

RULE 18: ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF CHAIRMAN

The chairman of the full committee shall:

(a) Make available to other committees the findings and recommendations resulting from the investigations of the committee or its subcommittees as required by House Rule X, 4(c)(2);

(b) Direct such review and studies on the impact or probable impact of tax policies affecting subjects within the committee's jurisdiction as required by House Rule X, 2(c);

(c) Submit to the Committee on the Budget views and estimates required by House Rule X, 4(g), and to file reports with the House as required by the Congressional Budget Act;

(d) Authorize and issue subpoenas as provided in House Rule XI, clause 2(m), in the conduct of any investigation or activity or series of investigations or activities within the jurisdiction of the committee;

(e) Prepare, after consultation with subcommittee chairmen and the minority, a budget for the committee which shall include an adequate budget for the subcommittees to discharge their responsibilities;

(f) Make any necessary technical and conforming changes to legislation reported by the committee upon unanimous consent; and

(g) Will designate a Vice Chairman from the majority party.

RULE 19: COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

The committee has adopted the policy that the determination of the subject matter of commemorative stamps properly is for consideration by the Postmaster General and that the committee will not give consideration to legislative proposals for the issuance of commemorative stamps. It is suggested that recommendations for the issuance of commemorative stamps be submitted to the Postmaster General.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH AND RACE ENTERTAINMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCINNIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. JACKSON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am particularly honored on this occasion to welcome the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] to the 105th Congress. I know he gave his first special order just a few moments ago. He, like I, when I first became a Member of this institution, was quite nervous, and we talked about it just before he began. But I wanted to take this opportunity to welcome him to the 105th Congress and indicate to him how much I look forward to serving with him in this institution.

Today for the better part of this special order I want to talk about a subject that is near and dear to my heart, that is near and dear to 39 Members of this institution, the Congressional Black Caucus. This is African-American History Month. We find ourselves this February confronting some challenges as a nation.

We have heard our Speaker talk about racial reconciliation. We have heard our President address the issue of racial reconciliation. And I thought what a better start we could have if we could just begin an honest dialogue

about racial reconciliation in the context of Black History Month.

Carter G. Woodson is known as the father of black history. Originally it was designated to be just one week long, and then it eventually became a month. He knew that the African-American experience was unique and that the chronologizing of the African-American history and the chronologizing of American history did not, would not and could not acknowledge the contributions that African-Americans have made.

Recently racial reconciliation has become a widely talked about issue. The O.J. case has forced us to face the wide gap separating white and black Americans in their views of our criminal justice system. How can people have such different perspectives of the same case according to the color of their skin? It becomes obvious that blacks and whites are not speaking from the same page because both groups are looking at the case through the lens of their own experiences, in this case, the experiences of whites versus the experiences of people of color with the criminal justice system.

The first step in a process of racial reconciliation is to build understanding between the races. We cannot have an effective conversation about racial reconciliation, which is one of the Speaker's goals, which is certainly one of the President's goals, if we do not try to understand the other group and their experiences. This is what Carter G. Woodson was thinking about and reflecting about when he wanted us as a Nation to pause during the month of February to acknowledge the contribution of African-Americans.

The purpose of this special order today is to take that first step, a serious dialogue about race issues, by beginning to explain the historical experience of African-Americans and by explaining the history of obstacles and advances which have allowed me to stand in this room and speak to you today as the 91st African-American Member of Congress.

To talk about the history of blacks in America, one cannot avoid the story of the struggle against discrimination in America. The two are intertwined. It is hard for many people to sit down and listen to a history full of discrimination. Many people do not want to relive it. Others do not feel like, they feel more like they are being blamed, but the history has to be told because many people are not aware of the full history, Mr. Speaker.

To build bridges, we have to build awareness. One of the greatest problems in race relations is the lack of awareness about discrimination. The discrimination that many blacks experience every day as common knowledge is the same discrimination that many whites do not experience and do not realize even exists. As a Member of this institution, I found myself in the 104th Congress, since I do not wear the identification pin that most Members of

Congress tend to wear, late at night standing out in front of the Capitol of the United States trying to catch a taxi.

Why can I not catch a taxi late at night in Washington, DC? I do not know. But I have some assumptions. That young African-American males in America trying to catch a cab late at night, where the cab driver is white or black, brings certain prejudices to the whole notion of catching a cab. For example, they may think that I am going to rob them. They may think that I am going to take something from them when the reality is nothing could be further from the truth. Discrimination exists even for Members of this institution as Members of Congress whether we talk about it in our daily lives on the floor of this Congress or not.

