

understand that we have a huge imbalance between wages and labor and capital, which Lincoln warned about.

I ask the majority party to work with us to raise the minimum wage in order to help the economy.

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

1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE HBCU CAUCUS

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege and honor today to be a part of a Special Order on the 1-year anniversary of the bipartisan HBCU Caucus. For those who are listening or who are watching, let me make sure you understand that HBCU stands for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. That is what we will be talking about today.

I am the co-chair of this caucus, along with a Member of this body who came up with this idea and who has spearheaded this effort from the very beginning—she is the spirit behind it—Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS from the great State of North Carolina.

I yield to Congresswoman ADAMS so that she may speak to this House and to the Nation about the importance of this topic and about the importance of HBCUs to the United States of America.

Ms. ADAMS. I thank Congressman BYRNE. I appreciate the gentleman's yielding to me and his work with this caucus.

Mr. Speaker, today marks the first anniversary of the bipartisan Congressional Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus, known by many as the HBCU Caucus.

As a retired 40-year educator from Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, I have always believed that every young person who desires a college education should get that opportunity. Like many of the young people I taught at Bennett College for those four decades of my academic career, my story is one of perseverance.

I was a first-generation college student at North Carolina A&T. I came to school like so many students today—not fully prepared to do college work. A&T gave me a chance because it believed in opportunity and the fundamental importance of education that W.E.B. Du Bois spoke about when he said: "Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental." That is why I advocate for HBCUs, for they advocated for me, and they invested in my success.

There are more than 100 HBCUs in the United States that enroll more than 300,000 students per year. HBCUs are taking our students in—students

like me and like you—from diverse backgrounds and are giving them a chance, a chance that other schools might not have given them. Many HBCU students are often like I was—first generation from low-income families—so we must ensure that all students, including those from economically strained backgrounds, have access to a high-quality education and are equipped with the knowledge and the 21st century skills that they need to succeed. HBCUs do just that for so many students. HBCUs represent 3 percent of colleges and universities; yet we graduate 20 percent of African Americans with undergraduate degrees and 50 percent of African American educators. Despite these facts, HBCUs have historically been underfunded.

There are many unique challenges that HBCUs and the students they serve face. Many students don't have the luxury of being supported through school. Some have to work their way through, taking breaks along the way. It is imperative then that we work together to ensure that these institutions not only have the resources that are necessary to encourage enrollment and increase the graduation rates among these students, but also that they are capable of preparing these young people for the workforce. That is why I launched the first bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus with my Republican co-chair and former Alabama Community College System Chancellor, Congressman BRADLEY BYRNE from Alabama.

Representative BYRNE, I thank you for being my co-chair. It is a pleasure to serve our HBCUs alongside of you.

The purpose of the caucus is to create a national dialogue so as to educate other Members of Congress and their staffs about the issues that impact HBCUs as well as to address the needs of HBCUs and to support the students and graduates of these institutions by increasing access and career opportunities. With the help of Representative BYRNE, we have grown the caucus to 56 members now, from both sides of the aisle, over the course of this year. I am proud to announce that the caucus is now bicameral and has the support of my home State Senator, RICHARD BURR of North Carolina.

Those of us in Congress have more to learn from our HBCU institutions and from the students who attend them. That is why, when we first launched the caucus, our first goal was to listen, and we did just that—we listened. We have held several staff briefings on various topics that impact HBCUs. I hosted a roundtable in my district with presidents and representatives from 10 HBCUs in the 12th District of North Carolina. I hosted a roundtable in my district, as well, with the former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as well as with presidents and representatives from HBCUs in the 12th District to make sure that their needs were heard. We hosted a diversity in the workforce event with Fortune 500 com-

panies to discuss the role HBCUs play in graduating a skilled and diverse workforce while learning more about the programs that are currently available to improve diversity at these companies. We surveyed members of the caucus and Members of Congress to find out what their priorities are for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and we hosted conference calls with chancellors and presidents for their input. At the start of this year, we held a caucus meeting with the new Secretary of Education, Dr. John King, Jr., in order to share those priorities with him.

Caucus members have been steadfast in crafting legislation to positively impact our HBCUs, which I am proud to support, from the America's College Promise Act, which would grant any first-time student access to community college for free and sets aside special funding for HBCUs and other institutions that serve many low-income, first-generation college students, to the HBCU Historic Preservation Program, which would reauthorize funds for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings on these campuses.

