

for New Hampshire Recovery, are donating their time and energy to supply our State with more treatment options as Federal, State, and local governments develop better solutions.

In Congress we created the bipartisan task force to combat the heroin epidemic to help develop these types of solutions, and I praise these individuals for their selflessness.

HONORING MARGARET DUNLEAVY

(Mr. BISHOP of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on the career of an outstanding public servant in my district, Margaret Dunleavy.

Mrs. Dunleavy retired at the end of 2015 after serving Livingston County as their clerk for 19 years. In her capacity as county clerk, Mrs. Dunleavy has been responsible for overseeing elections in the county as well as maintaining vital records and all circuit court records. She was first elected in 1996, and the voters of Livingston County chose her as their clerk in four additional elections.

Her role as county clerk was not Mrs. Dunleavy's first public service experience. She previously served as the Hartland Township, Michigan, clerk and deputy clerk.

Mrs. Dunleavy will be remembered as a hardworking, professional, ethical, and highly qualified clerk. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work with her, and I wish her all the best in her future retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent such a dedicated public servant in Michigan's Eighth District.

Thank you, Mrs. Dunleavy, for your commitment to Livingston County.

IRAN TERROR FINANCE TRANSPARENCY ACT

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act. This important legislation prevents sanctions from being lifted from banks and individuals who are connected to terrorism or Iran's weapons development program.

We do not need to be rewarding bad actors that are helping Iran become a nuclear state and continue to be the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Recently Iran made headlines by conducting two ballistic missile tests, already violating the deal that the President forced on the American people earlier this year. Disappointingly, we have heard nothing from the administration.

This is the same Iran who funnels money to Hezbollah to finance ter-

rorist attacks and the same Iran who awards medals for the capture of U.S. soldiers. Despicable.

It is abundantly clear that Iran is not to be trusted, and we must prevent rogue nations from becoming stronger. The administration needs to immediately reverse its course and hold those supporting terrorist efforts accountable.

In the name of national security, I urge my colleagues in the House to join me in voting in favor of this crucial and timely piece of legislation.

HONORING JULIA AARON HUMBLES

(Mr. RICHMOND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a second to recognize a civil rights hero and New Orleans native who recently passed away: Julia Aaron Humbles.

An active participant in the civil rights movement from an early age, she was selected to be on the first Freedom Ride bus at the age of 18, which was ultimately firebombed outside Anniston, Alabama.

She wasn't on that bus. She was, in fact, in Orleans Parish prison because she was arrested for picketing outside a segregated Woolworth's department store.

Julia was constantly testing the rules of segregation in New Orleans. She is quoted as saying: I was the kind of kid that would move up the colored sign on the buses. I would use the White restroom or water fountain. If I got caught, I would say flippantly that I just wanted to taste that White water, and then I would run.

Julia passed away on January 26 in Stone Mountain, Georgia, of cancer. She was 72 years old. Our country is a much better place because of the sacrifices Julia made during her lifetime. Our sympathies and prayers are with her family today.

EQUAL TREATMENT OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ACT, H.R. 711

(Mr. RATCLIFFE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to represent thousands of teachers, firefighters, and law enforcement officers across the Fourth District of Texas who have dedicated their careers to public service.

As the son of two schoolteachers and as a former law enforcement official myself, I have a personal and deep-felt appreciation for those who shape future generations by educating our children and protecting the communities where we live.

Right now there are nearly 900,000 of these public servants who are being unjustly denied their hard-earned retire-

ment benefits through an arbitrary formula called the windfall elimination provision, which can reduce their Social Security checks by up to \$413 a month.

That is why I have cosponsored and why I strongly support H.R. 711, the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act, to reduce and to eliminate the windfall elimination provision.

I urge my colleagues to take it up for a vote as soon as possible so that we can ensure that our public servants receive both the Social Security benefits and the pensions that they most certainly have earned.

CONGRATULATING DARYL VEATCH

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in admiration of a leader in Missouri's Fourth District, Mr. Daryl Veatch.

Daryl has served tirelessly to provide reliable light and energy to Missouri members of the Osage Valley Electric Cooperative, of which I am a lifelong member. After 43 years, Mr. Veatch has resigned his position as the general manager of Osage Valley in Butler, Missouri.

His passion for excellence was seen throughout all of his work: from the beginning at Grundy Electric Cooperative, where he served as a clerk, to his tenure as the president of the Missouri Electric Cooperative Human Resources Association, the Accountants Association, and a member of the Public Relations Committee.

This year Daryl was honored with the esteemed A.C. Burrows Award given by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives for his leadership above and beyond the call of duty to strengthen and improve the economic and social conditions of his community.

Part of going above and beyond for Daryl was being actively involved as a leader on the local Butler R-V School Board, the area Chamber of Commerce, and his Rotary Club.

Thank you for giving your life to the service of the citizens of Missouri's Fourth District. I congratulate you on a job well done. I look forward to hearing of the continued impact you will have in and for our community.

AN HOUR OF POWER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials relevant to the subject matter of this discussion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to rise this evening as co-chair, along with my distinguished colleague who represents the Eighth District of New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour, an hour of power, addressing the state of our Union, Dr. King's dream, and today's African American message.

Congressman JEFFRIES is a scholar, a distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee. He continues to be a tireless advocate for social and economic justice, working hard to reform our criminal justice system, improve the economy for hardworking Americans, and to make college more affordable for all. Most importantly, he is someone that I am proud to follow and he is my colleague.

Today we come to educate and to discuss some of the many contributions and accomplishments in American history that African Americans etched into the cornerstone of this America, Mr. Speaker, that they helped change. The Congressional Black Caucus is and continues to be a part of that change.

As we reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose holiday we recently observed, thanks to our Congressional Black Caucus colleague, Congressman JOHN CONYERS, the dean, who worked tirelessly to have the day observed as a Federal holiday, we pause to reflect on our progress and our history not only to remember, but to acknowledge, our unfinished work.

Congressional Black Caucus members and other colleagues with constituents across the country participated in holiday services, programs, marches, and many other events last week. This was not a day off, Mr. Speaker, but a day on in the spirit of Dr. King's legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to join some 4,000 constituents in my district in Columbus for the Nation's largest Martin Luther King breakfast celebration.

□ 1930

As I sat there, I was reminded of his words that we live by and that we are guided by: "Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase." Later I had the opportunity to join hundreds of folks to march in freezing weather, singing "We Shall Overcome."

Today we also mark the beginning of the observation of Black History Month, to celebrate giants in civil rights, in the civil rights movement, as well as labor and education, transportation, the arts, and the service movement.