The purpose of this speech today is not to blame or create guilt over black history. It is to build an understanding, to begin to explain the experiences of African-Americans. A better understanding, I genuinely believe, will help us move past the guilt to create positive change.

So I must ask each and every one, particularly the Members who are in their offices today to do just one thing: Put aside your opinions for now and try to imagine with me for a moment what it is like to be an African-American. I ask those of you who are not African-Americans to imagine that you are experiencing the history as being an African-American, that is the history of your people in this country, the history of your sisters, your brothers, your parents and your grandparents. I ask you to imagine what it would feel like had you had to have that certain outlook on the world.

I ask if you are an African-American to listen to this story as if you were white, as if this was the first time you heard some of these accounts. How would you react?

My first special order, one of five special orders I plan to have this month, is entitled, "O.J. and Race Entertainment." The noted historian John Hope Franklin in his book, "The Color Line," 1993, said perhaps the very first thing we need to do as a nation and as individual members of society is to confront our past and to see it for what it is. If we do that, he says, whites will discover that African-Americans possess the same human qualities that other Americans possess, and African-Americans will discover that white Americans are capable of the most sublime expressions of human conduct of which all human beings are capable.

Then he suggests we need to do everything possible to emphasize the positive qualities that all of us have, qualities that we have never had to utilize to the fullest but which remain, but which we must utilize if we are to solve the problem of the color line in the 21st century.

America is a nation that is in dire need of entertainment. And the media, Mr. Speaker, knows how to provide it.

You want movie entertainment, go see Independence Day. You go see a movie that does what no Democrats or Republicans could ever do, watch the aliens blow up Capitol Hill, not the deficit or the debt, but aliens. Watch them blow up the White House, watch them destroy Wall Street. If you want good movie entertainment, go see Independence Day.

If you want sports entertainment, you have the best, Michael Jordan, and, some could arguably say, the worst, Dennis Rodman on the same team. Why is that? Because Dennis Rodman—multicolored hair, many tatoos, more earrings on his body than a fishing lure—he understands entertainment. You want race entertainment and you do not want to have a serious dialog about race, about injustice in America. Here is O.J.

In fact, race entertainment is becoming increasingly popular. Name another subject that could give Geraldo Rivera the same television viewer ratings or Rush Limbaugh the same radio listenership. O.J. Simpson has given virtual rise to a new entertainment network, race entertainment television.

It is not substantive discussion about understandings from African-Americans, Asian-Americans, native Americans, women in our society or people who are working upward in the society to make a difference for their families. No, that is not O.J. entertainment or race entertainment. You want race entertainment, nonsensical dialog about moving the society forward, engage in it.

Talking about race and racial reconciliation is clearly becoming the in thing. It is the politically acceptable thing. The Nation responded positively to President Clinton's discussion of racial diversity in his inaugural address on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s holiday and again in his State of the Union Address. Speaker GINGRICH followed with a call on race ignorance and drugs.

Nobody in the media wants to just talk about the O.J. Simpson verdict. They wanted to talk about the O.J. Simpson verdict and what it is revealing about the current state of race relations in America. The fact that the O.J. Simpson trial is being viewed and used as a news hook to talk about race in this country is a sign of just how far off the point the media truly is. If we are going to have an honest conversation about this, we have to ask ourselves the question, why do African-Americans and white Americans see the justice system so differently?

□ 1615

Let us look at some of the historical chronology, and then we will come back to O.J.

In 1705, a Massachusetts law provided that any African-American or mulatto who struck a white person be severely whipped, at the discretion of the justices before whom the offender was convicted.

In 1708, a Connecticut law imposed a penalty riot exceeding lashes for any African-American who disturbed the peace or attempted to strike a white person.

In 1718, a Rhode Island law was enacted that said to the States if a slave is found in a free black's home, both should be whipped.

In 1730, a Connecticut law provided for penalty of 40 lashes for any black, native American, or mulatto who attempted to defame a white person.

Of particular importance to O.J., and I have not heard this in any of the analysis, in 1816 a Louisiana State law prohibited slaves from testifying against whites and free blacks except in cases where free blacks were allegedly involved in slave uprisings.

