

them, and that is the good thing about the activities and about doing it and being involved.

So, Doug, I really thank you for all your institute is doing; and I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for calling us together tonight so that I could say thank you for coming, so that I can invite you back next year or the year after next, whenever the decision is made when we will go. Also I would like to thank the President for coming and thank America for being there. They were there in so many ways, whether it was by TV, radio, or in spirit. I would like to think that all of us marched this time across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Let me thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) for being there 35 years ago, and let me thank the gentleman for being there this time. Let me thank all of you, and I invite you back.

Remember this: Selma is America. You can come there, just as you can go home.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. We appreciate his comments and appreciate his welcome to his district and appreciate his invitation back.

I think I pointed out, and the point that was made by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOFFEL) was apt, that Selma is America, and America can learn lessons from Selma, as Selma needed to learn lessons from America.

Doug Tanner, we all do thank you. You have made our lives richer, more whole, by your ministering to us, ministering to us in a variety of different ways, some of which some would say are religious, some would say secular, but surely ministering to our souls and to our hearts and to our heads so that we will be better persons and treat one another as we would want to be treated.

As I was sitting here and listening to all of you speak, I thought to myself, we rise here every day as we begin this session and pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The lesson of Selma is for all. Indivisible. We cannot segregate rights and expect any of us to long enjoy those rights. That, JOHN, is the lesson I think you were teaching to the country, that Martin Luther King, Jr., was teaching to the country.

If you hold truths to be self-evident and you say that all men are created equal and endowed not by the State, not by government, but by God, by their creator, with inalienable rights, then God's creatures mean for all, liberty and justice for all.

JOHN, I think you made us a little more cognizant of what that really means; and as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) has pointed out, it teaches us better how to go home with our friends and neighbors, families and colleagues, and to emphasize how im-

portant it is for our Nation to be better than it is today. As great as it is, as just as it is, it can be better, if we realize that we must have it as a Nation with justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving us this time to commemorate an extraordinary experience in the lives of each one of us.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I honor and thank my brother, JOHN LEWIS; and I thank my friend, DOUG TANNER.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I join a number of my colleagues in commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Voting Rights March from Selma to Montgomery. I was honored to be a part of the Faith and Politics Institute's Congressional Civil Rights pilgrimage a couple of weeks ago. It was powerful to hear from those who had experienced the struggle firsthand. It was informative to learn about these historic events while actually at the sites. It was inspiring to walk in the same places as those who stood up for justice.

Thirty-five years ago, our country experienced some of the lowest and highest points in our history. On the one hand, law enforcement agents and elected officials violently opposed the basic democratic right of voting for African Americans. On the other hand, ministers, students and regular citizens stood up for their most basic rights as Americans. Congress responded by passing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the crowning achievements of the Civil Rights Movement.

Unfortunately, the work of Martin Luther King and JOHN LEWIS and so many others is still unfinished. We have made many strides toward equal rights and progress toward racial equality. But the issues surrounding race remain among the biggest challenges facing our country. When we review our country's legacy around slavery, the historical record is still incomplete.

One of the items on that unfinished agenda is that the U.S. government has never apologized for its role in slavery. A few years ago, I saw a television program with a Black minister and a White minister commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday. They stated that there had never been an official apology for slavery. With my country's Civil War, all that President Abraham Lincoln achieved and the successes of the Civil Rights Movement, I found that hard to believe.

So I went to the Library of Congress and discovered that they were right—no one in the Government of the United States had ever apologized for slavery. Therefore, I set out to correct this glaring omission in history. On June 12, 1997, I introduced my simple resolution without any fanfare.

What happened next was a complete surprise. It exploded on the political scene at about the same time President Clinton was conducting his "National

Dialogue on Race." Both conservatives and liberals, blacks and whites dismissed it as "a meaningless gesture" or "an avoidance of problem-solving." After considering it, President Clinton decided not to apologize because of the fear of legal ramifications.

I received hundreds of letters and phone calls about the apology. Most of the people I heard from opposed the idea and some were blatantly racist and hateful. Very few people stood up and defended the idea and necessity of an apology. At times, I felt very alone in this struggle to do what I know is right.

I know that my resolution will not fix the lingering injustice resulting from slavery. But reconciliation begins with an apology. I hope this apology will be the start of a new healing between the races. I introduced the resolution because it is the right thing to do.

Many of the opponents to the apology argued that slavery had been abolished over a century ago and no one alive in the United States today had been a slave or a slave owner. But that ignores the fact that slavery's effects are still with us.

Just one of the many examples of slavery's legacy is in terms of assets. Slaves, of course, were not able to earn any money or pass on an inheritance to their children. When African-Americans were freed after the Civil War, they started at a distinct disadvantage. Then they were shackled with Jim Crow laws and segregation that prevented them from truly entering into society. Only within the last two generations have descendants of slaves legally able to join American society. Not only was it not a level playing field, the game itself was stacked against people of color.

Now in the 21st Century in the richest nation in the world, blacks control only 1.3 percent of the nation's financial assets, while they are around 12 percent of the population. Whites possess a staggering 95 percent. Almost two-thirds of black households have no net financial assets. Blacks and whites with equal incomes possess very unequal shares of wealth.

Our work is obviously not finished. I am proud to stand up with my colleagues and voice my support for efforts that promote racial reconciliation. My special thanks to JOHN LEWIS and AMO HOUGHTON for organizing the pilgrimage to Alabama and the ongoing "Congressional Conversations on Race." I look forward a time when the record is corrected and we can truly celebrate the accomplishments that have brought about "One America."

