

what the Constitution says and what it means. We have a President of the United States who was a professional Constitution teacher, who we know knows the history and the text of the Constitution and takes his oath to preserve, protect, and defend it and take care that the laws be faithfully executed and explains it in stop after stop succinctly, in ways that I agree with this President, and then he turns around and, by his own definition—and by his definition is all I am referring to here, Mr. Speaker—breaks his own oath. So we are here now trying to restore the knowledge base of America.

Members of Congress arrive here as freshmen, and they take an oath to the Constitution. They don't know what it means anymore. The Supreme Court thinks they can amend the Constitution; they can manufacture new commands in the Constitution; they can violate Article I authority. And the President can do so at will.

But I would point out that, 13 times, the President of the United States' position has been unanimously reversed by the United States Supreme Court—President Obama, 13 times, unanimously reversed. Another 11 times, he has lost on a 5-4 decision.

So he has stretched this Constitution beyond that. Even his own appointees in the Supreme Court can't stomach it; that is how bad this is. But I want to see the right appointments to the Supreme Court so the whole Constitution is revered, respected, and we see cases go before the Court and, once again, we can predict the Court will rule on the Constitution rather than their political whims.

Mr. YOHO. I appreciate you bringing that up, because you bring up how many times it has been overstepped as of recent, but other administrations have done it in the past. But it sets a precedent from this point forward. If we don't rein it in now, when do you rein it in? Do you wait for the next candidate to come in? And we have had talks about that. If we don't do it now, it be would like buying fire insurance after your house catches on fire. It doesn't work.

So it is so important that we come together as a body. Again, the Constitution is not a product of Republicans or Democrats or conservatives or liberals. The Constitution is not a function of government. Government is a function of the Constitution.

When government steps over the boundaries of the Constitution, it is us—we, the people—the Representatives that were sent up here to hold and rein in the branches that are out of balance. This is all about bringing the three branches of government into balance.

Let me just wind up with this. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank all the Members who have joined me this evening. Restoring Article I powers is so vital to the survival of our constitutional Republic.

At this very moment, there are individuals seeking the highest office in

the land who have stated, if Congress disagrees with them, they have no qualms about taking action on their own, circumventing Congress and disregarding the founding principles enshrined in our Constitution. That should give concern to everybody.

The time has arrived for us to take action to restore this institution to the one the Founders envisioned. Granted, you can say what you want about our Founding Fathers, but they got this right—again, as you and have I have talked about, with divine intervention—and they put in place a way to amend it to make it better, not to get rid of it. It is time for us to stand up for this body, the people's House.

I will leave you with this reminder. All it takes for evil or tyranny to prevail or for our constitutional Republic to fail is for those good men and women to do nothing.

I, Mr. Speaker, and the people that have joined us tonight, our colleagues that participated, will not sit idly by when the very document that has allowed so many people to be free, to achieve beyond their beliefs to a level never before ever achieved in human history, is being marginalized by inaction.

I know my good friend from Iowa feels the same. And if you have any last remarks, you have got about 1 minute, if you want to wrap it up.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank, again, the gentleman from Florida. I appreciate you coming to the floor with this leadership that is here. If no one stepped forward in leadership and we just went along as if somehow the Constitution were going to be restored, it would never be restored. And I would remind people, Mr. Speaker, that it is one thing to give lip service to the Constitution; it is another to exercise it.

Freedom of speech is being exercised here right now. Freedom of assembly is being exercised across this country right now. The right to keep and bear arms, if it were never exercised, the liberals would define it away from us.

Any one of these rights that we have that come from God, defined by our Founding Fathers, is also something we have got to exercise and utilize; if not, over time, the enemies of freedom will find a way to say: Well, it is just an artifact of history.

If we stop exercising our right to keep and bear arms, in a matter of a generation, someone will say it is just an artifact of history. We are going to confiscate your guns. And after a while, they will zip your lip if you don't watch it. We can't let that happen.

So I appreciate this Special Order here tonight with the gentleman from Florida's leadership, and I appreciate my Constitution and the rights that come, especially from God.

Mr. YOHO. I thank my colleague from Iowa, and I want to thank everybody that participated.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are advised to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

CHILD NUTRITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revised and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, more than 60 years ago, Congress responded to the Defense Department's concern that so many children were malnourished, they would be unfit for military service, that they passed the National School Lunch Act as a measure of national security to safeguard the health and well-being of our Nation's children.