As we reflect on Dr. King's dream, just a few weeks ago President Barack Obama from this House floor, Mr. Speaker, delivered his final State of the Union Address. In his address, the

President delivered a speech filled with hope and optimism, reminding us that we, the people—emphasizing all people—want opportunity and security for our families. It was a message of a better future, fairness, and democracy for all Americans because we rise or fall together, Mr. Speaker.

President Obama continues to remind us that ours is a nation bounded by a common creed and that our American values of equality, fairness, and justice should be available to all, not just a fortunate few. Far too long people and communities of color continue to be left behind when we discuss equality, fairness, and justice.

In the 48 years since his death, while we have made some strides in confronting injustices and ending unequal treatment, there is still work to be done. Our Nation is still plagued by the vestiges of segregation and unequal laws and policies, evident today in Flint, Michigan, and its lack of clean drinking water; in it being harder, not easier, to exercise the constitutional right to vote through voter disenfranchisement; Black men being killed in Ferguson, Baltimore, Chicago, and my State of Ohio; inequities in health care, poverty, and in our failing schools.

But, Mr. Speaker, the time is now for us to work together to protect the most at risk among us, to defend the foundation of our democracy, and to expand opportunity for all people.

However, Republican leadership fails to act and refuses to bring up Voting Rights Advancement Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation, for an up-or-down vote.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, we will hear from our Congressional Black Caucus colleagues on the state of our Union and where we go from here. I welcome the dialogue and the debate.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor and privilege to yield to Congresswoman BARBARA LEE from the 13th District of California. We know her as a fearless advocate, fighting to eliminate poverty. We know her as someone who has a history of representing not only the people of her district but the people of America. I have had the opportunity to witness this firsthand, as I serve on her committee when she fights to end the War on Poverty. It is my honor to ask Congresswoman BARBARA LEE to bring her message to us tonight.

Ms. LEE. Let me first thank Congresswoman BEATTY for her very kind and humbling remarks, but also for her tremendous leadership on so many issues, not only since she has been here in Congress, but before she came representing her constituents, and really looking out for, speaking out for, and working for the most vulnerable in our society.

I am really proud of what she is doing with the Congressional Black Caucus, also Congressman JEFFRIES for continuing to organize these important sessions really to beat the drum and to allow our country to understand what the issues are that the Congressional

Black Caucus continues to work on because if, in fact, we address those issues, as you know, that the most vulnerable are dealing with each and every day, we will strengthen America, and so our country will be stronger. I thank both of them for making sure that we are doing that.

We celebrate tonight the start of Black History Month, but I would like to reflect quickly again what we are doing tonight on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of true democracy.

In his famous speech, "I Have a Dream," let me just quote here what he asked the American people to do. He said:

"To make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

"Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all God's children.

"Now is the time to lift our Nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood." Of course and sisterhood.

As I think about his powerful words going into Black History Month and his challenge for America to live up to her highest ideals, we must reflect on how far we have come and where we need to go.

Now, of course, the right to vote is the bedrock of our democracy, which Dr. King reminded us of when he said: "Give us the ballot, and we will fill our legislative halls with men and women of goodwill." In his honor, we must pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 2867, introduced by a great woman, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL.

In 1967 Dr. King explained the underlying nature of the challenges facing our country in his book "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos Or Community?" he talked about these triple evils. He wrote about poverty, racism, and war. He said they are the forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle in our country. He says: "They are inter-related, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the beloved community. When we work to remedy one evil, we affect all evils."

So we must come together as never before to address these issues that infect our communities in order for our Nation to move beyond the quicksands of racial and economic injustice.

Of course, the first of these evils is poverty, a harsh reality lived every day by more than 46 million Americans. Our Joint Economic Committee report, championed by Congresswoman MALONEY and the Congressional Black Caucus, demonstrated and showed that African Americans are disproportionately affected by the scourge of poverty. The poverty rate in our community is 27 percent. One in three African American kids live in poverty. One in five kids in the entire country live in poverty. Poverty rates throughout our country are much too high for everyone, and we know how to eliminate poverty.

Our assistant leader, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, a great human being who has worked so hard to eliminate poverty for so many years has come up with a formula that would target resources to those rural and urban communities with the highest rates of persistent poverty.

We have our Half in Ten Act, which establishes a national strategy to cut poverty in half over the next decade. That is more than 22 million Americans lifted into the middle class in just 10 years by coordinating local, State, and Federal anti-poverty programs.

Likewise, our Pathways Out of Poverty Act is a comprehensive anti-poverty bill that starts by creating good-paying jobs while redoubling our investments in proven programs that empower families to build pathways out of poverty into the middle class.

Of course, Dr. King mentioned the second evil, which is racism. While racial barriers and biases are endemic through our society, they are very and most apparent in our broken criminal justice system. It is high time that we work to fix our criminal justice system that far too often fails African Americans. Yes, Black lives matter.

So today in America, an African American is killed by a security officer, police officer, or self-proclaimed vigilante every 28 hours. That is nearly once a day. One in three Black men can plan to spend at least some part of their life behind bars, and men of color make up 70 percent of the U.S. prison population. Let me say that again. Seventy percent of the U.S. prison population are men of color. That is simply outrageous.

Now, we have ended legal segregation. Our first African American President is serving his second term in the White House. Our Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, serves as our first African American female Attorney General. But so much must be done to achieve the dream of liberty and justice for all.

Dr. King told us over and over again that we live in two Americas. This was in 1967, in one of his speeches. The Kerner Commission report still describes American society today. We have got to really look at our history and acknowledge and honor the legacy of those who really brought us this far. But when you look at the statistics and what is taking place now in communities of color and the African American community, it just shows us what we have to do. We have a long way to go.

Dr. King finally spoke of war. He talked about the fact that our Nation continues to be involved in endless wars, and communities are suffering the costs. The Pentagon consumes 60 percent of discretionary spending compared to 11 percent that we spend on education, job creation, and resources to help our young people live the life that they so deserve in terms of being educated and providing workforce training, housing, health care, all the

opportunities that are the American opportunities to allow us to live the American Dream.

Congresswoman BEATTY and Congressman JEFFRIES, I just want to thank you for arranging the time for us to talk tonight. We have real solutions. You have real solutions. Every member of the Congressional Black Caucus has real solutions to end poverty, to end racism, and to end war.

During Black History Month, we need to recommit ourselves to all of the solutions that members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Members of this body as a whole, have if the political will were there so we can honor the legacy of those who came before us during Black History Month. By honoring them, we say we are going to pick up that mantle and really address these triple evils once and for all.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman LEE, for reminding us of the work we have to do to strengthen our America and for giving us those facts that clearly point out the barriers that we have and also the disparities when you look at 70 percent of our men being incarcerated, yet we don't make up 70 percent of the population.

