

bringing a bill to the floor tomorrow that, if passed, will undoubtedly make hunger worse in this country. Their bill will make hunger worse for working mothers and fathers, for kids, for senior citizens, and even for our veterans.

CBO reports that the bill would cut 3.8 million low-income people from SNAP in 2014—and just so there is no misunderstanding, “low-income” means “poor.” On top of that, an average of nearly 3 million people will be cut from SNAP each and every year over the coming decade. These are some of the Nation’s most destitute adults as well as many low-income children, seniors and families that work for low wages. That’s right. People who work but who don’t make enough to feed their families will be cut from this program.

The biggest cut affects at least 1.7 million unemployed, childless adults in 2014 who live in areas of high unemployment. These are poor people. Many don’t have the skills or education they need to find a job. This is a group whose average income is about \$2,500 a year for a single individual—\$2,500 a year—and for most, SNAP is the only government assistance they receive.

This bill also cuts an additional 2.1 million people from SNAP in 2014, mostly low-income working families and low-income seniors. These are people who have gross incomes or assets modestly above the Federal SNAP limits but whose disposable incomes—the income that a family actually has available to spend on food and other needs—are below the poverty line, in most cases often because of high rent or child care costs.

If that weren’t bad enough, 210,000 children in those families would also lose their free school meals, and 170,000 unemployed veterans will lose their SNAP benefits. To top it all off, other poor, unemployed parents who want to work but who cannot find a job or an opening in a training program, along with their children other than infants, will be cut from the program.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when combating hunger was a bipartisan issue—when Bob Dole worked with George McGovern and when Bill Emerson worked with Tony Hall. It didn’t matter whether you were a liberal or a conservative—ending hunger was a priority. The current Republican leadership has blown all that up.

We should not do this. There are no hearings on this bill, no markup, no semblance of regular order. And for what—to stick it to the working poor yet again? We should be doing everything we can to end hunger now. The Republican bill just makes hunger worse, and it should be soundly defeated.

Mr. Speaker, I urge and I plead with both Democrats and Republicans to stand together, to come together in a bipartisan way, and to demand to end hunger now.

Please, please, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, reject this Repub-

lican leadership bill that is coming to the floor tomorrow. It is cruel. It is immoral. We are much better than this. Reject the leadership bill.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, although this hall is empty, there are a lot of people watching it, and I wonder how many of them have ever actually gone hungry. How many of the people watching this have had to go without a meal so their kids could eat? How many have had to wonder how they’ll get through a summer without subsidized school lunches? It’s easy to talk about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps when you’ve had designer shoes on your whole life.

Tomorrow, we will be voting on whether or not to cut \$40 billion from SNAP. That’s a nutrition program for people who do not have access to adequate nutrition. It’s a program that helps one out of seven Americans to put food on the table. If this seems familiar, it’s because it is familiar. Republicans tried just exactly this before the August recess, a couple of months ago, and not surprisingly, for the most unproductive Congress in decades, this bill had to be pulled at the last minute because of a lack of support. Even some of the Republicans saw it was too much.

Anyone who has been paying attention knows that symbolic votes to nowhere are the bread and butter for this Congress, but the Republicans couldn’t even get their own support on the bill—\$20 billion of cuts that primarily help children and the elderly wasn’t enough for them. They had to hurt people more, so here we are again with a new, improved plan that doubles the cuts to \$40 billion. On top of making 2 million people ineligible for benefits, they are also going to take away our States’ ability to provide temporary benefits in times of high unemployment. As a result, the CBO predicts that this will add an additional 1.8 million hungry Americans to the “ineligible” list.

Why are we attempting to inflict another needless wound on the working poor?

Republicans will tell you that the program has grown too much over the last few years, as though the need for food stamps were unrelated to a dragging economy. They see no connection between the economy and the fact that people don’t have food. That’s exactly what the program was designed to do—quickly help people who are in need. When unemployment is high and people can’t pay their bills, that’s exactly the time they need the SNAP program. Caseloads rose dramatically when the recession hit. We laid off 700,000 people a month in 2007, but that growth has also slowed as the economy has recovered slowly. The CBO projects that, in

just a few years, SNAP spending will be back down to 1995 levels as a share of the GDP, and since it’s shrinking on its own, it isn’t adding to the long-term deficit problems.

The rhetoric is simply empty and stupid. Conservatives can try and push this tired welfare abuse narrative. It’s a talking point. Every time they come out here, “Welfare abuse. Welfare abuse. People are getting money for food. That’s welfare abuse,” but as usual, the reality is not in their corner. Studies show that food assistance has some of the lowest rates of fraud of any benefit program. If you go to one of those food banks and talk to the people who are there, you’ll find some surprising people there, people who thought they would never have to go there, but they are short on money and can’t feed their kids, so they’re getting some money.

So I ask you again: Why are we doing this—wasting time to satisfy the furthest right-wing of the Republican Party?

We are again catering to a fringe agenda thought up by partisans who are obsessed with the deficit bogeyman. That bogeyman has been roaming around here for 4 years. “We’re going to have a terrible collapse. We’re going to have inflation. We’re going to have terrible things.” It has never happened. The President has done a miraculous job in keeping us on an upward track in spite of the resistance of the other side. What it does is it makes it harder for 4 million people to put food on the table.

So be it. That’s their attitude. I’m in. At least they won’t risk facing a primary in the next election. They are all worried about somebody further on the right. We’ve already got one Member over here, Mr. Speaker, who is worried about somebody coming from the right, and he’s about the furthest right I can imagine on the floor.

Senate Democrats and Republicans appointed conferees to negotiate a farm bill back at the beginning of August. Quit worrying about scoring points with the Heritage Foundation, and let’s focus on the American family and vote this bill down.

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SNAP

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I think each one of us 435 has to ask ourselves, Is this really what we were sent here to do, to take food out of the mouths of hungry people, nearly half of them children? That’s what’s at stake this week when we are asked to vote on legislation that would cut \$39 billion from one of our Nation’s most successful and important programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP. It used to be called food stamps.