Through the enactment of the first Federal child nutrition program, Congress recognized that feeding hungry children is not just a moral imperative, it is vital to the health and security of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I serve as the ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Our committee is tasked with making sure that all children have an equal shot at success, so it is only fitting that child nutrition programs fall within our committee's jurisdiction.

Just as there is a Federal role in ensuring that all children have access to quality education, regardless of where they live, what they look like, or their family's income, there is also a Federal role in ensuring that every child has access to healthy and nutritious food.

Research has repeatedly shown us that a lack of adequate consumption of specific foods, especially fruits and vegetables, is associated with lower grades among students; and child obesity affects all aspects of a child's life, from their physical well-being to their academic success and self-confidence.

So we have a choice to make. We can put money into these programs now and support healthy eating in schools, or we can cut corners and spend more money down the road on chronic diseases and other social services, putting the well-being of our children and our Nation's future at risk.

Either way, we will spend the money. In fact, researchers estimate that \$19,000 was the incremental lifetime medical costs of an obese child relative to a normal weight child who maintains that normal weight throughout adulthood. So it is important to keep

this tradeoff in mind as we talk about reauthorization of child nutrition programs.

The hallmark of a good reauthorization is that it makes progress; it moves us forward; it builds on what works and improves on what needs to be improved. So with this in mind, Democrats are ready to make improvements to the child nutrition programs and to protect the progress that has been made.

For example, we have made progress in creating a healthier school environment for students. The nutrition standards enacted after the 2010 bipartisan reauthorization are working. Around 99 percent of all schools are meeting the standards. Kids are eating better foods. Studies show that kids are eating up to 16 percent more vegetables and 23 percent more fruit at lunch.

□ 1845

Now, unfortunately, many are now advocating that we roll back the standards, and the Republican draft bill released last week makes numerous steps backwards by making less nutritious foods available in schools.

Another example of progress is the community eligibility provision. Enacted in the 2010 reauthorization, the community eligibility provision, or CEP, allows schools to provide free nutritious meals to all students without using the paper applications when a large portion of the students are deemed eligible because they are already receiving certain social benefits.

Schools love this, teachers love this, families love it, and kids love it. So why go backwards?

Again, unfortunately, the Republican bill does just that by making it harder for schools to use CEP, kicking thousands of schools out of CEP and back into the individualized paper application process.

So we are talking about a hugely popular option for schools that improves the health of children, makes everyone's job easier. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. And if it ain't broke, you shouldn't make a special effort to try to break it.

Our work on reauthorization of our school nutrition programs represents a great opportunity to continue to change the way children eat, to expand their access to nutritious meals, and to end the child hunger crisis in our Nation.

So we should ask ourselves if these are goals that we are willing to compromise or whether we will continue on that path that has resulted in healthier schools and communities.

The success of these programs are too many to mention, but it is my hope that we will continue to build on our success and invest in the future of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, more than 21 percent of American children live in poverty. More than 15 million children live in food-insecure households. In fact, households with children are more likely to be food insecure than those without.

In my home State of Ohio, 16.9 percent of households experience food insecurity, and Ohio's rate is higher than the national average of 14.3.

Programs that affect child nutrition, such as the National School Lunch Program, the National School Breakfast Program, and the Summer Food Service Program, are essential tools in the fight to end child hunger.

Access to healthy foods during the school day and throughout summer feeding programs is essential to helping children thrive both academically and developmentally.

The Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act would increase the burden on schools with new verification requirements and increased community eligibility thresholds, or CEP.

I represent one of the Nation's most impoverished districts, with nearly 200,000 people living in poverty. Out of 435 districts and the District of Columbia, my district ranks 420th. Only 16 other districts in the United States fare worse than mine.

If passed, the changes to CEP alone could result in children across the country losing access to free and reduced-price meals at school, and that is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The bill fails to make critical investments in the summer meal program. Meals served through the summer feeding program may be the only ones some children have in a day.

If the sponsors of the bill truly wanted to improve child nutrition, they would invest in summer meals to ensure eligible children do not go hungry during the summer months.

As we move towards reauthorization, we must strengthen and expand child nutrition programs. Our children's health and education are not budget-saving gimmicks.

I firmly believe that any attempt to reauthorize child nutrition programs must improve access to healthy foods year-round. This bill does not even come close to meeting the minimum requirement.