Thank you for reminding us of all the work and the words of Martin Luther King because you are so right. To sum it up in his words: injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere.

Thank you. We will continue that work.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor and privilege to yield to Congresswoman KAREN BASS from the 37th District of California. It is a great honor for me because she is certainly not only a leader, but an advocate domestically and globally for young girls. As a matter of fact, when I think of her work across this Nation in foster care, I call her the Sojourner Truth of foster care.

When I think of her leadership, it is important for me to remind folks that she was the first African American female to be Speaker of the House of the great State of California. Today it is indeed my honor to yield to Congresswoman BASS.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman BEATTY. I want to congratulate her for her leadership that she has displayed since day one of coming to the House of Representatives, and knowing of her leadership in the State of Ohio, serving as the leader of the legislature in Ohio.

I want to acknowledge my colleague HAKEEM JEFFRIES. I have always appreciated his leadership in the committees as well as his leadership within the House. I am glad that he is very much a part of our Caucus.

I know our theme today is: "The State of Our Union: Have We Achieved Dr. King's Dream?" I have to say that the state of our union is a mixed bag. Have we achieved Dr. King's dream? As a nation, we haven't, but if we look at the success of individuals, many individuals have achieved remarkable levels of success.

While the success of individuals should rightfully be celebrated, until the richest nation on the planet in the history of the world has figured out how to address poverty, income inequality, and provide opportunity for everyone to succeed in our Nation, Dr. King's dream is a dream deferred.

Dr. King would have been so proud to have been at the inauguration of the first African American President, but he would have been horrified to see a man achieve that level of success, becoming the most powerful man in the world, and still be subjected to doubters who ask to see his birth certificate, questioning if he was actually an American, obviously code for "he might be the President, but he is still not one of us"; asking to see his college transcripts, questioning if his academic success was legitimate.

Dr. King would be horrified to learn the number of hate groups. White supremacist organizations exploded after the election of the first African American President of the United States. He would have been shocked to hear that leaders in our country actually publicly stated that they would do everything they could, including hurting the national economy, to ensure that the Nation's first African American President did not serve a second term.

□ 1945

Dr. King would have been overjoyed when this President was reelected to a second term, so that no one could say the first time was an aberration. Dr. King would have been so proud of the millions of people who withstood attempts to block their right to vote and to know that thousands were willing to stand for hours to make sure they voted and reelected President Obama.

Dr. King would have celebrated the creation of a program to provide health coverage for the majority of people in the Nation. He would have celebrated the fact that this was accomplished in the first term of President Obama's administration.

Dr. King would have celebrated the fact that when the law was signed by President Obama, for the first time, insurance companies could no longer refuse to provide coverage for people if they had an illness or a preexisting condition.

Just think for a minute. Prior to the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies excluded you from coverage if you had a preexisting condition. There were examples of babies born prematurely that were excluded from coverage because their premature birth and the associated complications were considered a preexisting condition.

And, frankly, almost everyone after a certain age has one preexisting condition or another—hypertension, high cholesterol, et cetera. Prior to passage of healthcare reform, aging, essentially, was a reason to exclude individuals from coverage.

While Dr. King would have celebrated this victory, he would have been

shocked to know Congress has voted over 60 times to take health care away from people and to reverse this advance. If the Affordable Care Act was repealed, then the parents of the premature baby and the adult over 60 with high blood pressure would not have health care.

On another subject, Dr. King would wonder: How on Earth did his country end up incarcerating more people than any other nation in the world? And how is it that the majority of people incarcerated in the United States are poor and are people of color?

As a man of faith, as a teacher of the Bible, he would wonder what happened to the concept of redemption in our society. How did we become a society that punished people forever? What happened to the belief that, if you offended society and then paid your debt to society, you were expected and accepted to reenter society with your full rights?

How did we evolve into a nation that basically said we will punish you for your entire life? Because even though 85 percent of people incarcerated are eventually released, we can strip away your right to vote. You cannot live in public housing; and if your family lives in public housing, then you can't go home.

If you were in prison and you owed child support, well, we just kept the clock running on what you owed even though you were in prison and, of course, could not work to pay child support. You owed the money anyway.

And, of course, when you were released, you are then behind in child support. And because you are behind because you could not work while incarcerated, we will not give you a driver's license. And if you are from Los Angeles and cannot drive, you can forget about having a decent-paying job, because those jobs certainly don't exist in your neighborhood.

Furthermore, if you don't find a job, we just might violate your parole and put you back in prison, because a condition of your parole is that you have a job. But then, since you are a felon, we will not allow you to work anyway.

In California, until we changed the law, there were 56 occupations you could not participate in if you were a felon. One of those occupations we even trained you for while you were in prison. We have a school that trains prisoners to be barbers. But when you were released, we didn't allow ex-offenders to have a license in the very occupation we trained you for—until we changed the law.

I think Dr. King would be thoroughly confused by the contradictions he would see in America today. We have amazingly successful individuals, thousands of African Americans and other people of color in elected office or in other major positions of authority. They are CEOs of companies, astronauts, athletes, college presidents, entertainers on every level, actors, producers, directors.

In every area in society, there are successful individuals. There are 48 African American Members of Congress. The year before his death, there were only five African Americans in Congress.

But Dr. King would wonder what is holding our Nation back from making sure every American has access to the American Dream. With all the technological advances, advances in science and education, how can it be that people are hungry in America, that too many children continue to go to poor, segregated schools, and that there are homeless encampments that exist in most major cities?

Although his dream for our Nation is only partially realized, I believe now it is our responsibility to continue the work and to continue the struggle until there is no such thing as homelessness in the richest nation on the planet, until all children have access to a 21st century education, until poverty is eliminated and the safety net is strong enough that no one in our Nation slips through the cracks.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, thank you again to Congresswoman KAREN BASS for reminding us of all the great riches that we have in this society, but also for putting on the forefront that our work is not finished. There is hope. Because we have learned that through having a President who stands on the shoulders of another great man—Martin Luther King.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my honor and privilege to yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND), who hails from the Second District of Louisiana. He is someone who is fearless and not afraid to speak up, but he doesn't speak in vain. He speaks with a platform—whether that platform is to discuss reforming our broken prison system, whether it is to talk about HBCUs, or whether it is to be a role model—and he knows a lot about that because he is a natural leader. When he took office in the State legislature, he was one of the youngest legislators to ever serve.

So it is indeed my honor to call Congressman CEDRIC RICHMOND a colleague and friend.

Mr. RICHMOND. I want to thank the gentle lady and scholar for yielding to me and putting on this series tonight.

Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago, on January 12, right here in this Chamber, President Obama proudly declared to the citizens of the United States that the state of our Union is strong. With that, I agree. However, tonight, just as I did in New Orleans on this holiday, I must stand here and give the state of the dream address.

So, today, I stand in this Chamber and report to the world that the state of the dream is in disrepair. It is in disrepair because of neglect by some and intentional harms by others.

Let me first just state what I believe his dream to be. This is in his own words. In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. King said: "I have the audac-

ity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."

So why do I say that dream is in disrepair? Well, inadequate funding and misguided policies stand as a bar to many kids of color from getting a quality education, just like Bull Connor stood in the schoolhouse doors during the civil rights movement.

Why do I say the dream is in disrepair? Because too many African American children have better access to guns and drugs than textbooks and computers. Far too many of them choose guns and drugs.

Why do I say the dream is in disrepair? Because the Supreme Court rolled back the protections for minority voting rights.

Why do I say the dream is in disrepair? Because in a Supreme Court hearing on minority admission policies to colleges and universities, one of our Supreme Court Justices demonstrated his bias, his ignorance, and his lack of understanding by trying to justify why Blacks should go to lesser colleges and universities.

Why is the dream in disrepair? Because the Black Supreme Court Justice sat there and said nothing. Well, if I were in college and I were playing Spades, I would call him a "possible," because you can't count on him to hold up when the game starts.

Why do I also say the dream is in disrepair? Because big Wall Street executives can steel millions and never get charged and held accountable while young Black kids who shoplift get prosecuted and fill up our jails and our prisons and create what we call the prison industrial enterprise.

Some ask: Why do the poor and uneducated continue to steal and cheat? Well, the answer is simple: Because the rich and educated keep showing them how.

So, as we stand here this month and celebrate Black History Month, we will not only describe some of the problems, but we will go into some of the solutions that have been tested over time.

Let me just say that Dr. King and the generation before us did a great job of making this dream a reality through sacrifice, hard work, and commitment, but somewhere in my generation, we fell off from that sacrifice and determination.

Far too many of us are letting reality shows and music videos give our children their misguided sense of morals. Too many of our African American and White middle-class families who have achieved the dream are excited that they are there, but they are telling the rest of the world to get it the best they can.

The dream can be realized when everyone realizes that you are not going to help minority communities in spite of the minority communities, but we are going to bring them to the table and let them be a co-participant in drafting their accomplishments.

So, where do we go from here? We continue to invest in proven leaders and proven ways out of poverty and ways to get ahead, like education. We have to invest in the Pell grants and our Historically Black Colleges and Universities because we know that education is the best way out of poverty.

We have to invest in summer jobs so that kids in urban areas and impoverished communities can get exposure to a different way of life so that they can help themselves. We know that a summer job reduces the dropout rate by 50 percent.

What else can we do? We can invest in job training. We can invest in disadvantaged businesses. We can do a number of things. And the good part about it is we have a Congressional Black Caucus that can stand here and introduce legislation if the other side would meet us halfway.

So, the state of our union will continue to be strong. The state of the dream will become a reality when people join hands together to make sure that the least of us have every opportunity in the world.

I will tell you that the dream was strong. The dream is the same dream that allowed my mother, who is from the poorest place in the country, 1 of 15 children, to achieve her college degree and raise two sons who went off to Morehouse. So the dream is real when I, as the son of a single mother, can go to Morehouse, Tulane Law School, and the Harvard School of Government. That is the dream.

So I stand here today and just ask that we do what Booker T. Washington said. We may be as separate as our fingers, but we are as whole as the hand. This body has an obligation to come together as the hand and make sure that we give every kid from every place in this country the opportunity to succeed.

Mrs. BEATTY. I thank Congressman RICHMOND for reminding us that you bring hope. Your experience shows that there is opportunity. Because certainly, we know that there are fewer Black students graduating from high school. Sixteen percent of Blacks drop out, compared to 8 percent of our White counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, can you tell me how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 30 minutes remaining.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor and privilege to yield to my colleague from the 10th District of New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE). He is someone who is a great example of a committed public servant. He is someone who puts others before himself. When you want to call on him, he is someone that will sit and quietly listen to you, and then a few minutes later he will give you probably one of the most profound answers that one could look for. I am proud to not only call him my colleague, but I am also proud to call him my classmate.

It is my honor to ask Congressman DONALD PAYNE to bring his reflections.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking my classmates, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY and Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for anchoring these important Special Order hours for the Congressional Black Caucus.

Since her arrival here in Congress, Congresswoman BEATTY has demonstrated why she was a leader in Ohio, and she has become a great leader in the House of Representatives.

□ 2000

Mr. Speaker, Dr. King envisioned for this Nation a future of vast potential, a future where every man and woman and child would have the opportunity to get ahead, free from the constraints of injustice and intolerance.

What we see happening across our country shows how far we still have to go to achieve Dr. King's dream. From gun violence to racial wealth gaps, from lack of diversity to persistent poverty, there are still critical issues affecting our communities that must be addressed.

In 2015, there were at least 76 gun deaths in my district in New Jersey, the Tenth Congressional District. One-third of all the gun deaths in New Jersey last year happened in my district.

If we don't do something to tackle this epidemic, then we are failing our children. We are failing the next generation, to give them the hope and the possibilities of being a positive part of this community, such as we saw in Congressman CEDRIC RICHMOND.

In my district, African Americans face unemployment rates nearly triple that of White workers. Generations of African American workers are being left behind, without a fair shot at success. The economic prosperity and the American Dream are on hold for many African American communities.

Instead of working to address these challenges facing our communities, Republicans continue their assault on women's health by trying to defund Planned Parenthood.

On the other hand, Democrats are working on bold, aggressive action that will have an immediate impact on the challenges facing African Americans.

I have tried to do my part here in Congress. My Safer Neighborhoods Gun Buyback Act would create a voluntary Federal gun buyback program to keep guns out of the wrong hands. That is just one measure that we have to look at.

But in talking about Dr. King's dream, it reminds me of A Tale of Two Cities. This is the best of times and the worst of times.

Yes, we have seen an African American rise to the pinnacle of success in this country in public service in President Barack Obama. Dr. King would be very proud of that.

But he would be upset to see the other part, the despair that our communities are in without the opportunities to raise their children as other communities do.

Dr. King was about equal opportunity for every man and woman. He discussed problems in Appalachia, he discussed problems in the South, and he discussed problems in the North.

So, yes, his main focus was the African American community. But injustice somewhere is injustice anywhere, and he lived that motto. He would be happy for some reasons, but in other areas he would be very disappointed.

