

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING JULY 4TH
INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 5, 2024

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, each July 4th we have an opportunity to pause and reflect upon our past and celebrate our future for what we as a Nation have accomplished.

Today, we can celebrate that over the nearly two and a half centuries we have conquered the crucibles faced: from the civil war, global conflicts and global deadly pandemics and an assault on our Capitol—the citadel of Democracy—the birthplace of all modern democracies.

The success of our democracy and the means provided to the people of this Nation to shape its present and guide it into the future has been and continues to be the ballot box.

Martin Luther King's Speech at the March on Washington explains the power of the vote to empower We The People to shape our destiny.

"Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights . . . "Give us the ballot and we will no longer plead to the federal government for passage of an anti-lynching law. . . "Give us the ballot and we will fill our legislative halls with men of good will . . . "Give us the ballot and we will place judges on the benches of the South who will do justly and love mercy . . . "Give us the ballot and we will quietly and non-violently, without rancor or bitterness, implement the Supreme Court's decision of May 17, 1954 [in *Brown v. the Board of Education*]

We are not governed by the rule of might makes right—which is what almost happened when January 6 insurrectionists attempted to overthrow our governmental process for electing our Nation's president.

We are Nation of laws—made by Americans on the behalf of Americans.

Which is why it also important to affirm and understand our history as Americans.

The United States came into being under impossible odds, a vast land mass housing separate colonies of disparate people with parochial interests up against the world's sole superpower of their time.

After the revolution, and a government was organized, King George was not alone in predicting its demise, because it was a collection of colonies trying to rule itself as a Nation.

The first schisms appeared as the industrial revolution took hold and women began to push against the bonds that limited them in social, economic and political expression.

Frederick Douglass a man ahead of his time championed the rights of women to vote and expressed the frustration of Black persons who knew the constitution's acceptance of slaves as three fifths of a person were wrong headed and counterproductive to the potential of the new Nation.

Douglass, wrote about "What to the slave is your 4th of July":

"[A] day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages".

But Frederick Douglass was not bitter with America, he was determined to perfect America by making it better through his writings, lectures, speeches, and civic activism.

The efforts at perfecting this Nation are small and sometimes very great.

I am happy to have contributed to this effort by introducing legislation that led to the establishment of Juneteenth as a Federal Holiday—making manifest the Nation's rejection of slavery and embrace of the freedom and equality of rights Douglass hoped for.

The work of past generations and our work today is to perfect this democracy—to keep the experiment going—until we have made it consistent with its founding document:

THE PREAMBLE OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . .

To celebrate our Nation's continued existence would be hollow if we do not remember and acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the men and women in the uniform services who fill the ranks of the Army, Airforce, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines, to defend this Nation.

We also owe our thanks to the nameless and faceless thousands of brave and patriotic public servants who are in our Nation's intelligence agencies who serve in support of the missions of the uniformed services through the Executive Office of the President.

These brave Americans know well Lincoln's Lyceum speech, in which he warned us about the need to be vigilant in defense of our precious democracy—and that nothing should be taken for granted about this experiment.

They know that attacks and threats on our democracy should not be ignored—the cost of doing so can be grave.

They know, like many of you, that our Nation was not a century old when it was plunged into a civil war—with brother taking up arms against brother—where the soil and creeks of battlefields turned red with the life blood of warriors in conflict about which direction the Nation would go—would it be slaveholding, freedom loving or would it end.

The Civil War made manifest Lincoln's warning that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

This fourth of July—we must rededicate ourselves to work towards a system of democracy that hears the voices of all citizens no matter their color, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, or social or economic status, for if we do less than allow them access to the ballot box where all votes are counted as cast—it would dishonor those who fought and died over the centuries so that this country might endure.

And we must give thanks to those who dedicate themselves to our Nation's preservation for the next generations to come.

I know that this is a Nation of patriots—and as we honor its birth we may not celebrate in the same way—but I believe that our love of country is real and present in the minds and hearts of the people of this Nation.

Self-governance of a Nation by the people and for the people who come from such diversity is an experiment that has yet to run its course.

