

be doing more to address the root causes, we should not turn our backs on those struggling to make ends meet by cutting benefits that help put food on the table for working families.

I believe we all share the goal of seeing a stronger economy that creates jobs and reduces the need for this kind of assistance. But until that time, let's not make the most vulnerable among us pay the steepest price.

SNAP BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, during the 35 years I spent in the military, it was my privilege to lead the outstanding men and women in our Armed Forces. Many are still serving today. They served with honor and distinction, yet here we are talking about treating the lowest paid of them like second-class citizens, unworthy of basic assistance in these difficult times.

I was elected to Congress to represent everyone in the 12th Congressional District of Illinois. I represent the poorest county in the State of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, 100,000 people in my district, most of them children or seniors, live below the poverty line. My district has a higher proportion of veterans than any other district in this State.

I answer to Active Duty military and veterans who rely on SNAP benefits to make ends meet. They exist in my district and in every district represented in this House. Mr. Speaker, does anyone in this Chamber wish to tell them that in this hour of need, their country is turning its back on them? Who among us wants to decide which of these veterans deserve assistance and which do not? I know I don't.

According to the Census Bureau, about 7 percent of people who report prior military service also report receiving SNAP benefits. Census data indicates that some 1.5 million households with a veteran are receiving SNAP benefits.

The base pay of most recent enlistees, from corporals on down, is at or below the \$23,050 poverty rate for a family of four. At military commissaries nationwide, nearly \$88 million in SNAP benefits were redeemed. Stars and Stripes reported that in 2011, food stamp purchases at military commissaries tripled during the preceding 4 years.

Just last month, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that approximately 900,000 veterans currently receive food aid and that proposed cuts would impact around 170,000.

According to The Hill newspaper, more than \$98 million in SNAP benefits were redeemed by veterans in 2012. The Huffington Post reports that in 2011, "both Active Duty members and retirees, together, used more than \$100 million in Federal food aid in the past year."

Sixteen percent of SNAP recipients are disabled, many of them are veterans. SNAP benefits are already scheduled to go down. On November 1, families of three will lose \$29 a month. Now, that doesn't sound like very much, but the daily per person per meal benefit will be less than \$1.40.

Recently, one Illinois veteran was quoted, saying, "I relocated, and the job I was supposed to get fell through. I lived off my savings but found myself needing to apply for emergency assistance to sustain until I found a job. I, like many others, was only receiving assistance for a time (5 months) but don't know what I would have done without it."

They served us with honor and distinction, Mr. Speaker. Some are still serving. Now it is time for us to serve them with a measure of honor and distinction of our own. I urge my colleagues to reject these shameful proposals which would cut this basic level of assistance to deserving recipients who need it now more than ever.

A SAD DAY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I probably don't need 5 minutes to say what I would like to say.

This is a very sad moment for the most powerful Nation in the history of this planet. We are on the verge of a government shutdown over ideology. I can remember in 1995, I was the mayor of Kansas City when the government shut down and the impact was Herculean, not just here in Washington, but around the country and around the world. And if we are proud to be Americans, it means that we pay our bills.

We are the only nation that still allows a vote by a legislature on paying our bills. Most countries won't do that because they don't need any disruption in paying their debts. We are close to declaring to the whole world that we don't pay our bills.

The other part that's troublesome is this whole issue of SNAP, or food stamps. And there are so many myths that roll around that it just turns my stomach.

I lived in a house with no running water or electricity until I was 7 years old. We moved into public housing. My father worked three jobs. He eventually was able to buy a home.

I know what it's like to be poor. I know what it's like to struggle. My father was able to send my mother to college when I was in the eighth grade, and then all four of his children graduated from college, too, with post-graduate degrees. So I am always insulted when I hear all of these irreverent and nasty comments about poor people. And we spread this stuff about the country to the point of absurdity.

We spread lies. "Well, people go into stores and they buy alcohol with food stamps." Well, we don't have food

stamps anymore. We have cards, Economic Benefit Transfer cards. And in spite of the lies that people tell, you can't buy alcohol with cards. You cannot buy lottery tickets. I heard Members of Congress—this Congress—tell people that they know that people in prison are getting food stamps, and they've seen people buy alcohol with food stamp cards. It doesn't work. And it divides and damages this Nation.

The other lie, over 70 percent of the people receiving SNAP benefits are the elderly, the disabled, and children. And we are against helping them? Another 25 percent are people who work every day, it's just that they can't make enough to survive.

I remember growing up and my mother would say, Eat everything on your plate; there are starving kids in Africa. Well, I'm not sure how eating everything on my plate helped them—I'm still struggling with that—but there are starving people not far from here, and the government of the United States is saying we'd rather shut down than to have a program that deals with the people who are in trouble.

I just heard a few moments ago about a 101-year-old person whose daily Meals on Wheels had been reduced. 101 years old, and people are celebrating that, Mr. Speaker? This is a sad, sad day. And by the end of next week, when we are shut down, it's going to be much sadder.

UNITED STATES FINANCIAL CRISIS: 5 YEARS LATER

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the meltdown of Lehman Brothers, and the 5-year anniversary of the greatest financial crisis in a generation that struck our country. This economic disaster nearly caused the destruction of our country's entire financial infrastructure and led to what we now call the Great Recession.

However, Wall Street, during the last 5 years, has actually profited greatly from this crisis and, in the process, has caused continuing financial failures of millions of Americans. JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley have all reported record profits during the recession.

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Wall Street, in the last 5 years, has regained all of its pre-crisis wealth with interest. Wouldn't the American people like to be in that position?

Meanwhile, Main Street has yet to see a real robust recovery.

The roots of the recession began in the late 1990s, when a majority in this Congress first overturned something called the Glass-Steagall Act, which separated speculative banking from prudent banking and then, in 2000, refused to regulate the trading of derivatives.