We must engage in bipartisan conversations about how to best meet the needs of all children.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER), a hardworking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in support of my colleagues in urging the reauthorization of this act based on nutritional value and investment in this country's future and our young people.

Specifically, I want to take a minute to talk about the simultaneous issues of extreme hunger and obesity in this country and in my home State of California, which are nothing short of staggering.

Fourteen percent of people in California are food insecure. Twenty-three percent of California's children are food insecure. In my district, 14 percent of the total population is food insecure.

In the United States, three out of four public school teachers tell us that students regularly come to class hungry. Eighty-one percent say it happens at least once a week. Over 15 million American kids struggle with hunger.

On the other hand, American kids who eat school breakfast miss less school, get better grades, and are more likely to graduate from high school.

At the same time, there is a childhood obesity epidemic in this country. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

In 2012, more than one-third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese. One in three children in California are currently overweight or obese, according to the Pew Endowment Foundation.

Research shows that children living in States with strong school nutrition standards are more likely to maintain healthier weights.

The estimated annual health costs of obesity-related illness in the U.S. is a staggering \$190.2 billion, or nearly 21 percent of annual medical spending in the United States.

Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs. Ironically, the Federal Government spends \$15 billion every year on school food.

The work that we began with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act in 2010 is having an important and positive effect on both of these problems at once.

School meal participants are less likely to have nutrient inadequacies and are more likely to consume fruit, vegetables, and milk at breakfast and lunch.

Low-income students who eat both school breakfast and lunch have significantly better overall diet quality than low-income students who do not eat school meals.

The school meal nutrition standards are having a positive impact on student food selection and consumption, especially for fruits and vegetables.

Few packed lunches and snacks brought from home meet National School Lunch Program standards and Child and Adult Care Food Program standards.

Children in after-school programs consume more calories, more salty foods, and sugary foods on days that they bring their own snacks than on days they only eat the afterschool snack provided by the National School Lunch Program.

In California, I am pleased to say that we have figured it out for the kids, for their parents, for the purveyors who provide all of this healthy product, and for the students, the school administrators, and rank-and-file staff who distribute these foods.

Over 93 percent of school districts nationwide have met the improved lunch and breakfast standards, certifying them to receive Federally authorized school lunch reimbursement rate increases.

In California, we exceed the national compliance rates with 100 percent of our schools currently in compliance.

These standards are going a long way toward decreasing the health costs associated with malnutrition for both hungry and obese children. We must double down on these efforts, not turn away from them. Our children deserve at least this much from us.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this effort.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), a strong child advocate.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for recognizing me. I am really pleased to join the Ranking Member, BOBBY SCOTT, a mentor of mine and a good friend, MARCIA FUDGE, and others about the reauthorization of school meals and the WIC program. They are truly champions for ending hunger among children in this country.

And I believe no conversation could occur about hunger without having the indomitable Mr. MCGOVERN with us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization is really a critical opportunity for us to talk about the importance of improving access to healthy meals in schools and for maintaining strong nutrition standards.

For too many kids, Mr. Speaker, the only sure meals that they can count on on any given day are provided in school.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the majority on the other side of the aisle are talking about how to make it harder for children, especially low-income children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, breakfast and lunch, to access these programs.

We should be using this reauthorization to address known gaps and to help children connect to these healthy meals. Nearly 10,000 more schools offer school lunch than offer school breakfast programs, and we should be trying to expand school breakfast rather than restricting them.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Act in the nationwide implementation of the community eligibility program was so insightful. But, yet, we need to do more. Over 162,000 kids in my State qualify for free or reduced meals for lunch, and we need to reach them.

Now, what does the reauthorization that Republicans are bringing before us entail? What does it talk about? It talks about scaling back the successful

and proven community eligibility provision which we just implemented nationwide last year and really haven't scaled up to what it could be.

This innovative program actually works. We have proven it. We have metrics that prove that the program increases access and participation for low-income students, and it helps to reduce administrative burdens and costs for school staff.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you have heard my colleagues here talk about obesity. Now, obesity is not just a cosmetic problem. It is a major health problem.

We also last year put new nutrition standards in to ward off obesity. Ninety-seven percent—97 percent—of the schools have successfully met these new standards, and USDA has shown great eagerness to work with those who have not.

