

operating costs of the approved insurance providers and agents shall not exceed \$924,000,000 per year.”

(b) REDUCED RATE OF RETURN.—Section 508(k)(8) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(k)(8)) (as amended by section 11011) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(G) REDUCED RATE OF RETURN.—Beginning with the 2014 reinsurance year, the Standard Reinsurance Agreement shall be adjusted to ensure a projected rate of return for the approved insurance producers not to exceed 12 percent, as determined by the Corporation.”

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I yield to the chairman of the committee for other business.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator.

Madam President, we have a great start here with our first vote.

AMENDMENT NO. 945, AS MODIFIED

Ms. STABENOW. Before proceeding with Senator GILLIBRAND’s amendment, I ask unanimous consent that the Sessions amendment No. 945, with the changes at the desk, as modified, be agreed to.

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To clarify eligibility criteria for agricultural irrigation assistance)

On page 263, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

“(iii) IRRIGATION.—In States where irrigation has not been used significantly for agricultural purposes, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall not limit eligibility under section 1271B or this section on the basis of prior irrigation history.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

AMENDMENT NO. 931

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join my effort to fight off the proposed \$4 billion worth of cuts to SNAP, better known as food stamps.

I ask that my amendment, No. 931, be called up for a vote at a time determined by the manager of the bill.

When Congress proposes to cut the food stamp program, it is not a nameless, faceless person looking for a handout who suffers—it is hungry children, hardworking adults, seniors on fixed incomes, veterans, active-duty servicemembers fighting our wars, and the families who stand by them.

I heard from a single mom in Queens, working full time at a supermarket, doing all she could to make ends meet but still struggles in this very tough economy. Her son came home one day from school with a bag in his hand and told her he saved his lunch for their dinner, and that he asked his best friend if he could have his sandwich to bring home for his brother. Obviously that mother broke down in tears. She needs food stamp assistance.

I heard from a senior in Washington Heights in New York City. She receives a limited fixed income, not enough to live on. She relies on SNAP to pay for food and for some peace of mind. Without that help, putting food on the table will become impossible.

I have heard from veterans all across the country who are making their

voices heard to prevent these cuts, such as one very brave veteran from Colorado Springs. He served in Iraq, but was declared medically unfit to continue his service. He was released from the military and returned home. As he was looking for a job and waited for the VA to activate his benefits, he relied on SNAP to help his family make ends meet. Going from active duty to food stamps, he described, was a culture shock. It was never his plan to go on food stamps. Without that little bit of support, this veteran, his wife, and his children would have needlessly suffered. Today he is back on his feet working full time, but the program was there for him when he needed it, as it should be.

These are the people who rely on this critically needed assistance to put food on the table and who stand to lose if Congress follows through with these deep cuts to SNAP. Half of all food stamp recipients are children, 8 percent are seniors, and 1.4 million veteran households receive food stamps. There are some of you here who would have us believe that these children, seniors, and veterans are gaming the system just to take advantage of taxpayers. The fact is, it is less than 1 percent of every dollar that goes into this program that is wasted, less than 1 percent is evidence of fraud. Imagine if we had that level of efficiency anywhere else in government.

In fact, SNAP keeps our economy moving. This money goes straight to the grocery stores, the store clerks, the truckers who haul the food, and producers all across the country. Sixteen cents of every SNAP dollar actually goes right back to the farmer who grew the crop, according to the USDA. When we cut \$4 billion from SNAP, it means there is \$90 less a month going to half a million households. To folks in this Chamber, \$90 a month may not seem like a lot of money, but for a struggling family that is a week’s worth of groceries. Imagine telling your children they can’t eat the last week of every month. Imagine telling your child at night when he says to you: Mommy, I am still hungry, that there is nothing you can do about it.

As a mother, as a lawmaker, watching a child, a senior, and a brave veteran going hungry is something I will not stand for, and neither should anyone else in this body. Clearly we have to reduce the debt and the deficit, but hardworking parents, their children, seniors, troops, and veterans are just trying to keep the lights on, trying to make ends meet, trying to put food on the table. They did not spend this Nation into debt, and we should not be trying to balance the budget on their back. They deserve better from us. These are the wrong priorities for America.

Instead, the amendment I am proposing would reduce a real source of waste in this budget, and that is corporate welfare for large corporations that do not need it, including insur-

ance companies that are based in Bermuda, Australia, and Switzerland.

My amendment already has the support and advocacy of a third of this body. Thirty-three Senators have signed a letter saying do not cut food stamps, because it protects half a million struggling Americans who too often do not have a voice in Washington when they desperately need it. It makes modest cuts to an already overgenerous corporate welfare system. It is common sense. Standing by those who are suffering is the core. It is a core value of who we are as Americans.

If it is in your heart, and if you believe feeding hungry children is the right thing to do, then stand with us. Stand with America’s veterans. Stand with the AARP and America’s seniors. Stand with struggling families and children all across this Nation. Let’s keep food on the tables of people who need it. When we do, America will be stronger, and this body will be stronger.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:41 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

COST OF GASOLINE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I will hold off asking that the pending amendment be set aside until the manager is here. At this time I will address an enormously important national issue, an issue even more important to rural America; that is, the skyrocketing cost of gasoline at the pump, and oil in general, which is causing enormous hardship for the American consumer, small businesses, truckers, airlines, and fuel dealers.

The bottom line is in Vermont and all over this country people are paying an arm and a leg for a gallon of gas and for home heating oil, and it is a very serious economic problem for the individual consumer and for the entire economy at large. In fact, as we continue to struggle to get out of this terrible recession, high oil and gas prices are enormously detrimental to the entire economic recovery process.

These rapidly increasing prices are particularly harmful to rural America where working people often are forced to travel 50 to 100 miles to their jobs and back. If people are paying \$3.80 for a gallon of gas, that adds up, and it is money coming right out of their wallets.

Over the last 5 months the national average price for a gallon of gasoline