



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2012

No. 55

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 17, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, 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 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HUNGER HITS HOME

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday the Food Network premiered their first-ever documentary called "Hunger Hits Home." This powerful program showed the struggle that millions of Americans go through just to put food on their tables. I urge my colleagues, indeed, all Americans, to watch it by going to foodnetwork.com and searching for "Hunger Hits Home."

It's fitting that the Food Network, a cable network that focuses on cooking,

would choose to highlight the scourge of hunger with its first documentary. That's because food is at the heart of the problem.

While 435 Members of Congress and 100 Senators will never have to worry about going hungry, there are nearly 49 million people who struggle each year to put food on their table; 17 million kids each year go hungry in America, and those numbers are getting worse, not better.

The Food Network aired this documentary because of the hard work of good people at Share Our Strength. Led by my good friend, Billy Shore, Share Our Strength is a leader in the fight to end child hunger, and this effort wouldn't be where it is today without them.

We have more than enough food in America to feed everyone. We also have the delivery systems to ensure that food gets to those people who need it. The problem is politics. We have the means, the food, and the programs to ensure that not one person goes without food in this country.

What we lack, Mr. Speaker, is the political will to actually make it happen. We should remember that while there is a cost to ending hunger, the cost of doing nothing is so much more. According to a report from the Center for American Progress and Brandeis University, hunger costs America more than \$261 billion each year. That's billion with a "b."

Specifically, hunger costs "at least \$167.5 billion due to the combination of lost economic productivity per year, more expensive public education because of the rising costs of poor education outcomes, avoidable health care costs, and the cost of charity to keep families fed. This \$167.5 billion does not include the cost of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the other key Federal nutrition programs, which run at about \$94 billion a year. We call this \$167.5 billion America's

hunger bill. In 2010 it cost every citizen \$542 due to the far-reaching consequences of hunger in our Nation. At the household level, the hunger bill came to at least \$1,410 in 2010. And because our \$167.5 billion estimate is based on a cautious methodology, the actual cost of hunger and food insecurity to our Nation is probably higher."

That's a lot of money—\$167.5 billion. It's a staggering amount. Yet, we continue to ignore those costs and allow hunger to grow in America.

We know that hunger would be even worse in this country if it weren't for programs like the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, or SNAP, the school meal programs and other Federal anti-hunger programs. These programs are literally a lifeline for millions of hungry children, parents, and seniors.

I believe that we can end hunger in America if we muster the political will to do so. Fighting hunger has traditionally been a bipartisan effort. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in this House is pushing an agenda that will actually make hunger worse in America.

Tomorrow the Agriculture Committee will mark up legislation that cuts \$33 billion from the most important anti-hunger program we have in this country. SNAP is a program that not only provides food to low-income parents, seniors, and children; it also provides a most effective form of economic stimulus, and it actually reduces poverty.

Yet, the Republican leadership continues to demagogue the program as wasteful, as fraudulent, and as something that is growing out of control. But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, SNAP is among the most effective and efficient Federal programs. The truth is that the SNAP error rate is around 3 percent. That error rate includes people who do not receive the benefit that they're actually entitled to. I challenge anyone to

□ 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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