Recently, I introduced the HBCU Innovation Fund Act, which would provide \$250 million in competitive grants to these schools across the country in order to develop critical solutions to meet current and emerging needs, like student retention and improving graduation rates; but this is just the start, and it is, clearly, not the end of our work to support HBCUs.

Many of the members of this bipartisan HBCU Caucus have long been champions for education and for our schools. This bipartisan caucus is just another step in the right direction as we join forces across the aisle so that we can truly make a difference and deliver for our HBCUs: from Assistant Democratic Leader CLYBURN, who works to protect institutions like South Carolina State and who has helped start Centers of Excellence, which have had a tremendous impact on students in his State; to my ranking member on Education and the Workforce, Representative BOBBY SCOTT, who has used his leadership position to be a national voice for all HBCUs and institutions of higher learning; to Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, a leader in STEM education and a steadfast voice for our students—and HBCUs in particular.

To Congressional Black Caucus chair and my colleague from North Carolina, Representative G.K. BUTTERFIELD, I thank him for making HBCUs a priority for our Congressional Black Caucus and for Congress.

To our Democrat vice chairs—Representative BENNIE THOMPSON and Representative TERRI SEWELL—and our Republican vice chairs—Representatives BRUCE WESTERMAN and RANDY FORBES—who have all been fierce advocates for HBCUs in their districts, and to my colleagues—Representatives CEDRIC RICHMOND and CORRINE BROWN—

who are co-chairs of the CBC's HBCUs task force, they have all put HBCUs first and have brought Members and the administration to the table to highlight the issues of concern.

Thank you to all of these Members for doing this good work and for bringing their expertise to the HBCU Caucus, because we couldn't do it without strong leaders in our communities who represent these institutions.

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund, an organization that supports the 47 publicly supported HBCUs, and the Thurgood Marshall Foundation played a critical role in the caucus' inception, and their very own president, Johnny Taylor, was the host for the caucus launch.

Thank you as well to the United Negro College Fund, which works to support the 37-member private Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The UNCF has been instrumental in widening the caucus' reach and has helped provide more than \$4.5 billion to help more than 400,000 students get college degrees. So we thank Dr. Lomax and all of those who work with him.

To the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, NAFEO, which has also remained a key advocate for our HBCUs and our students, thank you to that organization and, also, to Lezli Baskerville.

I also congratulate the 1890 land grant institutions on their 125th anniversary last year. I was honored to participate in the House Agriculture Committee's hearing, in July, with the presidents and leaders of those universities, and I look forward to continuing to work with these organizations.

We have come a long way this year, but with this crisis still existing in education and with those facing our HBCUs, we still have a long road ahead of us; so I look forward to growing this partnership with Representative BYRNE and with more Members from both Chambers and from both sides of the aisle. We can continue to collectively work together in a bipartisan fashion to make a difference for our HBCUs and to protect and advance the students they serve.

□ 1615

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough about the leadership on this issue that Congresswoman ADAMS has provided. She just did a terrific job of explaining to us all not just the progress that we have made over the last year, but the promise we have in the years to come to take this area and continue to move forward on it.

What a rich tradition we have in this country with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. I come from the State of Alabama. We are justifiably proud of the great institutions in our State. I can only tell you about a few, but let's start with probably our flagship, which is Tuskegee University, worldwide famous and well known for so many different things.

It is not just what its history is, although it is a rich and storied industry. It is also what it continues to do today and what Tuskegee will do in the future to enrich the lives of hundreds, yet tens of thousands, of people who have gone on in their lives and will go on in their lives to do great things for our State of Alabama and for the United States of America.

I am blessed in my district to have Bishop State Community College. Bishop State is one of the public community colleges in the State of Alabama. It was under my jurisdiction when I was the chancellor of post-secondary education. It is rich in its own history with an incredibly important mission in our rapidly growing economy in the Mobile area of providing the trained workforce for all of the business and industry that have been coming and is already there in our district.

So Bishop State stands as a great symbol to me not just of what we are, but of what we can be as we work with these institutions throughout my State of Alabama, throughout the South, and throughout the Nation.

I stand here not as a Black person, not as a Democrat, because this is not a White or Black issue. This is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. This is an American issue. This is about providing opportunity for everyone in America.

