

continue to maximize our opportunities for intervening in ways that fit individual victims' needs. We need culturally competent services. We need services for children. And we must make the most of every opportunity for education and advocacy and prevention services. I sure hope my colleagues will join me this month and every month in the fight to support victims of domestic violence through funding more programming.

#### THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the millions of Americans who woke up this morning facing a separate and unequal America, a separate and unequal America marked not by the American Dream and limitless opportunities, but an America of the unemployed and poverty stricken, an America marked by struggle and fear of the future—the struggle just to find a job, the struggle to keep their home, the struggle to put enough food on the table.

Americans all across the country are struggling and believe that their government is not looking out for their best interests and instead is working just for rich bankers and massive corporations. People across the Nation are losing faith in our democratic processes and, thank goodness, are taking to the streets to tell their friends, neighbors, and their government that much more must be done for the American people and not just for the super rich. They are saying very loudly that the obstacles to achieving the American Dream must be removed. Too many families across our great Nation are wondering for the first time if our children's generation will be left worse off than the generation before it.

I urge the Republican leadership of the House to quickly pass the President's American Jobs Act to restore the American economy and bring some relief to the millions of Americans who are struggling every day just to get by.

Mr. Speaker, more than 46 million Americans will apply for food stamps this month. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, previously known to many as food stamps, provides the average person a benefit of about \$133 a month—that's \$4.50 a day, \$1.50 a meal. There is a Member of the Senate, however, who seems to believe that there might be millions of Americans who are getting rich by applying for food stamps. Let me assure the good Senator from Alabama that it is not fraud that is causing the rising demand for nutrition assistance in America, but the years of failed economic policies that have lined the pockets of corporate billionaires and left average Americans behind. A program with one of the lowest fraud rates of any program in our entire government is not out of control.

But let me state as clearly as I can, having to apply for food stamps to put enough food on the table to keep your children from going hungry is not like winning the lottery. One in seven Americans do receive food stamps, but millions more are eligible but don't apply. And I'm certain that each and every family would be willing to trade in their book of food stamps for a decent job with livable wages and benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I'm taking part in the Fourth Annual Food Stamp Challenge, along with several other Members on this side of the aisle—Congressman TIM RYAN of Ohio, Congressman JOE COURTNEY of Connecticut, Chairman EMANUEL CLEAVER of Missouri, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE of Ohio, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ of Florida, Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois, and Congresswoman GWEN MOORE of Wisconsin. And I invite every Member of Congress to join us in living for a few days or a week on what a family on food stamps will face every day of the year. I hope that the challenge will open our eyes to the challenges and the struggles of the millions of Americans who face hunger each and every day. Living in poverty and facing food insecurity means missed meals, poor health, and lost productivity.

Even if you choose not to join the Food Stamp Challenge, I encourage you all to stop and consider what it means to have \$31.50 to spend on food for the entire week. Stop for a moment and consider that there are over 46 million Americans who have to swallow their pride and ask for help just to put food on the table. As a former recipient of food stamps myself as a single young mom, I know how difficult this is. I did it because I had to do it just to get over some very difficult times. Forty-six million Americans who reached out to their fellow Americans during their time of need—and I thank the American people during my time of need—they were glad to be there to lend a helping hand. We cannot make cuts to SNAP or Medicaid or Social Security right when children and senior citizens need them the most. So I hope that my colleagues take up the Food Stamp Challenge.

I also encourage each Member to join me and the 43 other Members of the Congressional Out-of-Poverty Caucus in ending poverty in America to ensure that no family in our country needs to ever face hunger again. The Out-of-Poverty Caucus is working to reignite the American Dream so that every man, woman, and child is provided the opportunities to achieve the American Dream. But right now, these 47 million people living in poverty and on food stamps need us to protect the safety net.

And for those individuals and persons of faith, we have to remember that this is a moral issue also. I want to remind you of the Scripture, "To whom much is given, much is expected." It's also an

economic issue though; for every \$1 spent on food stamps, \$1.79 is placed into the economy.

#### THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. On Thursday, I will join my colleague Representative BARBARA LEE, Catholic Charities USA, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the National Council of Churches, and several other Congress Members that my colleague mentioned to participate in the Food Stamp Challenge, an effort to draw attention to the crisis of hunger in America.

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As part of the challenge, participants will eat on the average SNAP allotment. That's what we call it now. There's no more food stamps. Now people get a card that they can actually use to charge the food. But we'll eat on the average SNAP allotment of \$1.50 per meal for a week.

Having participated in this event in the past, I know it is extremely difficult to eat a healthy diet under such strict budgetary guidelines. Nevertheless, SNAP is the difference between chronic hunger and a basic meal for 45 million Americans.

Now, obviously, that means I'm going to give up any Starbucks coffee. But even the \$1 coffee that I was able to buy in the cloakroom just before I came out here is something that will be just too precious to spend. That's almost a whole meal's worth just to buy that cup of coffee.

In 2010, 14.5 percent of American households were food insecure, meaning they lacked the capacity to put enough food on their tables. They relied on nutrition programs like SNAP to make ends meet.

In this, the wealthiest country in the world, one out of four American children is now food insecure, meaning there are nights that they go to sleep hungry. It really is a moral issue, as my colleague pointed out.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—that's SNAP—provides an essential safety net for American families. More than half of SNAP recipients are children.

The Republican budget passed in the House—with no Democratic support, I might add—would cut \$127 billion from SNAP over the next decade, a 20 percent cut. The House Agriculture appropriations bill—passed, again, with no Democratic support—would also cut the SNAP program.

You know, these may be just numbers, \$127 billion here and several billion dollars there, but their effects are very real for people across the country. I recently received dozens of messages on paper plates from EZRA Multi-Service Center in Chicago. They rely on SNAP to make ends meet, and they