In 1827, from my State, the State of Illinois, a law decreed that blacks and native Americans and mulattos were incompetent to testify in court against whites.

In 1831, here is a real case study, Ohio said that African-Americans were prohibited from serving on juries as a matter of law.

In 1848, Ohio's black laws were then reversed, giving blacks legal standing in the courts.

In 1849, Ohio lifted its ban on testimony by blacks in courts.

In 1855, black Bostonians protested the absence of black jurors and called for equal judicial rights.

In 1860, two blacks in Worcester, MA, were named jurors, the first black jurors in Massachusetts's history.

In 1862, California African-Americans were granted the right to testify in cases for the first time where white men were defendants.

In 1865, the first interracial jury in the United States indicted Jefferson Davis for treason. The case was set for trial in 1868.

In 1880, in *Stauder versus West Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the exclusion of blacks from the jury was unconstitutional. And the way around the *Stauder* case, many prosecutors have now used preemptory strikes to accomplish what the Constitution has already eliminated as unconstitutional.

In 1919, in *State versus Young*, the West Virginia Supreme Court ruled that a black man sentenced to life in prison was denied equal protection under the law because his jury had no black members. The State subsequently admitted black jury members.

In 1926, Violette N. Anderson was the first black woman attorney to present a case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1930, President Hoover nominated Judge John J. Parker of North Carolina, a known Klansman, to the U.S. Supreme Court. The NAACP led a successful campaign against Mr. Parker's confirmation.

In 1947, be patient with me, I am coming up to 1997, Rosa Lee Ingram, a Georgia tenant farmer, and two of her husbands were convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a white man

whom Ingram alleged assaulted her. The case spurred a national defense and an amnesty program that resulted in her pardon in 1959.

On the mind of every African-American still living today, 1955, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black youth, was murdered in Mississippi by white men. The murder was so brutal and the child's body was beaten so badly that at first he could only be identified by the ring that he was wearing.

The reason for his murder: A Chicago native, on a dare from his friends, on a dare from his friends, whistled at a white woman. The two white men arrested for the crime were acquitted by an all-white jury.

The particularly graphic picture of Emmett Till's body appeared in *Jet* magazine and is freshly etched in the minds of every African-American.

In 1959, Mack Charles Parker was lynched in Poplarville, MS. A grand jury received evidence in the case but refused to acknowledge that a lynching had even occurred.

In 1961, on an integrated bus in Alabama, there were routinely arrests in Mississippi, and, as they routinely arrested people in Mississippi, a Federal judge had to issue an injunction against the police to get them to protect the Freedom Riders.

Later, evidence surfaces that local police in Birmingham and Montgomery were involved in the violence and that an FBI employee participated in the Ku Klux Klan's strategy sessions. The FBI did nothing to stop the violence it knew was planned.

These are accounts that my grandmother, who is still living, and my great-grandmother, God rest her soul, she is still living and in a coma, often used to tell us about. She used to tell us in 1963 about Medgar Evers, the civil rights activist and field secretary for the NAACP. He was shot in the back.

The rifle bore the fingerprints of Byron de la Beckwith, a vocal member of a local white supremacist group. Despite overwhelming evidence against Mr. Beckwith, including an earlier statement that he wanted to kill Mr. Evers, Beckwith was set free after two trials with all-white juries.

In 1989, evidence surfaced suggesting that juries had been tampered with. Beckwith was not convicted for the murder until over 26 years after he had committed the crime.

Just 2 years ago this case was resolved, and there is presently a movie at the theater starring Whoopi Goldberg to illustrate how recent and current the history is that many African-Americans have with juries.

The FBI files referred to Dr. King as the most dangerous Negro leader in the Nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro, and the national security. The FBI began high surveillance of this civil rights leader and those close to him in an attempt to expose, disrupt, discredit, and otherwise neutralize them. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy authorized the FBI to tap Dr. King's phones.

An FBI letter referring to Dr. King and other civil rights leaders that it would "be unrealistic to limit ourselves, as we have been doing, to legalistic proofs or definitely conclusive evidence that would stand up in the court or before congressional committees."

In an attempt to replace King with a manageable black leader, the FBI, under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, began an extended character assault against Dr. King, labeling him a Communist sympathizer and an adulterer.

