

CELEBRATING PASSAGE OF THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly 10 years since the Great Recession officially began, when our economy slumped and unemployment climbed to levels not witnessed since the early 1980s, but last month Congress paved the way to create a tax system that is fair, simpler, and one that establishes an environment where our country can unleash our full potential.

Too many Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and have been for too long. Stagnant wages, growing debt, and the inability to save have plagued so many. That is why our tax overhaul is so important. This truly is a once-in-a-generation opportunity that we could not afford to pass up.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will touch every household in the Nation and every corner of our economy. As soon as February, Americans will see more money in their paychecks. When it comes time to file their 2018 taxes, our tax system will be so simple that 9 out of 10 Americans will be able to file on a postcard. The standard deduction will be doubled for individuals and joint filers. Middle class families will also have a significant increase to the child tax credit to help parents with the costs of raising children.

And, Mr. Speaker, for those pursuing opportunity through education, America's students, the graduate tuition voucher exemption and student loan interest deduction remain in our tax reform package. I, and many of my colleagues, urged the conference committee to keep these provisions intact.

Our Tax Code should provide incentives for greater opportunity. For many, this is realized through higher education. The student loan interest deduction helps make higher education more affordable, and based on the most recent yearly data available, 12 million taxpayers benefited from that deduction.

I advocated keeping this provision as well as the graduate tuition voucher exemption and other higher education tax credits as a part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act because they truly do make a difference in the lives of so many Americans. It makes financing an education possible for many low- and middle-income individuals.

In addition to education, another great cornerstone of the American Dream is homeownership, and, proudly, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will continue to provide tax relief to current and aspiring homeowners alike.

Mr. Speaker, there are many accomplishments in this historic tax overhaul, including lowering the corporate tax rate, which will put our job creators on a level playing field with their global competitors. This has already led to increased bonuses and pay raises

for millions of workers. Quite simply, this bill provides the kind of tax relief that Americans deserve.

We challenged the status quo and the special interests who said it couldn't be done, and we did it. And the American people won.

CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the upcoming holiday remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As a lifelong activist fighting for immigrants, civil and human rights, and now as a Member of Congress, Dr. King has been a deep and central inspiration throughout my life. His work has helped me to make possible the path that I have taken, from being a 16-year-old immigrant girl who came to this country by herself for college, to serving, now, as the first Indian-American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives—and it is the courage and the fight of Dr. King that made my journey possible.

I knew of Dr. King first because of his connection to Mahatma Gandhi, a great leader from my own birth country of India. Like Gandhi, Dr. King was a once-in-a-generation leader. Like Gandhi, the problems that Dr. King tackled were once seen as insurmountable problems, institutional barriers of race and class that seemed as if, if taken on, would topple society as we knew it, tall walls of tradition and practice that kept our society segregated and divided.

But that did not stop him from speaking out, organizing, and leading a growing movement that reminded the leaders of our country of the very dream that made America possible: that all men and women were created equal and that we should be judged by the content of our character and not the color of our skin.

Dr. King's gift was in his unique ability to bring truth, compassion, and justice together for a better future and to remind us of how much we share even across our differences. He followed Gandhi's principles of nonviolent resistance, also known as satyagraha: "satya" meaning truth, and "graha" meaning adherence to truth.

Satyagraha then meant insistence on truth, and that is what Dr. King preached and acted upon: truth about ending segregation and discrimination, truth about ending the war in Vietnam, truth about lifting up sanitation workers and ending poverty, truth, ultimately, that it is love and not hate that builds our character and our collective society.

If Dr. King were here with us today, he would call on us to have faith in our fight for justice and to substitute courage for caution. He would call on us to

work passionately and unrelentingly for the very vision of our country that inspires so many around the world, for that more perfect Union that we know is still ahead of us, for that society that remembers that we are all better off when we are all better off.

Dr. King would remind us that justice is what love looks like in public. He would call on us to move into that plane of higher education, that plane of moral consciousness where we simply cannot stand by as injustice occurs around us.

He would call on us to address economic inequality by raising the minimum wage and enacting real tax reform whose benefits accrue to the masses and not to the top 1 percent and the wealthiest corporations.

Dr. King would call on us to pass the Dream Act and support the futures of 1.5 million young people across the country. He would call on us to expand and support the Affordable Care Act and healthcare for everyone so that no one is one healthcare crisis away from bankruptcy.

Our work is still to fight for justice and build that beloved community where each of us has a place to stand regardless of the color of our skin or where we live or how much money we have in our pockets, and in this beloved community, we would tackle the legacies of racism and implicit bias that we all carry with us with courage and with fortitude. We would work together to build that community that inspires us and to leave a world to our children that makes us proud, and, most importantly, we operate always from a place of generosity and abundance rather than fear and scarcity.

From that jail cell in Alabama, Dr. King wrote: "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny," or, as the great civil rights leader Reverend Joseph Lowery once said to me during the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride: "We may have come over on different ships, but we are all in the same boat now."

To make a difference, to truly serve the people, it only takes courage and coming together as a collective, across the aisle, across rural and urban, across Black, White, and Brown. Dr. King showed us what that really looks like, and he died because he was compelled to stand for making a reality from a dream of what was possible only in a country as great as the United States of America.

Today, as we remember and honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we remember, too, that if we are courageous, if we put people over politics, our actions have the power to change lives, to push that moral arc of the universe more quickly towards justice. As Dr. King said: "We must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back."