Of course, these new requirements require more servings of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat fluid milk in schools while cutting sodium-saturated fats and trans fats.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that, when you introduce these foods to children at a young age, they will start to prefer them and we can really transform their lives.

I want to skip over many of my comments and just add them to the RECORD because I just want to focus on one little disease that is associated with poor nutrition, and that is diabetes.

The burden to individuals and families is gargantuan. You hear of people losing their limbs because of diabetes. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the burden to the economy and to the budget by allowing diabetes to run amok.

Diabetes is a budget-busting disease. It is an epidemic that is affecting an increasing number of Americans, including more and more of our youth.

Right now—right now—in 2014, 29 million people in the United States, 9.3 percent of our population, have had diabetes. That is about 1 in 11 people. According to the CDC, by 2050, that number could be as high as 100 million, or 1 in 3 persons.

□ 1900

The time to stop this is now while we are reauthorizing the child nutrition bill. We can help our children develop healthy eating habits. I have seen kids love avocados, love grapes, and love these things that are introduced to them while they are young. Our investment in school lunch and school breakfast pales in comparison to the cost of treating diabetes.

In 2012, diabetes and its related complications accounted for \$245 billion in total costs. Now, that is \$176 billion in direct medical costs—think Medicaid and Medicare—and lost wages and work. The CDC estimates that the growth in these—if their predictions hold, if we don't do something, just think, this will go from 1 in 11 people having diabetes to 1 in 3. So we are looking at 2050—2050, I don't think I am

going to be around in 2050—this is clearly a clarion call to feed our children properly now.

In the school year 2016, we spent \$12.5 billion on the school lunch program and \$4.3 billion on the school breakfast program. Compare that with the \$245 billion that we have spent on diabetes for just 1 year.

With that, I will add the rest of my comments to the RECORD. I would just say, Mr. SCOTT and Mr. Speaker, that school breakfast, school lunch, and WIC, it is a doggone good deal when you think about it.

Mr. Speaker, child nutrition reauthorization is a critical time for us to talk about the importance of improving access to healthy foods in schools, and for maintaining strong nutrition standards. For too many kids, the only sure meals they can count on on a given day are the ones provided in school.

Yet, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are talking about how to make it harder for children, especially low-income children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals, to access these programs.

The draft Republican Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill is an assault on the programs that help to ensure that our children and get the nutrition they need to be active and engaged learners. A growling stomach does not advance educational achievement. They want to roll back programs that have been proven to help eligible children get access to school breakfast and school lunch programs.

It is reportedly titled the "Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016" but it really should be the "Increasing Child Hunger and Hobbiling Education Act."

We should be using child nutrition reauthorization to address know gaps and help connect more children to healthy meals. Nearly 10,000 more schools offer school lunch than offer a school breakfast program. Participation in school breakfast programs, though improving since the enactment of the Healthy Hunger Free Act and the nationwide implementation of CEP, still lags drastically behind participation in the school lunch program. Only about half of students who eat school lunch nationwide eat a school breakfast. My state of Wisconsin is at the bottom when it comes to the number of schools that participate in school breakfast nationwide. Over 162,000 kids that qualify for Free or Reduced meals are eating lunch, but miss breakfast and Wisconsin loses \$22 million federal breakfast reimbursement dollars annually. We need to be discussing how to help the states and schools do better.

Mr. Speaker, we just passed the Every Student Succeeds Act last year reauthorizing federal elementary and secondary education policy. Let me tell you, no child can succeed when they're hungry. Any teacher can tell you that. So can a range of experts who have conducted studies on this issue and found overwhelmingly that hunger does not promote academic achievement.

So what are Republicans talking about doing in this reauthorization:

Scaling back the successful and proven Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which just went into effect nationwide last year. This is an innovative program authorized in 2010 that makes it easier for high need schools and school districts to serve free meals to all students by eliminating traditional free/reduced priced applications.

With all the rhetoric about wasteful government spending and duplicative programs, what happens when we have successful and proven federal programs and policies that work like CEP, like SNAP? Republicans want to cut them and roll them back.

This program has been proven—I emphasize that word again—to increase access and participation in the school meals programs for the low-income students while helping to reduce administrative burdens and costs for school staff. School meal programs benefit from the economics of scale. The more kids who participate, the cheaper it is to serve each child. Thousands of schools have adopted CEP and are seeing benefits including the 156 schools in the Milwaukee Public School system. In its first year, MPS reported serving 22% more school breakfasts. School lunches also saw a gain. CEP means fewer kids are going hungry in Milwaukee and nationwide.