The O.J. Simpson verdicts themselves are really, Mr. Speaker, not that complicated. Assuming the rules of the judicial system in Los Angeles and Santa Monica were fair and followed, and only the appellate process will determine that, we must accept both verdicts if we are to live in a nation of laws and not men and women. Personal views are just that, personal views, to which everyone is entitled. They are irrelevant, however, with respect to being in a nation of laws.

The principle should not be difficult to accept. All of us want to live and work in a nation of laws, in a society where equal protection of the laws is respected and accepted. This really, Mr. Speaker, should be all there is to O.J. Simpson. Guilty, not guilty, and guilty. That is over with and done with.

But how do we get from O.J. Simpson's verdicts to race relations and to race entertainment? I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, we arrive at this conclusion by dealing with symbols over substance and talk over action.

President Clinton stood on the steps of the Capitol, looking west toward the Lincoln Memorial, the spot where Dr. King gave his famous 1963 speech. When he gave his Inaugural speech and paid tribute to Dr. King's dream, President Clinton spoke to the poetic symbolism of Dr. King's dream but not to its economic substance.

Dr. King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, looking east toward the Capitol and the Congress, and he spoke to them about our Nation's budget priorities, about economic justice as the path to racial justice as the substance of his speech. He talked about a promissory note, about a check that had bounced, that had been returned, that had been marked "Insufficient funds."

But Dr. King refused to believe that the bank of justice was bankrupt, and he said that there would neither be rest nor tranquility in America until the promissory note was made good.

Today, the White House and both Democrats and Republicans discussed that same promissory note, that same bounced check, and that same bank of justice, using different terms. Now the false bankruptcy is called a balanced budget or balanced budget amendment.

Assessing the state of the Union depends on one's vantage point. You see one thing if you are on the top looking down. It was a great speech for those of

us who were on the top looking down. You see quite another thing if you are a worker or you are poor or you are economically insecure and you are looking up.

If you are well educated, if you are employed full time at basically a job of your choosing, if you are making a decent salary, if you and your family have good health and an insurance plan, if you are living in a relatively safe and affordable house, then the state of the Union is pretty much what President Clinton said it was in his State of the Union Address. Then we, as a nation, have a decent shot clearly, at that level, at making racial progress.

But you may be 1 of the 15 to 20 million Americans who are unemployed, underemployed, working part time when you want to be working full time, have never had a job, gave up looking for a job so that you are not even counted among the unemployed, or with corporate or government downsizing you are worried that you may be soon in one of these categories.

In that economic climate, does anyone think that the American people can really hear and really understand a conversation about race and racial reconciliation?

If you are 1 of the 40 million Americans without health insurance, another 40 million with inadequate health insurance, a worker who is being asked to pay more for less medical care, is anyone who is ill-insured or has no insurance, is anyone really convinced that racial reconciliation is high atop that individual's priorities and agenda?

If you are not living in safe, sanitary, and affordable housing, then you have a personal housing crisis. But much of the country lives that way, so America has a housing crisis.

In the late sixties, a White House Conference on Housing called for 26 million housing starts over the next 10 years, with 6 million federally subsidized. That translates into 2,600,000 each year, 600,000 federally subsidized housing over 10 years.

The Nation has never approximated that goal, and currently we are over 1.5 million new housing starts. And the population has grown, so the crisis is worse today than it was three decades ago. Thus, we now need more housing than ever, for America is ill-housed. How can we expect people to be sensitive about race and about racial reconciliation when there is a housing crisis?

Our education system is in crisis. Not all of our children are being educated for work and life in the 21st century. Certainly, one can say that the President made a huge effort in his State of the Union Address to improve our educational system and make it more accessible to more people through the various initiatives he spelled out in his speech in the form of tax breaks, tuition grants, and scholarships. For that, he is to be commended.

While the effort was there, and I agreed with that, for quality of edu-

cation is an entitlement of every American, one cannot be as sure about the effectiveness of these programs for the students who have the greatest need, those who are the least well off. While many will benefit from the President's plan, it appears that most of the money will go to students who plan to attend college anyway.

It is a kind of "Democrats for the leisure class" approach of giving tax relief to the middle class in the guise of education reform; a tinkering, top-down, talented, and technocratic approach to solving a very real problem.