While living this experiment for two-hundred and forty-five years—we have also expanded and extended the blessings of liberty to former slaves, women, young people, native Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and LGBTQI+ persons.

While we are still a work in progress, as each generation learns how best to perfect our democracy, we indeed have a great deal to be thankful for this July 4th.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN
OPERATIONS, AND RELATED
PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2025

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

This legislation houses some of the most important diplomacy, development, and defense initiatives for the United States and the world at-large. The programs that are funded through this bill serve some of the neediest populations in the world, helping millions of people gain access to clean water, safe shelter, nutritious food, and democracy development.

Unfortunately, the bill before us today abdicates U.S. leadership in all of these areas. It eliminates funding for the United Nations and underfunds operations and staffing of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. It cuts funding for the Peace Corps and cuts a staggering \$362 million from programs that improve maternal and child health around the globe.

This bill ignores the existential threat of climate change, which affects the lives and livelihoods of families around the world, including here in America. Climate change is a known

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

threat to our national security, yet there is no funding to help communities adapt to drought, rising coastlines, or extreme heat, and no funding to stop deforestation or recurring coastal flooding. Additionally, there is no support for adapting to renewable energy.

Even in areas where we can usually find bipartisan agreement, this bill falls short. For example, the Feed the Future program, which has historically enjoyed bipartisan support across multiple administrations, received a \$50 million cut. This program has helped feed 32 million children worldwide in the last year alone and has helped their families learn to farm sustainably and stand on their own. This cut will have devastating impacts on children and families that struggle with malnutrition and food instability.

This is a deeply political bill that will diminish America's leadership on the world stage, make it more difficult for us to support our allies and deter our adversaries, and will ultimately jeopardize our national security. For these reasons, I ask that my colleagues vote against it.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH
BIRTHDAY OF LORETTA RINALDI

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 5, 2024

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the birthday of Loretta Rinaldi who is deeply cherished by her community, her church, and family.

Born to English-immigrant parents on July 17, 1924, in Los Angeles, California, Mrs. Rinaldi dedicated her life to education, her community, and family. In 1942, she graduated as valedictorian of Catholic Girls' High School after which she took her vows to become a nun.

At Immaculate Heart, Mrs. Rinaldi taught science and found her passion for being an educator. She continued to educate and be a proactive figure in her community even after leaving the covenant.

Mrs. Rinaldi has truly lived a life of service and is a persistent advocate. In the 1960s, she was an activist in the Immaculate Heart Sisters movement which encouraged the church to embrace cultural shifts. She was one of 315 sisters who voted to give up their vows and leave their lives as nuns after the opposition they faced from the Catholic Church.

It wasn't long after she left the order that Mrs. Rinaldi fell in love and married a widower, Neal Rinaldi, who had five children from his previous marriage. Together, the couple moved to Banning, California where Mrs. Rinaldi was Mr. Rinaldi's caretaker until he passed away.

Mr. Speaker, in celebrating Loretta Rinaldi, we celebrate the empowerment found in knowledge, the precedent set by courageous advocates, and the strength of familial bonds.

On behalf of California's 25th District, I extend my warmest wishes to Mrs. Rinaldi and her family as we join in celebrating this major life milestone.

TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF DON
CHILDERS

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 5, 2024

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of a legendary leader and a pillar of innovation in Eastern Kentucky, my longtime friend Don Childers, best known for founding Childers Oil Company in Whitesburg, Kentucky. After spending a lifetime creating jobs and investing hope in our rural Appalachian region, Don received his heavenly reward at the age of 92.

Over the years, you learn the dynamics of a meeting can change by the presence of one strong leader. Don Childers significantly shifted the dynamics of our entire region, spanning the coalfields of southern and eastern Kentucky, by putting actions to his words and remaining a loyal friend to the region he loved.

