

begin to create jobs and put Americans to work. Americans want to work and they need to work; and yet the House leadership is really focused, as an example, on the dismantling of environmental regulations. This is not a jobs program that puts Americans to work. It's a cynical, opportunistic move in order to attack the environment.

So we have to have as our priority efforts to create jobs that give Americans economic security and that grow our economy. Our economy will not recover quickly from this Great Recession and, of course, Great Depression in many communities of color, including the African American community and for those living in poverty, unless we really do provide a pathway out of poverty.

We need to target these programs in areas that need it the most. Many of these areas are communities of color, where the poverty rates are three times higher than the poverty rate for whites. The unemployment rates are also higher in communities of color: 16.7 percent of African Americans are unemployed, 11.3 percent of Latinos. And these are just the reported statistics. It's clear that we must address these disparities as we work to create jobs and opportunities for all.

So I am asking Members to join us in this deficit reduction letter and urge the Speaker and leadership of this House to move the American Jobs Act as the first step in jump-starting this economy and putting Americans back to work.

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*U.S. Senate,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. MAX BAUCUS,  
*U.S. Senate,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. JOHN KERRY,  
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Hon. JAMES CLYBURN,  
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Hon. XAVIER BECERRA,  
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Hon. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,  
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Hon. JEB HENSARLING,  
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Hon. DAVE CAMP,  
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Hon. FRED UPTON,  
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Hon. JON KYL,  
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Hon. PAT TOOMEY,  
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Hon. ROB PORTMAN,  
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*U.S. Senate,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON DEFICIT REDUCTION: We are writing to request that you protect vital programs that comprise our social safety net, including but not limited to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security, as well as the programs

that provide economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans.

Vital safety net services and programs support those people hit the hardest by the Great Recession. These services help people and families maintain housing or find shelter, keep food on the table, assist in access to health care, and support those looking for employment, including the long-term unemployed. Examples of federal programs that provide such services include programs which assist disabled veterans to find an accessible home, ensure seniors receive food to eat, help people access our health care system, connect people seeking jobs with employment, give shelter to homeless families, and ensure that children get meals in school.

It is imperative that we protect vital safety net programs and programs that provide economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans, including those facing or living in poverty. The Census Bureau released data on September 13, 2011, revealing that 15 percent of Americans—46.2 million people across this country—lived in poverty in 2010. This is the largest number of Americans living in poverty since the Census started collecting this data 52 years ago. For our nation's children under 18, 22 percent lived in poverty in 2010. That is 16.4 million children who do not know where their next meal is coming from, where they might be sleeping that night, and who are anxious overall about their well being and that of their parents.

According to the recent Census data release on poverty, the poverty numbers would have been worse had it not been for key federal programs like unemployment insurance, food stamps, and Medicaid (Census Bureau slide 25 located at [http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/2010\\_Report.pdf](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/2010_Report.pdf)).

For the last 25 years when we have come to deficit reduction agreements, these agreements have protected low-income programs. Beyond that, we have a moral and an economic obligation to care for our nation's most vulnerable, those facing or living in poverty. We respectfully implore that as you work through ways that our nation can reduce the deficit that you sustain our nation's safety net programs that assist people in obtaining or maintaining their access to basic human needs including food, shelter, and health care, and that provide ladders to opportunity for struggling families. These programs both support and create consumers, which result in increased demand and job creation. In the end, this reduces our deficit by enabling people to participate in our economy.

Again, we respectfully implore that as you work through ways that our nation can reduce the deficit that you sustain the vital human needs programs found across the federal government and accomplish deficit-reduction in a way that does not exacerbate poverty or inequality.

#### FREE TRADE AND JOBS

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, just last week I had the opportunity to host a manufacturing roundtable to hear firsthand from job creators in the 10th District of Illinois. These business leaders spoke about the challenges that they are facing and how decisions made right here in Washington, D.C. impact their ability to create jobs and put Illinois back to work.

The entrepreneurs I met with expressed their concern with the uncer-

tainty in the marketplace and spoke about the difficulties they face when competing in a global marketplace. From trade to excessive regulations, it is clear that much work needs to be done right here in Washington, D.C.

Despite the problems that our country and businesses face, I am optimistic about the future. Just yesterday, the President sent long-anticipated trade agreements to Congress for approval.

We heard the President talk about his Jobs Act; and while there may be some disagreement about the Jobs Act, certainly I think that there are areas where we can agree, and I think that we ought to move those aspects forward. Certainly when we talk about the trade agreements, I would argue that's one of the areas that has broad bipartisan support, and we should move it forward for the American public.

We have 650 manufacturers in Illinois' 10th Congressional District representing 80,000 jobs. Fifty thousand of those jobs rely upon exports, and I would argue that our ability to open and expand markets will create that demand.

Seventy-three percent of the world's purchasing power is outside of the United States. Ninety-five percent of the consumers are outside of the United States' borders. We want to make sure that we have an agreement, an arrangement where we can knock down these barriers where we can allow the American worker to compete on a level playing field.

If we are able to do that, the American worker will win. We know that for every billion dollars that we increase in trade, we create 6,250 jobs right here at home.

We know that it would add, just with South Korea alone, would add \$10 billion to our GDP. This is a step, certainly, in the right direction.

In Illinois, manufacturing accounts for 93 percent of our exports, and these exports support 25 percent of the manufacturing jobs in our State, a State that's lost 750,000 manufacturing jobs over the last decade.

Small businesses are also a big part of those exports. By ratifying the pending trade agreements, we are empowering manufacturers, small business owners, and entrepreneurs. This is exactly the type of bipartisan action we need to be taking in these tough economic times.