Enacting the GOP bill would mean that 7,000 schools that now currently participate would be dropped. That is a gigantic step backwards for the health and nutrition of tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of school children who are at key stages of development, physically and academically.

Not to mention the students in thousands of schools currently eligible to participate in CEP but would be kicked off under the Republican bill.

We have put in place new nutrition standards for school meals—97% of schools have successfully met these new standards and the USDA has shown great eagerness to work with those that have not to do so. These new requirements require more servings of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals while cutting sodium, saturated fat and trans fats.

Now, some are trying to block the new rules and the savings to our nation both short term and long term for helping kids develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Let me just talk about the burden to individuals and taxpayers of just one disease: diabetes—a budget busting disease. This is an epidemic affecting an increasing number of Americans, including more and more of our youth.

The number of Americans with diabetes is estimated to drastically increase in the next three decades. In 2014, 29 million people in the U.S. (9.3 percent) had diabetes (about 1 in 11). According to the CDC, by 2050 that number could be as high as 100 Million Americans (or 1 in 3).

The time to stop this trend is right now when we can help our children develop healthy eating habits that will stay with them for the rest of their lives and a taste for healthy and nutritious foods through the school nutrition programs.

I want to compare our investments in school lunch and breakfast programs and helping to provide nutritious meals that will support lifelong eating habits to young people with what it will cost us to treat diabetes.

Diabetes is an extremely expensive condition for our healthcare system given that it is associated with a number of complicated health effects. In 2012, diabetes and its related complications accounted for \$245 billion in total costs, including \$176 billion in direct medical costs (think Medicaid and Medicare) and lost work and wages. If the CDC estimates about the growth in cases holds, the

cost of just this one disease will grow dramatically over the next three decades. These costs will be picked up by all of us, including through Medicare and Medicaid.

In contrast, in FY 2016, we will spend \$12.5 billion on the school lunch program and \$4.3 billion on the school breakfast program. Maintaining healthy and nutrition meals and standards and ensuring that all who are eligible can participate in these programs seems like a very wise investment to me.

The GOP proposal would bar schools from including the eligibility requirements for school meals on the school meal applications. Absolutely absurd. What public policy purpose is served by such a requirement other than to make sure people don't know about a benefit to which they are entitled.

I also want to emphasize the need to further strengthen WIC during this reauthorization. WIC works. That's what the research tells us. The program helps improve health and nutrition outcomes for at risk women, infants, and children. WIC breastfeeding rates are rising. We all know the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child.

We can make WIC better by increasing the certification period for infants and women, taking steps to ensure that children a better transition by WIC eligible children from the program to the school meals programs. Under current law, children that age out of WIC may not be enrolled in school (and participating in the school meals programs), risking gains to their health and well-being from having participated in WIC.

How about making WIC work better for our men and women in uniform? Yes, there are members of our military who receive WIC. In fact, I know of efforts in the last year to close a WIC clinic located on a military base in Washington State serving over 700 people including Navy families.

There is room for bipartisanship. The Senate Agriculture Committee reported a bipartisan bill—which while not perfect and I don't support every element—reflects an honest effort to reach across the aisle that is simply nonexistent in this chamber at this point.

And that is a shame. For the children who rely on the school meal programs to meet their nutritional needs. For the schools and school administrators who fight hard every day to put the students under their charge in a position to succeed. For the American taxpayer, who expect us to govern.

I know the will is there on this side of the aisle to work together on things like increasing the breakfast (and lunch for that matter) reimbursement rates. To support grant programs to help increase access to school breakfast which remains woefully undersubscribed compared to the school lunch program. We can provide grants to support innovative and proven models such as Breakfast after the bell and in the Classroom as well as school equipment grants to help offset some of the costs.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentlewoman. The gentlewoman is absolutely right.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), who is one of our strongest advocates for ending hunger in America.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank my colleague from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for organizing this today and for his leadership on child nutrition programs. I

want to thank all my colleagues for being here. This is an important issue. There is no question about that.

