

country control as much wealth as 150 million other Americans. We have a crisis, all right, in our country, and it's called a disappearing middle class. The rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer, and the middle going into poverty.

We have a jobs crisis in our country. And poverty has taken an entirely new face as a result of the financial crisis, the recession, and our Nation's slow economic recovery. In Skokie, Illinois, a solid middle class suburb, now 40 percent of the kids who go to school there qualify for a reduced or free lunch. And the food pantry is bulging now with new people waiting in line. I went to a mortgage foreclosure workshop in suburban Des Plaines, Illinois, and I felt like I was watching the American Dream slip through the fingers of hard-working Americans. More than one in five children is now called "food insecure," meaning they go to bed hungry some nights.

And what have the Republicans decided to do? They decided to cut the programs that will help those people. That's how they want to reduce the deficit. They passed a bill called the Cut, Cap, and Balance bill. And it cuts, and it caps, and it balances. It cuts Medicare. It caps Medicaid. And it balances the budget on the backs of the seniors, the poor, and the WIC program, taking food out of the mouths of hungry children. There is something very wrong and very un-American with the Republican proposal that makes it easier to cut Medicare than to cut subsidies for oil and gas companies; easier to cut Social Security than to ask for one penny more for the billionaires, like John Carlson, and easier to cut subsidies for food for little children than to cut subsidies for corporate jets.

I heard from a woman who lives on \$1,023 a month. That's her Social Security. And she doesn't have enough money to make it through the month and often goes hungry. Is this right in the richest country in the world? We can reduce our debt, but not on the backs of the middle class that are becoming poor and those who are already poor.

AMERICANS NEED WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 3 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, according to the latest figures available, an estimated 43.5 million Americans are living in poverty. Ladies and gentlemen, that's more than the entire State of California. Unbelievable. Communities of color continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty. The national unemployment rate is 9.2 percent. In my home State of Georgia, it's even higher, at 9.8 percent.

With millions of Americans in poverty and a high unemployment rate, you would think the Congress would do what it was elected to do, which is to

create jobs and pass legislation that spurs economic growth. But in the past 7 months, the Republican majority has not moved one single jobs bill. Instead, this House majority is pushing bills through that take away Grandma's Social Security check, dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which would provide health care to millions of uninsured Americans, and cut a first-generation college student's Pell Grants. They want to crash our economy by ignoring the need to raise the debt ceiling and ignoring the catastrophe that would occur if we don't. Instead of bringing us opportunities and the American Dream, the Republican majority gives us cut, cap, and kill. Kill Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid. Those are the prisoners who are awaiting execution. It's really about crash, slash, and trash.

Staying committed to safety net programs and health, education, housing, and employment is both a moral and an economic responsibility that we cannot ignore. However, Congress seems to be doing all that it can to keep families from getting back on their feet during times of economic distress. They shouldn't be trying to pull the wool out from under the people of this great Nation, regular working people.

The record debt run up by the Bush administration was a direct result of Republicans' two unfunded wars, failed economic policies, and failed oversight of the financial services sector. And what we need to do is support more programs like Pathways Out of Poverty, which puts residents in my district back to work doing green jobs. But instead, what we want to do is give Rupert Murdoch a tax break and give all of the big oil companies tax loopholes that you could drive a submarine through. Americans need to go to work. So let's focus on getting Americans what they need, which is jobs, jobs, jobs.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Once again we come to You to ask wisdom, patience, peace, and under-

standing for the Members of this people's House. The words and sentiments that have been spoken and heard in these recent days were born of principle, conviction, and commitment.

We ask discernment for the Members, that they might judge anew their adherence to principle, conviction, and commitment, lest they slide uncharitably toward an inability to listen to one another and work cooperatively to solve the important issues of our day.

Give them the generosity of heart and the courage of true leadership to work toward a common solution, which might call for compromise, even sacrifice, on both sides. We pray that their work results not in a result where some are winners and some losers, but where all Americans know in their hearts that we are winners.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches.

DEBT CONTRIBUTION ACT

(Mr. STIVERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, sometimes small steps can make a big difference, and often the best legislation comes from our constituents. That's the case with legislation that I have introduced called the DEBT Contribution Act, which gives Americans simpler ways to make a tax-deductible contribution specifically to reduce our national debt.

Recently, I have received letters from constituents like this one asking how they can donate funds to pay down our national debt. I voluntarily give \$700 out of every paycheck to go toward paying down the national debt, and I want to make it easier for like-minded citizens to do the same. That's why I've sponsored the DEBT Contribution Act. It does three things: