

When did hunger become a partisan issue?

By Adam Davis

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It's not easy for anyone living a comfortable middle- to upper-class life to imagine a life on food stamps.

Eleven dollars a month for so many of us is an insignificant figure, a few green bills in the greater scheme of our spending.

But for others, \$11 a month is quite significant. Maybe it's the difference between getting the fresh vegetables or not, or getting that extra carton of milk.

For the Americans who rely on food stamps, the recent expiration of the 2009 increase in food stamp benefits will hit hard: \$11 less a month for a single person and \$36 less a month for a family of four.

Fresh vegetables or canned vegetables? Two cartons of milk or one?

Sure, it's not easy for those of us fortunate enough to live in relative comfort to fully empathize with the hardships of those who struggle to feed themselves and their families, but shouldn't we as Americans, especially those who govern this country, have some compassion for the less-fortunate?

Instead, Congressional Republicans are looking to cut more from the program as part of the upcoming farm bill: \$40 billion over the next 10 years.

The U.S. spent \$78.4 billion on food stamps in the 2012 fiscal year. Compare that to the almost \$100 billion that, according to the Cato Institute, the U.S. spent on subsidizing businesses in the 2012 fiscal year, or the more than \$100 billion the U.S. spent on wars in the same period of time.

The fact that the first thing the House Republicans look to cut is aid for the weakest among us is despicable.

Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower stated "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

Compare that to North Dakota Rep. Kevin Cramer's biblical reference: "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" — I guess the sick and the elderly, the children and the disabled should get in line to apply for their minimum-wage jobs now.

The idea we should provide for the least-fortunate among us used to be one that transcended lines of political ideology and affiliation.

Now, we have brave crusaders like Rep. Cramer to dismantle the welfare state while ignoring corporate welfare — but I guess food stamp recipients never made a campaign contribution.