We are here because we are outraged. We are outraged at Republican attempts to undermine our child nutrition programs. We are outraged at their lousy child reauthorization bill. It is a terrible, terrible, terrible bill. My friends should be ashamed of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, a nutritious school meal is just as important to a child's success in school as a textbook. Hungry children can't concentrate. They can't focus on their studies. In short, hungry children cannot learn. That is a fact. Everybody knows that. Yet we have a bill that my Republican friends have drafted that will increase hunger and that will actually take food out of the mouths of children. It is outrageous.

Together, our child nutrition programs, WIC, school breakfast and lunch, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program provide nutritional support for children year round in places where they live, learn, and play.

Unfortunately, H.R. 5003, which is the Republican reauthorization bill, includes a number of harmful provisions that would roll back years of progress and hamper the ability of children to access healthy meals. As I said, to be very blunt, it makes hunger worse in this country.

Specifically, the bill would undermine the successful Community Eligibility Provision, which some of my colleagues have talked about first, included in the last reauthorization bill that has allowed high-poverty school districts to offer universal school meals to all students. In its first 2 years, CEP helped more than 8.5 million low-income students access free meals.

Instead of building on the success of this program, my Republican friends would severely restrict schools' eligibility for the community eligibility option. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that 7,022 schools currently using community eligibility would lose it under this Republican bill, and another 11,647 schools that qualify for community eligibility but who have not yet adopted it would be prevented from doing so in the future.

As we approach the summer months, it is also important to remember that child hunger gets worse in the summer. Consider this: for every six children who get a lunch in school each day, only one receives a meal in the summertime. Instead of being a carefree time for children who depend on getting healthy, reliable meals during the school year, the summer months can be a time of stress, anxiety, and hunger. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Unfortunately, this Republican bill cuts the successful summer EBT pilot program which provides a temporary boost in food assistance benefits during the summer months for families whose

children receive free school meals during the school year, and it fails to make necessary investments to expand the reach of summer food service programs so that more kids have access to healthy summer meals in their neighborhoods.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, this bill rolls back, as my colleagues have mentioned, evidence-based standards that make school meals healthier. USDA estimates that more than 90 percent of schools have successfully—have successfully—implemented these standards.

My grandmother used to say to me when I was growing up that an apple a day keeps the doctor away. I wish she was still alive so I could tell her she was right. Food is medicine. When we eat good food, we eat nutritious food, we tend to have healthy lives. If you eat bad food, if you eat junk food, then you end up getting health issues like diabetes, like high blood pressure, and like obesity. I could go on and on and on.

Why in the world would anybody want to lower the nutrition standards in our school meals to give our kids junkier, less nutritious food? What sense does that make?

If my colleagues who are advocating these reversals of smart policy are doing so only because they want to save a few dollars, then let me tell you something: you are saving nothing.

If we don't get this right, if we don't insist that our kids have access to nutritious, healthier food, the medical costs associated with the health challenges that they will experience are astronomical, as my colleague from Wisconsin mentioned earlier, hundreds of billions of dollars in avoidable healthcare costs as a result of children not having access to good food.

Mr. Speaker, 15 million children face hunger in this country. Instead of undoing the success we have already achieved, Congress should be focused on ways we can strengthen these vital child nutrition programs.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, finally, it is hard for me to understand why we have to be here today, why everything is a fight when it comes to dealing with issues of hunger and when it comes to dealing with issues and making sure our kids get access to good nutrition. It is always a fight. It is always a fight to protect so many vital food and nutrition programs that help our kids. There is either a shocking ignorance about the reality of the poverty that millions of our children face in this country or there is simply indifference. Those are the only two ways I can explain what is going on in this Chamber. Whichever one it is, it is a sad excuse for what my Republican friends are trying to do.

Let's come together. This should be a bipartisan issue. There was a time when fighting hunger and when making sure that our kids had access to nutritious food was a bipartisan issue. George McGovern and Bob Dole worked

together in the 1970s to strengthen our food and nutrition programs. But now in this Chamber these issues have become controversial.

It is sad because there are a lot of people in this country who are depending on us to find ways to end hunger in America. They are depending on us to make sure that their kids, when they go to school, have access to nutritious food, and that they have access to nutritious food during the summer months as well.

Why are my friends making it so difficult?

Enough. Enough of this. Stop beating up on the most vulnerable people in this country. Let's come together. Let's reject this awful draft of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill. Let's come together and do this right. It is the least we can do.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for all of his advocacy on ending hunger.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), an effective member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. TAKANO. I thank the ranking member. I appreciate the time allotted.

