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Video Transcript

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**Senator Bernie Sanders,
Democrat**

Hi, this is Senator Bernie Sanders. Thank you very much for inviting me to talk about an issue that gets far too little discussion in this country. And that is poverty.

You know my republican colleagues love to talk about family values. But somehow, in their discussion they forget to talk about the fact that we have 45 million Americans living in poverty. Despite the fact that we are the wealthiest country in history of the world.

They forget to talk about people who are homeless. Forget to talk about people who are hungry in this land of plenty. The fact of the matter is that we need to address poverty in America. In a very bold, and forceful way.

It is not acceptable to me nor, should it be acceptable to any American. That we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on earth. That we have millions of families who are working longer hours for low wages. You know what? Their wages are so low, that they end up going into an emergency food shelf. In order to supplement the inadequate income that they are earning.

Today in America, we have 35 million people who have no health insurance at all. So bottom-line here, is not only do we have to stop the horrendous cuts coming from the republican leadership. Cuts which want to throw 27 million people off of health insurance. Cuts which want to make it harder, significantly harder for young people to go to college. Cuts, which are making massive cuts in nutrition programs. That help feed hungry kids including cuts in the WIC program. Which is a program for pregnant women, and low-income babies.

These are the programs they want to cut. While at the same time, they want to give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country. So in my view, if we are serious about addressing poverty. What we need to do is create millions of decent paying jobs.

And we get legislation in to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. Which will create some 13 million jobs. We need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage, \$15 bucks an hour over a period of a couple of years. We need to pay equity for women workers so they're not making 78 cents on the dollar. Compared to men.

We need to make college affordable for all Americans regardless of the income. It is unacceptable to me, and I hope every American. That we have hundreds of thousands of bright young people who today cannot afford to go to college. Who don't have that opportunity to make it into the middle class.

One other crisis that we almost all spend no time talking about. Which concerns me very much. Is the outrageously high rate of youth unemployment. According to the Economic Policy Institute, over 30% of white and Hispanic kids 17-20 are unemployed. And 50% of black kids are unemployed. This is unacceptable.

So to my mind what we need in this country, what this campaign is about. Is a fundamental change in national priorities. No more tax breaks for the richest people in this country. No more tax breaks for multinational corporations. Who are now placing their profits in the Cayman Islands, and other tax havens. What we do need to do is create a government, which works for all our people. We need to invest in the real needs of our country. Which includes moving aggressively to end poverty in American.

I just want to congratulate all of you for your focus on these important issues. Standing together, we can transform our economy. We can transform our political system.

And I thank you very much for the work you're doing.

END