So often we talk about opportunity. Here is an example of where we are doing something about opportunity. We can open all the doors we want in America, but if the people of America or a small portion of the people of America can't walk through those doors, then we don't have real opportunity.

This Congress has few opportunities to really do the things that need to be done to help people. Here is one. Here is one where we can really do something that will make a tremendous difference.

Congresswoman ADAMS really put her finger on it. There are many people that go to HBCUs who didn't get there with the sort of support that they needed, who didn't get there with the sort of academic preparation that they needed.

Now, we can say: Oh, well. That is their problem and they just have to find some way to deal with it. Or we can understand that that is not just a problem for them, but that is a problem for all of us.

If we can work with them and help them with those problems through the programs that we have at these HBCUs, not only have we given that individual an opportunity to lift themselves up, but as they lift themselves up, they lift up our communities and they lift up our Nation.

So I was very honored when Congresswoman ADAMS came to me to ask me to participate in this very, very worthy endeavor with her. I know we have done some great things over the

last year, but that is just a foretaste of what we can do in the years to come with her inspiration and with her leadership.

We have a number of great members in this caucus. One of our most steadfast members is one of the great leaders from the State of Florida, Representative GWEN GRAHAM.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GRAHAM) for her to come forward and present to us her own background and her own feelings about HBCUs.

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BYRNE and Congresswoman ADAMS for hosting today's Special Order and for all you do to support our Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

It was such an honor for me to join this caucus as a founding member with you a year ago. It is hard to believe it has already been a year. I am proud of the bipartisan work we have done on behalf of our HBCUs.

There are more than 100 HBCUs in the United States that enroll more than 300,000 students per year. HBCUs represent 3 percent of colleges and universities, yet graduate 20 percent of African Americans with undergraduate degrees and 25 percent of African American degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

In my district, I am so proud to represent Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, one of our State's most historic and important universities. Florida A&M—or FAMU, as it is more affectionately known in north Florida—was founded in 1887 with just 15 students and 2 instructors. Let me just say: Go Rattlers.

Today the university has grown to enroll nearly 10,000 students, and it was named by the U.S. News & World Report as the top public Historically Black College and Universities in the entire Nation for 2015.

It is also listed among The Princeton Review's Best in the Southeast Colleges and is one of the top picks for providing a high-quality education at an affordable price in Florida, according to The College Database. And FAMU is the Nation's top producer of African Americans at the bachelor degree level.

It is such an honor for me to represent FAMU and to join the HBCU caucus in supporting all of our Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the wonderful students who attend them.

Again, I thank Congressman BYRNE and Congresswoman ADAMS for hosting this Special Order.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her leadership on this issue and so many issues. It is so important that we have the understanding, each of us, of the institutions in our own district. She talked about Florida A&M, a great institution of higher education in her district.

Part of what we hope to do in the caucus is to educate every Member in

this body about the institutions in their districts and—perhaps they don't have any institutions in their district—about institutions across America that are HBCUs and what they have done for their communities and what they have done for the United States of America and continue to do every day.

I am very blessed to have been able to work with a number of HBCUs in Alabama in my prior positions in the State school board and as a chancellor of post-secondary education. I must admit I didn't know very much about them before I was in those positions.

But as I learned about them, as I got to know the administration and the faculty, but, most importantly, the students at those institutions, I realized what a rich resource that is for those students and for the communities that they are founded in.

You look around the country at some of the great graduates of these institutions and you realize where would we have been without the HBCUs, particularly during a period of time when African Americans were denied access to regular institutions of higher education because of discrimination in American society.

Just because we have made progress in that regard doesn't mean that we have ended the need for HBCUs. In many ways, the need has never been greater, because what we need in our society from the people in our society—in order to perform at the levels that our economy requires, it requires ever greater levels of education, training, and expertise. What might have been enough to know 50 years ago, we need to know far more now and we need to know it at every level of education.

We are here today to talk about colleges and universities. Some of the great colleges and universities in America have understood the importance of this and have rallied around our cause. I will never forget our kick-off day when we had the chancellor of the University of North Carolina system here, one of the great university statewide systems that we have in this country, as a recognition of those universities and the role that HBCUs play along with them in providing higher education to people throughout the United States of America.