In my district, I have cities that do not have tax bases at all, not one job in the town, not enough money, Mr. Speaker, to raise revenue to pay their firemen, to pay their police officers. In this particular context, high school students are in school districts where there are no resources on a regular basis, a consistent basis, to pay teachers what they deserve. Can we really move systematically toward solving our race problem when we cannot provide a quality education for all of America's children?

On the watch of a current Democrat President and a Republican Congress, the United States has become the most economically unequal industrialized democracy in the world in terms of wealth and income. While taxes have probably never been totally fair for the average American, tax unfairness was dramatically escalated under the Reagan tax program of 1981. Thus, we do not need a more benevolent and less extreme tax plan than Ronald Reagan's, we need a reversal of that plan.

We do not need tax cuts for the middle class as much as we need fair taxes for everybody. Inherent in fair taxes for all is a reduction in taxes for the middle class, the working class, and the poor. How does one get racial justice in America in the context of economic injustice?

□ 1630

The reality is you cannot. The more likely outcome and one which we are currently witnessing is the dynamic scapegoating of people of color and the poor in a mean spirit. The logical result of this current economic climate is the passage of proposition 187, immigrant bashing in California and other xenophobic measures.

The current racial climate engenders scapegoating by blaming the lack of jobs on affirmative action for women and people of color. In this current climate it is the politically weakest and most vulnerable among us who are being economically assaulted in the name of welfare reform.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, there can only be anecdotal racial reconciliation under the present circumstances of economic inequality and insecurity. Thus, to talk about race and racial reconciliation without acting to bring about a full employment peacetime economy, without universal and comprehensive health care system, without

adequate, safe and affordable housing for every American, without quality education for every American child, without economic fairness in wealth and income, is talk that can only lead to more hostility, frustration and racial animosity. To deal with the American people on the matter of race in such a manner is to play games with them. It is engaging in race entertainment.

Frustration at the inability to make racial progress will lead to increased racial tensions, witnessed daily on television or experienced every day by average black, white, red, yellow, brown people. Or in the extreme, it can even lead to a racial explosion, as we witnessed in the aftermath of the Rodney King trial.

The other alternative, Mr. Speaker, is to think that you are contributing to racial progress merely by talking about it privately. I am reminded about former Senator Bill Bradley's poignant statement, "When is the last time you sat down with a person of another race and had a frank discussion about race?"

Yes, dialog undoubtedly helps break down barriers and contributes to understanding, but enhanced personal interactions, without economic progress, will never achieve the goal of racial reconciliation. One might wonder why I appear to be downplaying the importance of educating the American people about race through public dialog.

My point is that merely talking about or reporting on race relations through the media, especially television, is subject to the same limitations as in the case of individual dialog. Ted Koppel and Nightline have done some wonderful and important shows on race, but unless in the long term it is reported in the context of a comprehensive economic approach, it will not markedly improve race relations in America. In fact, in an unintended way, it may even add to the frustrations and to the tensions by reflecting a lack of progress on the racial front.

The problem is that we cannot make real progress on the race question in economic isolation. The race problem must be solved in the context of providing employment, health care, housing, education, and a fair share of wealth and income to all of America's people.

If we attempt to deal with the race question outside of the economic context, we are engaging in entertainment, because we cannot make systematic progress in race relations under these conditions. What often happens is that television ends up, since the networks must be concerned with ratings, not educating people about race but using race to entertain them instead, and unfortunately this is often done in the most sensational manner.

That is why I say that the O.J. Simpson trials have basically been about race entertainment, not about racial

education or racial reconciliation. What could be more sensational and off the point than substantively dealing with the state of current race relations in America than the O.J. Simpson trials? Star black male athlete alleged to have murdered his beautiful blonde white wife.

There is more racial understanding and racial reconciliation possible in 1 year, Mr. Speaker, of full employment than there is in three decades of talking about race on television, no matter how well-intentioned, how well done or how well researched.

Sensationalizing race in the current economic climate can only increase tension, add to frustration, increase cynicism, and eventually contribute to drug use and scapegoating, where people implode and turn on each other rather than to each other.

Racial justice is not the same as economic justice. There would still be racism in a full employment economy. But systematic and steady racial progress can only be achieved in the context of a full employment economy, and it would only be achieved to the degree that we as a nation make progress on economic issues.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, that is why I always say the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve System must become part of the racial justice dialog. Every time unemployment dips below 5 percent, Chairman Greenspan uses employment growth to say that the economy is overheating and as a rationale to raise interest rates, slow the economy and raise unemployment.