Sons and daughters of the coalfields deeply understand the value of hard work, perseverance, and southern hospitality. Every venture that Don and his wife Peggy established over the last five decades are marked by those same characteristics. While Don delivered oil to coal mines in Central Appalachia, Peggy focused on the retail side, designing and operating convenience stores where customers would be greeted with the smell of fresh, homemade food. Established in 1966, Childers Oil Company has now grown from three petroleum trucks and three drivers to a successful family-owned business group with more than 40 convenience stores and a thriving restaurant featuring Peggy's home recipes, as well as more than 1,000 employees in a region desperate for jobs.

Twenty years ago, Don rallied together a group of community leaders to form the Letcher County Planning Commission, focusing on the development of educational, recreational, and economic opportunities. During that time, they have boldly led the charge to build a federal correctional facility in Letcher County to create more than 300 federal jobs, a new airport to improve industrial development, new recreational trails, improved infrastructure, and much more.

Don was not only a good leader, but a respected mentor and teacher, passing down his unwavering work ethic, determination, and compassion to his children and those around him. Most recently, in response to the catastrophic flood that swept through our region in July 2022, the Childers family helped organize flood relief efforts and provided temporary housing for some families who lost everything overnight. Their generosity and quick response ensured flood survivors had emergency supplies and shelter when they needed it the most.

Despite the challenges that have crossed Don's path over the years, he has always responded with the utmost grace, fortitude and resolve to honor his word. He has never allowed fear of criticism to deter his mission to make Eastern Kentucky a better place to live.

Aside from his success in business, Don was equally dedicated to the Whitesburg First Baptist Church, a generous supporter of local schools and non-profits, and a proud U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran. He left a lasting legacy that will carry far beyond his time with us.

I am eternally grateful for Don's friendship and support, as well as the investments that he, Peggy and their children have made in the lives of Eastern Kentuckians every single day. My wife Cynthia and I share our heartfelt sympathy with the entire Childers family and especially Peggy, who lost the love of her life after 71 years of marriage.

HONORING UPTOWN COFFEEHOUSE
AND ITS OWNER, LORNA BRENNAN

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 5, 2024

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Uptown Coffeehouse and its remarkable owner, Lorna Brennan. After more than 20 years of serving the best cup of coffee in town, Uptown Coffeehouse closed its doors on June 30, 2024. Since it first opened in Howell, Michigan, in 2002, Lorna and her team of baristas created a cherished meeting spot, warmly welcoming all who entered.

Located at the bustling corner of Grand River and Michigan Avenues in a beautiful late 19th-century historic building, Uptown Coffeehouse was truly at the heart of downtown Howell. Through grit and determination, Lorna restored the building to its former splendor, including a historic renovation of the facade in 2019. Lorna's vision transformed this building into a vibrant coffee house, meeting place, and art gallery.

For more than two decades, Uptown Coffeehouse was a second home for Lorna and a treasured fixture in the community. Lorna's son, who was a preschooler when the business opened, grew up within its walls, celebrating milestones and accomplishments along the way.

In addition to coffee and baked goods, Uptown Coffeehouse offered a sense of belonging and outstanding service to customers. Its expansive front windows provided a picturesque view of the city and changing seasons. With local art displayed for patrons to enjoy, the venue became a vibrant cultural hub as it hosted open mic nights, spoken word events, and other entertainment through the years.

The community's love for Uptown Coffeehouse was evident through numerous local awards, including the People's Choice Award for the Best Howell Coffee Shop in 2019. It was a special place, providing customers with memories to last a lifetime. It was often the first place new residents visited downtown and were welcomed to Howell. Uptown is where friendships were formed and regulars found a haven for their morning routines and work sessions. It was a place where first dates happened and marriage proposals were made.

Despite challenges, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lorna and the staff at Uptown Coffeehouse always remained optimistic and focused on helping others. Their kindness and generosity knew no bounds as they supported school groups, local charities, and donated coffee gift cards to hospital staff during the pandemic.

July 5, 2024

As we bid farewell to Uptown Coffeehouse, not only for her, but for the entire Howell community. It is with profound gratitude that I honor the legacy of Uptown Coffeehouse and let us recognize Lorna Brennan and her beloved establishment that was a second home Lorna Brennan.