So it is our job to continue to push towards that dream, and we here in the Congressional Black Caucus are committed to pushing forward to see his dream realized.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you, Congressman PAYNE, for bringing us those words of wisdom and reminding us of the epidemics that face us, the failures that we have experienced, but leaving us with the hope of pushing forward and helping to realize Martin Luther King's dream.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my honor now to yield to the freshman of our group, someone who may be a freshman by our description, but someone who is not a stranger.

Whether it is advocating for jobs for veterans, whether it is looking at economic development and opportunities for those who are in struggling economies, she comes to us as a lawyer, she comes to us as a mother and a public servant.

She is someone who stands tall in her words of wisdom and someone's voice that we have learned to listen to.

She hails to us as the Delegate from the Virgin Islands. Join me in welcoming Congresswoman STACY PLASKETT for her words of wisdom.

Ms. PLASKETT. Thank you so much for allowing me this opportunity to be here with my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I am so humbled and honored to be with the gentlewoman from Ohio, JOYCE BEATTY, who is an example to us freshmen and who fights, along with the gentleman of New York, HAKEEM JEFFRIES, not just for the people of their district and not just for African Americans, but for all Americans, because that is what we are all here in this Congress to do.

By pointing out the inequalities, it is not to cast aspersions on all of America, but to make us to be better people than what we are today.

When Dr. King so eloquently delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech 50 years ago, he did so with every hope and expectation that that Nation would rise up and live out the true meaning of that creed. He hoped that the tenet all men are created equal would, in fact, one day be a truth held self-evident.

We cannot allow simply moving past the glaring bigotries of Jim Crow, however, to be a benchmark for success. Doing so would ignore the more subtle bigotries that continue today.

These subtle bigotries are, in fact, as deeply rooted and extreme in their effect as those glaring bigotries Dr. King and so many others fought vigorously and valiantly to overcome.

We are still achieving the dream. Today it is not just social injustice, but also extreme inequality that constrains economic mobility for the African American community and, therefore, for all of America.

Whether it is State-sanctioned attempts to roll back voting rights in Alabama, the outright denial of equal voting rights to citizens living in the Virgin Islands and other territories, or the years of neglect that have led to the poisoning of residents in Flint, Michigan, the persistent wealth and opportunity divide in this country is rooted in the legacy of racial discrimination dating back to Reconstruction and to slavery, indeed.

Although we have achieved much since the days of separate, but equal, there are still structural barriers to achieving the American Dream for too many minority families in this country.

There is racial disparity in nearly every index of the American Dream, and those disparities place families of color further behind in their plight to achieving the dream.

A recent study by the Corporation for Enterprise Development shows that families of color are two times more likely to live below the Federal poverty level, almost two times more likely to lack liquid savings, and are significantly more likely to have subprime credit scores.

A lack of liquid savings among families of color often leads to further disparity and wealth loss, as evidenced by the proportion of student debt by race and ethnicity.

African American college students rely more on student loans to pay for college than do other racial groups and are less likely to pay off the debt, according to a report by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

While unemployment in this country has fallen to 5 percent, African American communities like my home district of the U.S. Virgin Islands continue to experience double-digit unemployment rates.

Many of these communities of color have experienced decades of systematic divestment of funding and resources that can only serve to widen the wealth and opportunity gap.

That is benign neglect, a benign neglect that has led to failing public and alternative education systems, crumbling infrastructure, and, in some cases, the slide to bankruptcy, bankruptcy not just due to mismanagement and corruption, which is the convenient answer, but a systematic lack of investment, support, and adequate funding, which causes places like Detroit, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to mortgage their children's futures in bonds to make ends meet.

African Americans make up 13 percent of the population, but have only 2.7 percent of total wealth.

This Congress has within its power to reverse the years of benign neglect to these communities through supporting

legislation to invest in infrastructure and education through fighting against voter suppression efforts and supporting student loans and other finance reforms.

Closing the wealth and opportunity gap should not be a dream in post-racial America. It is the responsibility of this Congress to uphold the principles to which we were founded, to not only adhere to those powerful words that preamble our Constitution, but also to provide for the general welfare and ensure that justice, liberty, and prosperity are afforded to all and not just some.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands. Let me just say thank you for making us have a better understanding that we cannot do this alone and we have so much more work to do.

Mr. Speaker, tonight's Special Orders hour hopefully will share with this institution the amount of work that we have yet to do. But I believe in hope and opportunity for all.

So when I listen to the great legacy that those who have come before us, whether that is Dr. Martin Luther King, whether that is Rosa Parks, we have members of this Congressional Black Caucus who stand united to provide opportunities for all.

We are often referred to as the conscience of the Congress. There is a reason for that: Because we are the voice of the voiceless.

And when I think of voices, I think of my co-anchor. I think of a man who came as my classmate, someone stellar, someone who is a scholar and a profound lawyer, someone who stands tall in stature and in his words, someone that I actually enjoy sitting and listening to as he so often brings the message.

It is my honor to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) to talk to us about the state of our union, Dr. King's dream, and African Americans in this great Nation.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio, Representative BEATTY, my good friend, for those very kind words and, of course, for her tremendous leadership in anchoring and shepherding us here this evening in the same manner that she has done since her arrival here in the House of Representatives, always eloquent, erudite, and effervescent.

We appreciate that unique and tremendous combination of skill and ability that you bring to the people that you represent so ably in Columbus, Ohio, and, of course, really, on behalf of America as you stand here anchoring this Congressional Black Caucus Special Orders hour.

I look forward to continuing to work together throughout the year as we endeavor to speak truth to power here on the floor of the House of Representatives and articulate issues of significance and importance to African Americans in the United States of America and to all of America.

Earlier today I made the observation that this is the first day of Black History Month. Essentially, black history is American history. The two are forever intertwined. That is why the subject matter of this special order is of particular importance.

Dr. King once made the observation that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

□ 2015

I think what Dr. King was saying is that in this world you have got some good folks and you have got some bad actors. But in order for justice to prevail, what you essentially need is a fair amount of the good folks to come together, sacrifice, work hard, and dedicate themselves to the cause of social change, and at the end of the day justice will prevail.

Make no mistake that in the United States of America, of course, it has been a long and complicated march. We certainly have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. During the founding of the Republic back in 1776, in the DNA of this great country was embedded the principles of liberty and justice for all. It was a great document and a great start. Embedded in the DNA of this country was fairness, equality, and opportunity for everyone. But there was a genetic defect called chattel slavery that was also attendant to our birth.