I oppose the Democratic welfare reform bill. I oppose the Republican welfare reform bill. I thought it was horrible when the President of the United States said that he was going to support the welfare reform bill and 98 Democrats voted for it and 98 Democrats voted against it. But let us assume, since it is a matter of law now, and it is a horrible bill that still needs correction by this body, let us assume for a moment that we are going to move people genuinely from welfare to work.

Who is on welfare? People who are unemployed or people who are underemployed? Let us assume that they are part of the 5 percent, the very bottom of our Nation's economy, those with whom the social safety net of this country was designed to protect. Two years and you are off, we say in the bill. But let us say for the very first time because the Dow Jones industrial average is now above the 6,000 mark, that the economy is now beginning to reach the unemployed and the underemployed for the very first time. Let us say that the opportunities that the President talks about in his State of the Union Address, 10 million new jobs, now at 11 million new jobs, let us say that those jobs are finally beginning to reach the unemployed and the underemployed for the first time. As soon as unemployment in our Nation dips beneath 5 percent, the Federal Reserve

and its chairman has a press conference, and the very first thing they say is, "The economy is overheating, we've got to slow the economy down, we've got to jack up interest rates, we've got to slow the economy down," and, therefore, this institution, along with the Federal Reserve, creates a permanent class of poverty in our Nation without any more government assistance.

Shame on us, Mr. Speaker. Shame on Democrats and Republicans who do not recognize and will not acknowledge that the Federal Reserve Board has a unique and an integral role to play in racial reconciliation, because jobs that have never been and have been eliminated from a generation of people are not reaching them.

Even definitions must become part of the racial justice dialog. That is why we need Presidential leadership. The politically motivated movement to redefine the Consumer Price Index, lowering the Consumer Price Index in order to reduce the budget deficit, will have a negative effect on the lives of real Americans, but disproportionately on the lives of people of color. It will impact race relations. It is not a conversation for just Wall Street or a bunch of economists. This is serious business.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, even the way we define full employment affects race relations. "Oh, Jesse," Members on the other side walk up to me all the time, Democrats walk up to me all the time, shake my hand, "Hey, Jesse, I marched with your dad"; "Hey, Jesse, been there with you"; "You're so right, friend," but constantly vote against everything I am for.

It does not make sense, Mr. Speaker. It sure feels good, but we are not making any progress. In 1971, when Richard Nixon was President, unemployment had risen to just over 5 percent. At that time, our Nation defined 3 percent as full employment. He thought, Mr. Nixon, that 5 percent might cost him the election in 1972, so what did he do in August of 1971? He took an action traditionally attributed to Democratic officials and imposed wage-and-price controls. He jawboned the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates, and it worked. By November of 1972, the economy was booming, employment had dramatically risen, and he was overwhelmingly reelected.

They accused George McGovern of losing the election because he was too liberal. The fact of the matter is Richard Nixon won reelection because he was the liberal. He challenged the Federal Reserve, and he moved unemployment back to a number that was more acceptable by the American people.

In 1997, however, we are no longer at 3 percent. We are at 5 percent. And every time finally the underemployed get an opportunity, they jawbone the economy and start moving the economy in an opposite direction.

We must challenge, Mr. Speaker, the media, political, labor, and other leaders to transform the national discussion and debate from mere racial justice for minorities to greater racial justice for minorities in the context of greater economic justice for all Americans.

Dr. King's dream was poetic and it was symbolic. Dr. King's substance was a nonviolent, activist, economic strategy to combat racism and bring about racial reconciliation. That is why he moved from just talking about racial justice to talking about racial reconciliation in the context of an economic justice movement.

In 1968 when he was killed, he was not fighting for civil rights. That bill was passed in 1964, and he was not sleeping for 4 years. What was he doing in 1968? He was leading a poor people's campaign that paralleled the national Presidential campaign because he wanted the Nation's priorities to reflect raising boats that were stuck at the bottom.

In a nation with the economic ability and the technological capability of providing every American with a decent life, it is an outrage and it is a scandal that there should be such social misery in our country.

What do we say to the American poor and to the victims of racism and sexism and classism in America? Do we tell them, Mr. Speaker, that you are better off than the Russian poor? You are better off than the Bosnian poor? You are better off than the Asian poor, the African poor, the Latin poor? This, Mr. Speaker, has got to be close to cruel and insensitive and immoral.