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the special order just given.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Is there objection

to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT ON TOPICS OF CONCERN TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, once again we are here this evening for a little nightside chat. There are a number of different subjects I would like to cover this evening.

I would like to start out by talking about the loss of a good friend that I had last week, just a short comment in that regard. We are going to move on and talk about the Congressional Medal of Honor. We lost one of our heroes. If you want a true definition of hero, take a look at the people that serve in our military forces. We lost one in Colorado. I will talk a little about him. Then I want to move on and talk about the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms people.

We had a very interesting item in Colorado over the weekend about the enforcement, or lack of enforcement, by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms department in their inspections regarding firearms sales. As you know, across the country guns have become somewhat of a sensitive issue.

Now, last week when I addressed you, we talked a little on Operation Exile. I know that my colleague, the gentleman from the State of Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), is going to introduce a bill tomorrow to assist our local States and our local communities on their Project Exile, so we will highlight a little of what he is attempting to do. We will talk about our public awareness campaign and talk about some of the responsibilities of gun ownership.

Then, if we have some time this evening, I would like to touch again on the death tax. As many of you know, that is a very punitive tax in our system. It is a tax that has devastating impacts on small businesses, has devastating impacts on farms and ranches across the country; and, frankly, this is not a justified tax.

It is a tax supported by the administration. In fact, the administration has proposed a \$9.5 billion increase in the death tax this year. I am confident that we can stop that. But just so you no, there is a big difference of opinion on the policy of the Democratic administration to raise death taxes and our position on the Republican side that says death taxes are fundamentally unfair, they are unjustified, and they should be eliminated in this country.

But we will get to all that in due time. Let us start first of all with just a comment about a friend of mine, a classmate of mine, a fellow named Richard. I will not go into his last name, but I want to tell Members, my friend committed suicide last week.

I hope that in your walks of life, sometimes we get so busy that we forget that some people have some demons within them that they cannot control, that they are having a difficult time with life.

What I try and do, and it just came back home this last week when I was at the service of this gentleman, and he really was, I think he had some demons he could not control; but it brought back the thought that, gosh, any time we see somebody in some despair, we should always urge them, before they take that step, that ultimate and in some regards very selfish step of suicide, urge them to call a suicide watch or get some assistance.

I am confident that my friend, had my friend just had a few more minutes of being able to calm down and think out the situation, we would have avoided a tragedy; not so much just a tragedy to my friend, but a tragedy to his friends, to his family, to his wife, and to his children. His wife, Anna, is a splendid person. She now faces a tremendous challenge ahead with these children.

The circumstances of this suicide were tragic. I think the circumstances of any suicide are tragic. And if there is a justification for mental health assistance in this country, it is that suicide tragedy that takes place across the entire spectrum, across the entire spectrum of age, every day in this country.

□ 2200

So I just urge my colleagues again, we run at a fast pace around here, but if one has an opportunity to put one's hand on the shoulder of a friend, and I am sure all of my colleagues would do it, and I wish I would have had the opportunity to do it, it might just work; it might just prevent somebody from being in such despair that they ruin the most ultimate gift that God could give us.

PUEBLO, COLORADO: HOME OF A HERO, WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another sad event last week, although the gentleman lived a full life, and that is about a gentleman named William Crawford, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. My district is the Third Congressional District of Colorado, and just for those of my colleagues that need reminding, that includes most of the mountains of Colorado, all the resorts: Aspen, Colorado; Vail, Steamboat, Telluride; it has the industrial community of Pueblo, it has the San Luis Valley, it has Durango, down there in the Four Corners, the Anasazi ruins, the Colorado National Monuments, part of the Rocky Mountain National Monument, part of the Black Canyon National Monument. As my colleagues can see, any time I talk about my district, I get in kind of a promotional mood because it is such a wonderful district.

But there is another reason that stands out besides the natural beauty of this district and the people of this district, and that is that Pueblo, Colorado is what we call the Home of Heroes. Mr. Speaker, this last week we had four living members from the community who received the Congressional Medal of Honor. This was not awarded, they deserved this, they worked for it. I do not have to go into what the Congressional Medal of Honor means, although in my opinion, any recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor is at the very highest of the echelon as far as a definition of what being an American is all about.

Well, last week we lost one of our four; it was William Crawford. He passed away last Tuesday and actually they were holding a memorial service today at the United States Air Force Academy. I thought I would talk just a little about what Mr. Crawford did and how he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. I guess the best way to do that is just take directly from the script which described his actions.

But before I do that, let me say that one of the things that causes me some, I guess one would say discouragement, is when I read throughout the sports pages of our newspapers in this country, we read about heroes in sports. My opinion is there are celebrities in sports and there are a lot of talented celebrities in sports, but we really ought to be very cautious and very selfish about the use of the word "heroes." The word "heroes" really should be placed not on sports figures, but figures like William Crawford, figures like the firemen or the policemen that lose their lives. I think we lose a police officer every 28 hours in this country. This year has been a bad year for our firemen as well. We have lost several firemen in the line of duty.

But let us go back to Mr. Crawford. I am not over-using the word when I use the word "hero." He was given this medal and this recognition for conspicuous gallantry at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy in Italy on September 13, 1943. When Company I attacked an enemy-held position on hill 424, the 3rd Platoon, in which Private Crawford was a squad scout, attacked as base platoon for the company.

After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill directly into the line of fire and crawled to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly stood up and destroyed the machine gun emplacement, killed three of the crew with a hand grenade and thus, enabled his platoon to continue its advance.

So he climbs over the first hill, he is in the direct line of fire of a machine gun, he is able to crawl under the machine gun fire, he gets right up to the