If you are going to have any discussion about where we are in America today, you have got to recognize there was a genetic defect that has impacted the arc of the African American community here in America and the American story, and that genetic defect of chattel slavery stayed with us, of course, until the war ended in 1865. Millions of African American slaves were subjugated. It was one of the worst crimes ever perpetrated in the history of humanity. It finally ended in 1865 with the adoption of the 13th Amendment. Of course, we know that the 14th Amendment and the 15th Amendment followed, equal protection under the law for everyone, 14th Amendment, and the 15th Amendment was designed to guarantee the right to vote. The so-called Reconstruction period lasted until the middle of the 1870s, but it was largely abandoned thereafter.

The African Americans, of course, were given a raw, bad deal. How can you cure the genetic defect of chattel slavery with three constitutional amendments without ever really forcefully implementing them and within a decade or so abandoning the principles inherent in those constitutional amendments? In place we received the Black Codes, Jim Crow, segregation, and an intense lynching campaign unleashed on African Americans in the South, in the Midwest, in the far West, and other parts of the United States of America. So we went from chattel slavery, a brief period of Reconstruction, then you give us Jim Crow.

So we dealt with Jim Crow which was at least in principle abolished on paper

when the Supreme Court makes the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separate but equal was just a farce. It was a joke. It wasn't real. So the Supreme Court exposes that, but then says, go ahead and implement it with all deliberate speed. Which basically meant don't really implement it with any urgency, any immediacy, any impactful fashion, just take your time and do it at your own pace.

So as we are trying to deal with Jim Crow, then you have, of course, Dr. King and leaders of the civil rights movement, JOHN LEWIS, whom Congresswoman BEATTY and I are so privileged to serve with, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, and so many others. The civil rights movement deals with the lingering effects of our original genetic defect of chattel slavery replaced by Jim Crow.

Then in the 1960s, we get the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the 1968 Fair Housing Act, Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, and efforts to try to finally correct the injustices that have been race based here in America. Like Reconstruction, which lasted for a little over a decade, we get this period of dramatic social change, mainly in the early and mid-1960s that is quickly abandoned and taken advantage of by Richard Nixon in 1968 with the Southern strategy White backlash, particularly in the Deep South, compounded in 1971 when President Richard Nixon makes the statement that drug abuse is public enemy number one. Essentially, the War on Drugs ushered in an era of mass incarceration.

When President Nixon made that statement, there were less than 350,000 people incarcerated in America. Today, 40-plus years later, after the War on Drugs, so called, was started, 2.3 million people, more than 1 million African American men, disproportionately and adversely impacting communities of color and as has been mentioned earlier, incarcerate more people in America than any other country in the world, a country where we over-incarcerate and under educate.

We have made a lot of progress in America. African Americans as a collective community really haven't been given any room to breathe because we have gone from chattel slavery—the original birth defect in this great Republic—to Jim Crow, to mass incarceration with brief periods of Reconstruction and civil rights era mixed in between. And you wonder why we are in the situation that we are in right now.

We have made a lot of progress. Obviously the fact that Barack Obama is sitting at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is a significant development, but as Dr. King says, he talked about an arc, which means that similar to what Abraham Lincoln once said, that we have to continue a march toward a more perfect Union, the Congressional Black Caucus with leadership from dynamic representatives like JOYCE BEATTY, have put forth a series of

things to benefit not just the African American community, but all communities, to help bring the promise of American democracy to life.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my good friend, Representative BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much to my colleague. As I stood here and I listened to you walk us through that rich history, it reminded me of all of the bad actors that caused many of those bad things. I reflect on someone in my family being a part of that chattel slavery as a slave, I think about Jim Crow, and I think about the things that my grandmother was asked to do when she had walked far just to try to vote and was asked to recite things that probably the people asking her could not have done.

Then when I think about all of those social reforms and all the things that happened 50 and 55 years ago, it made me think, Congressman JEFFRIES, when we think about Martin Luther King and his dream, so often people say, "What would he think today?" But I guess for me the question is a little different that I would like to discuss with you. Do you think history is repeating itself?

As I listened to you talk about slavery, and today when I go into some parts of my community with the War on Drugs I have had Black men say to me that they feel like they are living during a time of slavery. When I talk to young, single moms who are fighting for their own existence or to feed their children, they feel that they are held captive by poverty.

So are we looking at still bad actors, bad actors in the Chambers that I stand in, bad actors who want to take away SNAP, bad actors who don't want to give us a voting rights bill, bad actors that don't want to ban the box?

What do you think? Are we seeing history repeat itself?

Mr. JEFFRIES. It is a great question. Unfortunately sort of the arc of history here in this great country of ours is that whenever progress has been made it has been followed by a backlash. Progress was made with the Reconstruction amendments. It was followed by a backlash that gave us Jim Crow, the Black Codes, and an explosion of lynching in the South. Progress, of course, was made in the 1960s with the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act immediately followed by Richard Nixon's Southern strategy, and a backlash against things like affirmative action which had barely been put into motion and a rollback of the War on Poverty which was designed to help African Americans and all Americans of every race.

Then, of course, many thought that we perhaps had reached a post-racial America in the aftermath of the election of President Barack Obama, but we know, of course, that that is not the case sadly.

I am hopeful, however, that many of my colleagues, Republicans and Demo-

crats, Conservatives and Progressives who have come together, folks like RAUL LABRADOR, TREY GOWDY, and JASON CHAFFETZ—good friends of mine on the other side of the aisle—recognize the importance of dealing with mass incarceration for America.

Here are a few statistics that I think we need to be concerned about as it relates to your question. African Americans serve virtually as much time in prison for a nonviolent drug offense, approximately 58 months, as White Americans do for a violent criminal offense, 62 months. Whites in America statistically use drugs five times as often as African Americans, yet African Americans are sent to prison for drug offenses at 10 times the rate of White Americans.

Lastly, African Americans represent 83 percent of crack cocaine Federal defendants, but only 28 percent of users—83 percent are defendants, 28 percent are users; whereas, White Americans represent 5.8 percent of Federal defendants but 62 percent of users.

Something is wrong. Justice is not colorblind in America. So hopefully we will find the ability to come together to deal with the overall broken criminal justice system and certainly as part of that rectify some of the racial disparities that exist.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much.

Let me just end by saying, Mr. Speaker, what you have witnessed tonight is that our past that we have talked about is our experience, our present is our responsibility, and our future is our hope.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King's vision of ending inequality through providing jobs, justice, and peace to all Americans is a vision that many have fought and died to make a reality. As the Civil Rights Movement battled against discrimination and inequality in the 1960's, I adopted Dr. King's vision of jobs, justice, and peace when I ran for Congress in 1964. I remember the Jim Crow era, poll taxes, and institutionalized segregation when I arrived in Congress. Yet, for all of these institutional scars and discriminatory impediments, the work we did in Congress aided in fulfilling the promises of equality enshrined in our Constitution. After a historic effort, the Civil Rights Act was passed, the Voting Rights Act was adopted, and a new era of federal protections around equality was ushered in the 20th Century.