The United Negro College Fund says that a mind is a terrible thing to waste. A great country cannot waste any mind. We need every mind in America to get whatever they need to become the person that they want to become, to realize their dreams, as I said earlier, not only to lift themselves up, but to lift the rest of us up with them. That is what we are talking about when we talk about HBCUs.

I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina again for her leadership, for her inspiration, for her continuing to be somebody out there to tell us that we need to keep pushing, we need to keep pushing. As long as she is willing to continue to do that, I am willing to continue to do that with her.

I yield back the balance of my time.

THE DISPARATE IMPLEMENTATION OF AMAZON.COM'S PRIME FREE SAME-DAY DELIVERY

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, despite our best efforts, racial redlining is still alive and well today. I come to this Chamber because racial redlining has once again reared its ugly, evil head across our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, on April 21, Bloomberg published an analysis entitled "Amazon Doesn't Consider the Race of Its Customers. Should It?"

Bloomberg explains how amazon.com discriminates against mostly African American communities nationwide by shutting them out, shutting them off from receiving its Prime free same-day delivery service.

Mr. Speaker, it must be understood that mostly predominantly African American ZIP Codes in this Nation have been excluded from receiving Amazon's Prime free same-day delivery service. It must be understood, Mr. Speaker, that this is absolutely unacceptable.

Amazon's vice president for global communications, Mr. Craig Berman, feebly attempted to justify this by saying that "demographics play no role" in the determination by which neighborhoods have access to Prime free same-day service.

□ 1630

He goes on to state that distance matters and that in terms of determining factors, close proximity to a warehouse is certainly one of the factors that they consider.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on the face of it, that seemingly appears to be both logical and understandable. However, when viewed through a sharper lens, there are some glaring, flagrant inconsistencies.

In my hometown of Chicago, Illinois, just for example, same-day service is available to a majority of the city and its surrounding suburbs. This free, same-day delivery service is not available to my constituents in predominantly African American ZIP Codes.

Mr. Berman, the article explains, again, feebly blames this on the distance of these ZIP Codes from a distribution center that is located in Kenosha, Wisconsin. That would be understandable if not for the fact that this free, same-day Amazon delivery service is available to residents in Oak Lawn, Illinois, which is a community that is also in the district that I represent, but Oak Lawn is even farther south, farther away from Kenosha, Wisconsin, a greater distance from the distribution center in Kenosha, Wisconsin, than all these African American-pre-dominant ZIP Codes.

Mr. Speaker, because I live in a predominantly African American ZIP Code, I cannot be served by the Amazon Prime free, same-day delivery service, but my White constituents can be served by Amazon with their Prime free, same-day delivery service.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, despite amazon.com's assertions of impartiality and a strictly numbers-based approach to the availability of this Prime free, same-day delivery services, Amazon's implementation of this service has been disparate, disappointing, disgusting, and apparently discriminatory.

Mr. Speaker, not only does this occur in the city of Chicago, but also Bloomberg found similar situations existing in five other cities. Not just Chicago, but Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, New York City, and Washington, D.C., all across our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, historically and unfortunately, the situation with amazon.com is not a unique experience for people of color. Today, in the year 2016, too many Americans still are denied services and access to goods based off the color of their skin and where they reside or the location of their ZIP Code. This is redlining. This practice is known as redlining. This redlining has been a major, significant obstacle to communities of color to gain access to the fullness of their American Dream, to the fullness of their American ideal.

For decades now, despite efforts during the civil rights era of our Nation, during similar efforts, not only before, but even after the civil rights era of our Nation, despite many multiple legislative attempts to stamp redlining out, this very injustice continues to spread, even among some of my corporate citizens who, on the face of it, would never accept the fact that they engage in discriminatory business practices.

But when you look at it from my perspective, look at it from my vantage point, look at it from the experience of my constituents who are African American, Amazon fails to meet the acid test. Its Prime same-day delivery service is far less than prime for too many of my constituents and too many American citizens.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this body of the U.S. House of Representatives, we cannot allow businesses in this country to discriminate against any particular group of Americans. We cannot allow businesses in this country to discriminate against neighborhoods, against communities based on their business's race-based perceptions.

Mr. Speaker, this body, this U.S. House of Representatives cannot allow the Amazons of the world, amazon.com to violate laws of our Nation, laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Amazon cannot violate the laws of our Nation with impunity and without accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I must call upon amazon.com and its CEO, Jeff Bezos, to come and do what is right, to come and