Mr. Speaker, in my 24 years as a public schoolteacher, I learned a lot about helping students reach their potential. I learned about project-based learning and STEM education, and I learned about the importance of arts and music in keeping students engaged and excited. But I also learned that there is no lesson plan or study guide that can improve a student's performance if they are hungry. Good nutrition is the foundation to a good education.

With that experience in mind, I rise to express my frustration and sadness with the Republicans' proposal to reauthorize the so-called Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act. The draft bill published last week includes several provisions that would restrict students' access to nutritious food, particularly children in America's poorest neighborhoods.

The proposal undermines nutritional standards for schools despite those standards receiving overwhelming support from pediatricians and public health officials. It weakens a popular program designed to give poor students access to fresh fruits and vegetables in communities where they are scarce, and it increases the burden on poor families to prove that their children are eligible for lunch programs.

But the impact of these provisions is mild compared to what Republicans are proposing to do with CEP, or the Community Eligibility Provision. CEP streamlines National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs by automatically enrolling students who live in areas with high rates of poverty. It was passed with bipartisan support just 6 years ago and it is responsible for feeding more than 3 million students every year.

Now Republicans are seeking to change the CEP formula to kick many

poor communities out of the program. Their goal is to save money by allowing fewer students to enroll in breakfast and lunch programs. Not only is this bad policy that will hurt student performance in low-income schools, it is cruel. In my district alone, this would affect more than 6,000 students. Nationwide it will severely damage a program that is critical to both fighting child poverty and closing the achievement gap in education.

There is a troubling asymmetry to conservatives' approach to spending. When it comes to tax cuts for large businesses that cost this country billions of dollars, conservatives are generous with taxpayer money. But when it comes to hungry students in America's poorest communities, that is when it is time to cut back. That is when it is time to be stingy. That is when they turn their backs on people in need.

Earlier this week, Speaker RYAN said that conservatism is just a happy way of life. This brand of conservatism is not a happy way of life for thousands of hungry children who will lose access to food at school. It is not a happy life for the parents of those children who are struggling every day to provide for them, and it is not a happy life for the generation of students who do not have the foundation to reach their potential.

Who could be happy when so many Americans are suffering?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman, Mr. TAKANO. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE), the leader of the Democratic Whip's Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding and also for his long-term and longstanding commitment to child nutrition programs and to our Nation's children.

I have to say to Mr. TAKANO that I am not happy at all, and I don't think many of us are happy at what is taking place with regard to this Improving Child Nutrition Education Act and what is happening to our children who many go to bed hungry at night. So I thank the gentleman very much for his leadership.

Let me just say to Mr. SCOTT, who is our ranking member, it is very important that we recognize the gentleman's leadership and know that he is on this committee fighting each and every day to make sure that this reauthorization bill, which would take food out of mouths of American schoolchildren, does not do that. So I thank the gentleman for his fight on the committee.

Let me say just a couple of things with regard to H.R. 5003. It would turn the clock back on years of progress and prevent children from eating healthy meals every day. This Republican child nutrition bill would roll back critical, evidence-based nutrition standards made in the 2010 reauthorization bill,

which we were very actively involved with.

Sadly, but unsurprisingly, it would also deny eligible children access to the Free or Reduced Price School Meals Program, and it would slash funding for some electronics benefits transfer.

□ 1915

I just have to say that as a young, single mother on public assistance and food stamps, I don't know what I would have done had my children not had school lunches. This was a bridge over troubled waters for me, and my children and I have to thank my government for that helping hand. But today, in 2016, this bill will roll back these programs, which means more hungry kids in our schools and in our neighborhoods.

That is why several of us are sending a letter to the Education and the Workforce Committee outlining our deep concerns with the changes to our child nutrition programs. I hope that everyone on our side of the aisle signs this important letter, and I hope that the majority will read it carefully. It lays out some of the basic problems in this bill. We want to make sure that everyone on the committee and this entire body understands the impact of what this will cause.

When we take away access to these meals, we jeopardize children's health, their educational attainment, and, really, their future. We know that children who have access to healthy meals are more likely to do well in school, have decreased behavioral problems, and come to class ready to learn. That is what we should want for all of our children.