While there is much more work that needs to be done, we should be encouraged by the movement on the trade agreements and use this as a stepping stone to continue working together and finding common ground. When we come together for the American public, we can create an economic certainty that allows small business owners all across the land to be able to forecast, have some more certainty, invest in their business and create jobs.

There are 29 million small businesses in our Nation. If we can create an environment here in Washington, D.C.

where half of those businesses can create one job, think about where we would be then.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together to pass these pending trade agreements. Put the American worker first, and let's get America back to work.

#### FINANCIAL CRISIS AND MORAL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. This morning I was pleased to see that the Conference of Catholic Bishops has organized in order to influence Washington as it relates to the question of same-sex marriage and abortion. I think that we all agree that these are moral issues and under our country's freedom of speech, the churches, the synagogues, the temples, have a right and, indeed, in their case, an obligation to speak out on the actions of Congress that they disapprove of morally.

I hope that this is a signal to other religious institutions that what this country is going through is not only a financial crisis, but a moral crisis. And perhaps the other religions might broaden their agenda to talk about what I truly believe is a priority and concern of every religion, and that is a deep-seated moral obligation to take care of the vulnerable in our society. Whether it's the lesser of our brothers and sisters, whether it's the sick and the aged, there's something about Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, about having a home and a job that to me has something that involves a moral obligation.

□ 1040

When a great country like the United States, a beacon for people to come to from all over the world in order to be successful, finds itself with so much of our national wealth being concentrated in the hands of so few people, never before has this happened in history, where we find more and more children and adults going into poverty in historic numbers.

We find the shrinking of our middle class, where all of our dreams and aspirations are planned, born, and conceived in the United States of America; where we have so many brave American men and women fighting causes in foreign countries that their parents don't understand and they come home with emotional and physical disabilities; that we can never thank them for their courage; and when we see young people on Wall Street and the Wall Streets around this country protesting, and they're being ridiculed because they have no leaders, they have no single cause, they never knew each other, they're not organized. But neither is America's pain and concern organized.

People are mad as hell. They really think that they've been let down. They worked so hard to achieve what they

had achieved in this great country; and the greatest thing about America is not what you've achieved, in my opinion, it is having the hope that you can make it in America.

So that's why it is so painful to see how this middle class that was more recently, if you look at history, formed in this country, where people thought having a car and a home and a job, sending your kids to college for an education, being secure in your retirement, and knowing that one day health care would be available for everybody—are these just political issues? No. I think they're moral issues. And that's why when I went down to meet with the protesters, I had hoped that more of our spiritual leaders would be there to give guidance, to give encouragement, to give direction so that we can say that this is a civilized society and people can't just break the law and scream; but they can demand attention, and that's what they are doing.

So it seems to me that we in the Congress are getting involved too politically and ignoring the pain and the suffering that's taking place in this country today. When we can find one of the parties saying that they will not entertain a bill that's being proposed to us in order to put America back to work, when they say that their primary goal is to get rid of Obama, when they say that no jobs bill is going to be accepted except what they pick and choose, when they refuse to bring to the floor of this House something that we can discuss to give hope back to the people, I think that's not just a political question. I think it's a moral question as well.

God—yes, God—bless America.

#### HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRETT EVERETT WOOD

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor U.S. Army Private First Class Brett Everett Wood. PFC Wood, a 19-year-old of Spencer, Indiana, lost his life in combat on September 9 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during an insurgent attack on his unit with an improvised explosive device.

PFC Wood was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Wainwright, Alaska.

Indiana lost a great citizen who enlisted with his brother, Nikk, during the summer of 2010. His sacrifice and valor in defense of the freedoms we hold dear should be commended, and I would like to offer my most heartfelt condolences to PFC Wood's family and friends. From a grateful Nation, he will be missed but not forgotten.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE OLIVER W. WANGER

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to honor and pay tribute to the outstanding service and dedication of the Honorable Judge Oliver W. Wanger on the occasion of his retirement last week from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California.

For the past 20 years, Judge Wanger has served the people of California admirably and courageously, maintaining a commitment to the justice and fairness of the law. Moreover, he is extremely knowledgeable and always attempted to balance the scales of justice when hearing cases in general, and specifically cases dealing with California's water and environmental issues.

During his tenure, District Court Judge Wanger has developed a mastery of complex Federal and State water and endangered species laws, putting forth many substantial rulings of several hundreds of pages in length that required painstaking attention to detail. Some of the most noteworthy in recent years were his findings with respect to operations of the Central Valley project and the State water project that convey water supplies throughout California, including the San Joaquin Valley and southern California for urban use and for agricultural use.

Were it not for Judge Wanger's attention to the letter of the law, farmers, farmer workers, and farm communities in the valley would have continued to suffer from job losses and uncertainty during the most recent drought period, while Federal agencies and this administration clung to flawed science and regulations that were destructive.

Judge Wanger has worked tirelessly on these issues, often putting in 75 to 80 hours a week. His retirement now leaves only two active judges in the already understaffed district court, which extends from the Oregon border to the Tehachapi Mountains south of Bakersfield. In a letter to Chief Judge Anthony Ishii regarding his coming retirement, Judge Wanger expressed grave concerns over the immense and unbearable workload that his departure will create. Let me read from his letter:

The impacts on these judges is best understood by my last 5 years: 161 jury trials to verdict; 5,465 courtroom hours; 3,554 terminal and civil cases; with an individual caseload approaching 1,200 cases in a 5-year period.

Judge Wanger also went on to say: Now who will handle these cases? Despite our pleas to and Congress' express recognition of the need, the continued refusal to create new desperately needed judgeships for the Eastern District of California has created a hardship for the Federal court. It has been more than 31 years since a new district judge position was created in Fresno, a division with over 2.5 million people. The