Some fifty years later, this era has yet to be fully realized. While the initial challenges of recognizing and upholding civil rights have been met, many of the original problems persist, but in an evolved form. Fifty plus years later, the American people confront issues of voter suppression, gender and sexual orientation discrimination. Many communities feel under siege from those sworn to protect their liberty. Hate crimes and religious intolerance are on the rise as reported nightly on the

news. And women contend with a pay inequity hampering their standing with men in the workplace.

In spite of all of these shortcomings, strides have been made: reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act in 2006; the passage of legislation expanding access to healthcare; the introduction of legislation combating voter caging and deceptive practices, and the passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, signed into law by the first African-American President of the United States, himself emblematic of civil rights progress.

These issues were all, at one point in time, deemed radical. Women's suffrage, racial equality, and now gay and lesbian rights: for each, the civil rights movement has expanded until true justice is achieved. Many problems persist and more are certain to arrive, but through renewed determination to tackle these deep-seated problems, we can one day live up to the beloved community envision by Dr. King.

While our struggle for equality stems from being afforded the basic human rights associated with a free society, the ideal of achieving economic justice, with employment for all who seek it, remains out of reach for many. The aftermath of the financial crisis has brought crippling unemployment, wage stagnation, and rising income inequality. Yet, the Great Recession has only exacerbated a decades-long decline in the fortunes of the working and middle classes. As finances continue to deteriorate, basic social and public services have often been the first to go.

In the realm of healthcare, a basic safety net was only recently afforded to the underserved in the United States with passage of the Affordable Care Act, yet millions of low-income and unemployed individuals remain uninsured. Housing remains a continued blight, as mass-foreclosures following the aftermath of the Great Recession tear apart communities and destabilizes families.

Even after fifty years of promoting Dr. King's cause for peace, our country is enmeshed in gun violence, which tragically produced the shootings in Newtown, Aurora, Tucson, and Wisconsin, and daily on the streets of America's most populated cities. These horrific occurrences are unacceptable for our nation, which is why catapulting peace to the forefront of our nation's agenda will save lives and protect our most vital right under the Constitution: life. I am hopeful that by strengthening our gun laws we can remove military style weapons out of our communities, prohibit the sale of deadly gun clips, and close loopholes on the sale of guns.

Our rate of incarceration and length of sentences are unjust and unsustainable. The United States incarcerates 25 percent of the world's prisoners, while we have only five percent of the world's population. And we disproportionately prosecute and incarcerate African Americans more than any other race. This is the result of what President Obama has called a "huge explosion" in our incarceration rates, with 500,000 people imprisoned in America in 1980 growing to 2.2 million today. We must change our prosecution policies and

sentencing laws to address this crisis, and I am working with my colleagues to do that.

The profiling of racial and religious minorities is also a terrible reality that threatens peace in our nation. Profiling is an archaic form of discrimination that subjects individuals to criminal indictments or investigations based on their race or religion. Although profiling cannot be found in any form of written law, the practice is real in America and threatens the trust and peace that is essential in the relationship between citizens and their law enforcement. Our nation's leaders can work to pass legislation, such as the End Racial Profiling Act, to prohibit this practice in any law enforcement agency and the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act to provide real standards for the operation of police departments.

As we press forward to address inequality in the 21st Century, the outstanding question is whether or not Congress will rise to tackle these issues. The American people have already witnessed how politics can transform our legislative body into a body producing nothing but dysfunction. However, the erosion of Congress's focus on protecting civil rights and civil liberties can be reversed.

This Congress has the opportunity to answer these present injustices by assuming the unwavering commitment to jobs, justice, and peace that was displayed so valiantly by Dr. Martin Luther King. Ending inequality in America is a battle that can be won, and although the enemy is still the same, our approach in the 21st century must not lack the strength and courage of those who have fought so bravely before us.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this February we recognize and celebrate the 39th commemoration of Black History Month.

This month we celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the history of our great nation, and pay tribute to trailblazers, pioneers, heroes, and leaders like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, U.S. Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce, U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland, Astronaut Dr. Guion Stewart Bluford Jr. and Mae C. Jemison, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, James Baldwin, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Gwendolyn Brooks just to name a few of the countless number of well-known and unsung heroes whose contributions have helped our nation become a more perfect union.

The history of the United States has been marked by the great contributions of African American activists, leaders, writers, and artists.

As a member of Congress, I know that I stand on the shoulders of giants whose struggles and triumphs made it possible for me to stand here today and continue the fight for equality, justice, and progress for all, regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

The greatest of these giants to me are Mrs. Ivalita "Ivy" Jackson, a vocational nurse, and Mr. Ezra A. Jackson, one of the first African-

Americans to succeed in the comic book publishing business.

They were my beloved parents and they taught me the value of education, hard work, discipline, perseverance, and caring for others.

And I am continually inspired by Dr. Elwyn Lee, my husband and the first tenured African American law professor at the University of Houston.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly wish to acknowledge the contributions of African American veterans in defending from foreign aggressors and who by their courageous examples helped transform our nation from a segregated society to a nation committed to the never ending challenge of perfecting our union.

Last year about this time, I was honored to join my colleagues, Congressmen JOHN LEWIS and Congressman CHARLES RANGEL, a Korean War veteran, in paying tribute to surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen and the 555th Parachute Infantry, the famed "Triple Nickels" at a moving ceremony sponsored by the U.S. Army commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The success of the Tuskegee Airmen in escorting bombers during World War II—achieving one of the lowest loss records of all the escort fighter groups, and being in constant demand for their services by the allied bomber units—is a record unmatched by any other fighter group.

So impressive and astounding were the feats of the Tuskegee Airmen that in 1948 they persuaded President Harry Truman to issue his famous Executive Order No. 9981, which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces and led to the end of racial segregation in the U.S. military forces.

It is a source of enormous and enduring pride that my father-in-law, Phillip Ferguson Lee, was one of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Clearly, what began as an experiment to determine whether "colored" soldiers were capable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft ended as an unqualified success based on the experience of the Tuskegee Airmen, whose record included 261 aircraft destroyed, 148 aircraft damaged, 15,553 combat sorties and 1,578 missions over Italy and North Africa.

They also destroyed or damaged over 950 units of ground transportation and escorted more than 200 bombing missions. They proved that "the antidote to racism is excellence in performance," as retired Lt. Col. Herbert Carter once remarked.