For the children growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods and who lack equal access to healthy meals, these school meals really are a lifeline. We are not just talking about a few students. The numbers are clear. More than 15.3 million children are living in food-insecure households. Let me say that again. More than 15 million kids are at risk of going to bed hungry every night in America, the richest and most powerful country in the world.

We also know that childhood hunger is far from colorblind. Children of color are disproportionately affected by hunger every day. For example, in 2014, one in three African American children and one in four Latino children were food insecure. For children who live in rural communities, food insecurity is coupled with other barriers, like lack of access to transportation to get to summer feeding sites. More than 17 percent of rural households—that is 3.3 million households—are food insecure.

Child hunger and the lack of nutritious food is a problem that affects every child in every ZIP Code. It is endemic in our country, in rural, urban, and suburban schools. Every Member of Congress has constituents who are hungry. This should be a priority for all of us.

I have seen the impact of food insecurity in my own community in Oakland, California, where one in four children at the Oakland Unified School District do not have access to affordable, nutritious food. These families are forced to make impossible choices to feed their children, especially during the summer months when schools are closed. These families are making decisions every day between food and medicine, food and rent, or food and paying the electric bill.

Mr. Speaker, we need real solutions to these very real problems. Let me just mention my legislation, the Half in Ten Act, H.R. 258, that would develop a national strategy to cut poverty in half over the next decade. That is more than 23 million Americans lifted out of poverty and into the middle class in just the next 10 years.

This bill that we are talking about tonight goes just the opposite way. Surely, we can all recognize that ensuring healthy meals for American children is the first step in this ongoing War on Poverty. It should not be a partisan issue. Feeding hungry kids is a moral imperative.

So let's put our children first, and let's strengthen our child nutrition programs rather than cut them. Our children deserve the security of knowing where their next meal is coming from. That is just basic. It is a basic American value.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman SCOTT for his leadership and thank him for yielding.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. LEE for all of her hard work on the task force.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS), a Member who has been fighting for children as a member of the State legislature, a member of the Los Angeles City Council, and now is a Member of Congress.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman SCOTT for working so hard and tirelessly to fight for those young little voices and those families that need food in their children's stomachs every single day. It is a tireless battle; and once again, today, we are trying to make people aware of the disingenuous, misguided efforts that are in this bill. I rise today to express concern over harmful provisions included in the so-called Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016.

In 2014, more than 17 million American households were at risk of going without having food, including 3.7 million households with American children. We should make every effort possible to help American children access the proper nutrition that is vital to their growth, development, and success in school and beyond.

The provisions outlined in this bill are doing just the opposite by tampering with programs that have been working well, such as the Community Eligibility Provision, the process that ensures that meals can be served to

American children in schools. The provisions in this bill will cause too many American children, especially low-income children, to lose access to these vital programs and to have healthier meals.

The Community Eligibility Provision allows high-poverty school districts to offer universal school meals to all students. This bill raises bureaucratic red tape. It will only lead to fewer schools qualifying for the program and more low-income American children going hungry every single day.

Why add burdensome paperwork on school districts and each and every family in them? Instead, Congress should focus on improving and expanding direct certification, an approach that has been shown to improve program integrity.

What this bill should be doing is addressing the barriers faced by eligible families who are currently not even accessing the benefits of the results of these programs because of the lack of awareness. This bill will freeze the progress that we have made on reducing the intake of salts for American children in their food diets. It would allow junk food to be an acceptable snack, which would undermine our children's health and their entire future.

We must do more to improve school nutrition, attack undernourishment, and combat hunger for millions of American children because, otherwise, we are robbing them of the opportunity to reach their full potential both physically and academically.

Once again, I want to thank my colleague from the great State of Virginia for all the wonderful work that he has been doing and for being so tireless in his effort to make sure that the voices of these families and these children are heard not only in the Education and the Workforce Committee, but beyond.

Thank you for bringing the attention of this to the floor. I am glad to be a partner in this effort.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CÁRDENAS very much for his hard work, too.

Mr. Speaker, reauthorization is an opportunity to improve legislation. Unfortunately, the pending Republican bill reduces nutrition standards and kicks kids off the school meal programs. Instead, we should be improving the program and expanding the child nutrition and the school lunch programs.

I thank my colleagues for saying why this is so important.

I yield back the balance of my time.

IDEOLOGICAL EXTREMISM IS SPREADING ACROSS THE GLOBE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROUZER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, upon visiting some of our wounded