance of different federal programs. When I tried to go back to work full-time and my son needed more care at home, I was given child care assistance so I could support my family and help my son. I was offered counseling, job training, and in the fall of 2009, the opportunity to work at Second Harvest Food Bank as an administrative assistant through the Federal Stimulus program.

I knew I was a hard worker but needed an opportunity to show it. When the program ended I was offered employment permanently at the food bank. I was one of 2010's Client Success Stories for Santa Clara County.

I am still married to my husband Ray. We have three beautiful children, Danielle, Raymond Jr., and Albert. There is NO WAY I could have kept my family together without the help of the programs such as SNAP/food stamps, Medi-Cal, and job training.

I will not say I will never need federal assistance again, but my husband and I know things happen for a reason. We found unknown strength, faith, and resilience in our downfall. We will do everything we can to stay self-sufficient, but cannot say enough about the blessed safety net.

THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

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

Mr. WOODALL. I'm conflicted as I come to the floor today, Mr. Speaker. I'd actually planned to talk about tax reforms this morning. The Ways and Means Committee for the first time in 10 years is holding a hearing on the Fair Tax next Tuesday, July 26. The Fair Tax is a proposal that abolishes the income tax system in this country that punishes people based on what they earn and creates a consumption tax that rewards people based on how much they save. And as we talk about poverty here this morning, as we talk about how to get folks back on their feet, the problem in this country, Mr. Speaker, is not that we don't bring in enough revenue. It's that we spend too much money. There is a bias in our culture now towards consumption as opposed to thrift.

Now, when did that happen? I wish I were a better student of history. I know that Ben Franklin shared with us that "a penny saved is a penny earned." I know that our colleagues in the past said if we talk about a million here and a million there, pretty soon we're talking about real money.

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My grandfather was a United Methodist minister in the South Georgia Conference. He was a Navy chaplain during World War II, and went down and worked the South Georgia circuit after the war. They'd get together and get all the little nubs of the candles

that they would have during the year and melt them all together to put together those Christmas candles. I don't know if you all grew up with one of those Christmas candles in your home, but they couldn't afford to go out and buy a candle. They had to put together all the nubs and put in the wick themselves.

My dad tells the story of a lot of cold winters and a lot of very hot summers. He tells the story of every time the Klan would threaten to come and burn a cross on the lawn, my grandfather would sit out there on the front porch in his rocking chair with a shotgun. If you can picture that: a United Methodist minister, a man of peace, sitting out there on the porch with his shotgun, but that's the way things were in that part of the world and in those days.

And then he went on to become the superintendent of the United Methodist children's home in the South Georgia Conference. He died about a decade ago without two nickels to rub together, but it was the largest funeral I had ever seen in my life, because he touched people, he nurtured people, he reached out to those who didn't have anyone else to advocate on their behalf. His entire career he spent building people up. His entire career he spent reaching out to those who had no one and being their "someone."

As this discussion goes on here this morning, I promise you there is not a bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., there is not an agency funded by Federal dollars, that loves people like my grandfather loved people. There's not one. There is not one bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., and there is not one agency under Federal control that loves children the way my grandfather loved children.

Folks, we have a choice each and every day that's going on in this debate that we're having over deficits, debts and defaults. Freedom and security. My big fear is not that there's going to be a default on United States debt. My big fear is that there's going to be a default on the promise of America. My big fear is that the government is doing so much, that we as people may think that we get to do so little, that government's not taking care of anyone. The government is taking from people who would have taken care of someone and is stealing that responsibility for nurturing our neighbors.

It is not the government's job to feed the hungry in my community. It's my job. It's not the government's job to reach out to the least of these. It's my job. As we're talking about children here on the House floor today, as we're talking about the most vulnerable of these, I think back to STENY HOYER's words in 1995, that when it comes to balanced budgets, when it comes to running up deficits, the person who gets hurt the worst when reckless government spending goes unchecked are the least of these, are the children. I agree with him a hundred percent.

What are we teaching our children today? What are we teaching our children about our responsibility as individuals to take care of one another? Where is the proposal? I've been in Congress 7 months now. There has not been a single proposal to encourage individuals to take care of one another. Time and time again what there are, are proposals to take away the responsibility from individuals of taking care of one another and to transfer that responsibility to government.

Now, I say that with passion. I know, Mr. Speaker, as you know, that everyone who brings those proposals to the floor brings it with a full heart. I do not question the motivations or the intentions of anyone who is reaching out to the least of these. I only question the results.

Mr. Speaker, the longest and most expensive war in this country's history is not the war in Afghanistan. It is the war on poverty, and the government's results are poor. We need to put it back in the hands of individuals.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON THE STIMULUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The best anti-poverty program is a job. The stimulus bill saved 3.3 million jobs just this year. After 8 years of reverse Robin Hood under Bush, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. I repeat: We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Eight hundred thousand people headed toward poverty. The stimulus bill reversed the slide toward poverty for this Nation.

Earlier this week, I submitted data for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD showing

that the stimulus bill has funded 700,000 education jobs, more than all of the jobs lost due to Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill combined. Today, I submit for the record data on jobs saved or created by transportation funding in the stimulus bill. Since February 2009, 335,000 positions have been funded directly by the Department of Transportation. That figure does not include the jobs indirectly created by the stimulus bill as States and local governments leverage these funds for improvements that get goods and services moving throughout this country.

So far, the DOT has paid out \$30 billion in grants and has authority for another \$18 billion. Over 15,000 projects have been made possible by the stimulus bill. Mr. Speaker, can anyone seriously argue that \$48 billion for roads, rails and infrastructure will not put millions of people to work? Of course they can't.

In my district, construction of a new Amtrak station in Sanford, Florida, employed 46 subcontractors. Forty-five of them are from Florida. Does anyone want to call that a disaster?

The real disaster is that we didn't put enough money in the stimulus bill for transportation. This country gets a failing grade for the conditions of our roads and bridges, and we're going to have disaster after disaster like what occurred in Minnesota, the collapsing of the bridge that killed people.

Mr. Speaker, the stimulus bill put us on the road to recovery, and I will continue to set the record straight. Let's not stop this recovery by reversing course. The pending transportation reauthorization bill will take us backwards a decade and will kill the millions of jobs. That is what I call a disaster.

I am placing in the RECORD the transportation and how much each State received and how many jobs it created. For example, in Florida, 782 projects, over 16,000 people put to work. Let me just mention one other State—Pennsylvania, 384 projects, 13,000 jobs reported.

Mr. Speaker, people come to this floor and they talk all the time, and I guess people on TV think that what they're saying is actual, or factual. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009—DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GRANTS AS OF MARCH 31, 2011

State	Projects	Total Awarded	Funds Per Capita	Jobs Reported
Alabama	364	\$689,783,797	\$146	4107
Alaska	54	388,794,321	557	2771
American Samoa	4	8,468,599	N/A	348
Arizona	249	808,989,561	123	7964
Arkansas	150	422,379,045	146	4021
California	1244	7,348,869,737	199	33355
Colorado	151	667,300,538	133	6441
Connecticut	169	472,631,172	134	6667
Delaware	49	143,098,747	162	1196
District of Columbia	26	1,733,232,733	2,890	13812
Florida	782	1,839,648,149	99	16596
Georgia	438	1,136,153,103	116	11212
Guam	12	30,591,897	N/A	186
Hawaii	39	214,745,880	166	3185
Idaho	107	221,927,181	144	2235
Illinois	920	2,727,586,568	211	10433
Indiana	1163	828,803,322	129	6910