No, we must tell them that such injustice is intolerable. That no American should be institutionally and systematically maimed in body and in spirit when our country has the means of doing better. The standard is not a comparison of how much worse things could be, but how much better things should be if we had only the political leadership and the development of the political will to change.

We are a nation, Mr. Speaker, of enormous national wealth that is tragically suffering from an anemia of national will to do what we know is just. It is time to end race entertainment, and it is time to start down the sure path of economic and racial justice.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY) at 5 p.m.

COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank our chairwoman, Congressman MAXINE WATERS, the gentlewoman from California, for her leadership and tenacity in moving forthwith on critical issues of importance, not only to African-Americans, but to all Americans, and to our revered and preeminent leader, the gentleman from Ohio, Congressman LOUIS STOKES, for the guidance in advising those of us who have come recently to this House to do the people's business. My thanks to both of my colleagues for allowing me these moments to reflect.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud African American to acknowledge this month as African American History Month and to recognize the vast contributions made by distinguished citizens of this Nation who are of African descent.

As we hold our forbearers to high esteem for their courage, perseverance, morality and faith, we salute them for their relentless efforts in fighting to remove the legal and political disabilities that were imposed upon us.

While I represent California's 37th Congressional District with pride, my birth State is Alabama, and I am reminded of the first African American from Alabama who was elected to the 42d Congress and who advocated even then the importance of education, Benjamin Sterling Turner.

Education has been the cornerstone in the African American community. My father, Rev. Shelley Millender, Sr., knew the importance of education. He and my mother, Mrs. Evelena Deutsche Millender advocated a quality education and gave us a value system that is part and parcel of the true spirit of African American families. We recognize that a good education is the key to success and should open the door of opportunity.

I am further reminded of my father's teachings when he said, never subordinate to race-bashing; respect yourself and others, even though you have differences of opinion, but hold firm to your convictions.

Let us not forget one who had strong convictions in the name of Wiley Branton, now deceased, but who was a great American and a great leader in the early civil rights movements. He was born and reared in Pine Bluff, AR, became a lawyer, and began practicing law in his hometown. His earliest achievements, however, was of national interest, as he represented the Little Rock Nine in 1958. He later became the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, being appointed by the President, then Lyndon Johnson. He served as the dean of Howard University School of Law until his death. Convictions like that and convictions like

Branton is but one of the various teachings of commitment and dedication that the African American family instills in their children.

As I listened very closely to the President's State of the Union Address, as he spoke of education as a No. 1 priority, building strong families and communities, and humanitarian efforts in the assistance of the underprivileged through volunteerism, I stand tonight to lift up some of my constituents who are role models and great citizens that the President talked about. Their names will never be in lights nor on billboards, but they are the unsung heroes of my community. They helped in the education of our children, they built strong families and engaging communities, and they taught us to have a strong value system. Let me share with you these outstanding African American individuals.

Theresa LaVerne Harris who passed away in November 1996 was a dedicated educator. Throughout her life Theresa LaVerne touched all of us who had the pleasure of knowing her with her humor, her strength and, perhaps most importantly, her dignity. But she never forgot that education was the key, and therefore she became an educator and an administrator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She spent her early youth in Louisiana and Mississippi until her family moved to California in 1943. She attended the Los Angeles unified schools and graduated from John Francis Polytechnic High School with honors. But it was during her college days at UCLA that she decided to become this educator.

Theresa LaVerne began a long distinguished life educating the young kids from the inner city. She excelled in her career as an educator. Though she raised three outstanding children, she was a loving and supportive wife, and in spite of all of this, she went on to earn a master's degree in personnel administration from Pepperdine University.

But both as an educator and an administrator within a public school system, Theresa LaVerne worked hard to ensure that students under her charge had the very best of education available to them. While she was deservedly proud of her mark as a personal and academic woman of achievements, she was more interested in using her talents and her strength to help children to become better educated and to ensure their mark in the future in mainstreaming them into the world of work.

Those of us who worked around her saw that she was a very strong disciplinarian in her efforts to make sure that education stayed the primary responsibility of those teachers and administrators who worked under her watch.

Mr. Speaker, I worked with Theresa LaVerne Harris and had the privilege of knowing her and her family for decades. She was a devoted wife, a wonderful and nurturing mother, a role model not only for our children, but for all of