Mr. Speaker, Black History Month is also a time to remember many pioneering women like U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm; activists Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks; astronaut Mae C. Jemison; authors Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Gwendolyn Brooks; all of whom have each in their own way, whether through courageous activism, cultural contributions, or artistic creativity, forged social and political change, and forever changed our great Nation for the better.

It is also fitting, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to those national leaders whose contributions

have made our nation better, we honor also those who have and are making a difference in their local communities.

In my home city of Houston, there are numerous great men and women. They are great because they have heeded the counsel of Dr. King who said:

“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

By that measure, I wish to pay tribute to some of the great men and women of Houston:

1. Rev. F.N. Williams, Sr.
2. Rev. Dr. S.J. Gilbert, Sr.
3. Rev. Crawford W. Kimble
4. Rev. Eldridge Stanley Branch
5. Rev. William A. Lawson
6. Rev. Johnnie Jeffery “J.J.” Robeson
7. Mr. El Franco Lee
8. Mr. John Brand
9. Ms. Ruby Moseley
10. Ms. Dorothy Hubbard
11. Ms. Doris Hubbard
12. Ms. Willie Bell Boone
13. Ms. Holly HogoBrooks
14. Mr. Deloyd Parker
15. Ms. Lenora “Doll” Carter

As we celebrate Black History Month, let us pay tribute to those who have come before us, and pay forward to future generations by addressing what is the number one issue for African American families, and all American families today: preserving the American promise of economic opportunity for all.

Our immediate focus must be job creation, and enacting legislation that will foster and lay the foundation for today’s and tomorrow’s generation of groundbreaking activists, leaders, scientists, writers and artists to continue contributing to the greatness of America.

We must work to get Americans back to work.

We must continue to preserve the American Dream for all.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here in celebration of the heroic and historic acts of African Americans and their indispensable contributions to this great Nation.

It is through our work in creating possibilities for today and future generations that we best honor the accomplishments and legacy of our predecessors.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when President Barack Obama delivered his final State of the Union address last month, he highlighted the resilience and determination of the American people. The President touted notable achievements in scientific advancement, greater transparency throughout our political system, and a stronger and more equitable economy as evidence pointing to the strength of our Nation.

For context, in the final month of President George W. Bush’s presidency, the economy was in free fall. The private sector lost nearly 820,000 jobs in the final month of President Bush’s presidency alone and unemployment peaked at around 10 percent in the midst of the Great Recession. Today, the economy has added 14.1 million jobs over 70 consecutive months of private-sector job growth, household wealth has increased by more than \$30 trillion, and average home prices have recovered to pre-recession levels under President Obama’s Administration. However, economic indicators are not the only method for determining the true state of our union.

As we celebrate Black History Month in February, it is timely to consider how other great leaders from our past would perceive the state of our union today. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one such leader who envisioned a greater future for our Nation in the face of unspeakable discrimination and intolerance. In his famous “I Have a Dream” speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., Dr. King laid out his vision of our country where all men are created equal and where freedom must ring if America is to be a great nation.

Today, those principles ring true. We have made great progress as a nation to move away from the darkest moments of our past. Yet, there is still much work to be done. We have witnessed continued efforts to disenfranchise select groups of voters by gutting the Voting Rights Act and persistent racial tension between law enforcement and the communities they are sworn to protect. It is a constant struggle that afflicts communities all across the United States and suggests that more work needs to be done if we are to achieve Dr. King’s dream.

Mr. Speaker, the freedoms we enjoy in the United States are not absolute. The principles and values that define our Nation are constantly challenged and ever-evolving. Dr. King had a distinct vision for the future of our Nation and his legacy can help guide our decisions moving into the future so that we can avoid making the same mistakes of our past.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, each February our nation takes time to reflect on the countless contributions African Americans have made to this country’s history. We celebrate innovators like Ohio District 11’s own Langston Hughes, pioneers like astronaut Mae Jamison, as well as political and civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Black History Month represents inclusion and innovation. It promotes America at its best. For in this month, we appreciate our collective strength and recognize the diversity of each and every patriot.

America is a country of immigrants, and our power lies in our differences. To quote Dr. King, “We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.”

No matter how we arrived, every American should have access to the same opportunity. Every individual should be able to reach his or her own potential and succeed in the home of the free and the land of the brave.

Unfortunately, many do not have equitable access to opportunity. This is why the Congressional Black Caucus stands today.

Despite the contributions and sacrifice of African Americans, many still suffer from the effects of historic injustice and prejudice. We are almost three times more likely to live in poverty than Whites, and six times more likely to be put in jail. Our unemployment rate is nearly two times the rates of Whites. When we do find work, we make less than our White counterparts.

As Black America reflects on its current situation, many tend to ask questions such as, “What would Dr. King do?” or “How would the civil rights leaders of the past address the issues of the present?”

If Dr. King was alive today, I believe he would certainly be proud of who we are. But he would also say that we must commit ourselves to moving forward together as one people and one nation.

It is time we “fix our politics.” Not just in Washington, but everywhere.

As President Barack Obama stated recently, “We are in a time of extraordinary change.” The Members of this House have the opportunity to pass policies that reverse years of bigotry and injustice and level the playing field for all.

This Black History Month, I urge my Congressional colleagues to celebrate through legislative action. Develop a new formula to ensure the right to vote for all Americans. Reauthorize the Higher Education Act to help more kids go to college. Combat harsh sentencing through criminal justice reform.

These actions won’t just honor a race of people. They will further the hope and success of an entire nation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and February 2 on account of a family emergency.

Ms. JACKSON LEE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

EXPENDITURES BY THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL UNDER HOUSE RESOLUTION 676, 113TH CONGRESS

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Washington, DC, January 29, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 3(b) of H. Res. 676 of the 113th Congress, as continued by section 3(F)(2) of H. Res. 5 of the 114th Congress, I write with the following enclosure which is a statement of the aggregate amount expended on outside counsel and other experts on any civil action authorized by H. Res. 676.

Sincerely,

CANDICE S. MILLER, Chairman.

AGGREGATE AMOUNT EXPENDED ON OUTSIDE COUNSEL OR OTHER EXPERTS (H. Res. 676)

July 1–September 30, 2014	.....
October 1–December 31, 2014	.....	\$42,875.00
January 1–March 31, 2015	.....	50,000.00
April 1, 2015–June 30, 2015	.....	29,915.00
July 1–September 30, 2015	.....	21,000.00
October 1–December 31, 2015	.....	45,707.67
Total	.....	189,497.67

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o’clock and 27 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 2, 2016, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.