

Those opposed to racial preferences claim that it is the way affirmative action actually equalizes the playing field that is unfair. But this argument only works if an alternative solution is proposed and enforced.

This has not happened. So in the absence of affirmative action, the best solution to leveling the playing field in educational opportunity is to equally fund all public schools.

All Americans should want to eliminate any barriers that underprivileged people now face in attempting to educate themselves and make a decent living.

In the meantime, there is still something to be said for hard work. But at the same time, when hard work cannot save a large portion of society from living a lower-class lifestyle, our system of capitalism is failing.

That is why it is imperative that public schools be funded equally and that people who can't afford college tuition can still go to college if they so choose.

Capitalism relies on the theory of competition, and the hardest work and greatest talent paying off the most. Right now, the hardest work and greatest talent can get you nowhere or anywhere depending on where you start from.

For a capitalist system to hold true to its ideals—and to even be efficient—it must allow people from all types of backgrounds to have the same opportunities; or else the best will not always reach the places where they can be most productive.

This will never occur until we have equal funding and equal opportunity at all levels of our educational system.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, in harmony with the theme that the 1-hour presentation on Black History Month has set forth, is there a color line, is there racism, emphatically, yes, there is. This does not prevent us from noting the positive achievements that have taken place and the progress that has been made. We are quite pleased that there are now 39 Members of the House of Representatives who are African Americans. We have gotten back what we lost certainly after the Civil War. There were some 30 representatives elected, some in the Senate as well as the House.

All that was lost. Step by step we have seen gains wiped out over the years during reconstruction, and for about a hundred years before the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King we were steadily going backwards and every achievement that was accomplished was accomplished without the help of the mainstream population, just about every achievement. Many of the achievements were accomplished despite a great deal of hostility and animosity from the mainstream population.

I sit on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and, of course, am very interested in all aspects of edu-

cation. The historically black colleges and universities, fortunately, are in the spotlight and have been the recipients of quite a bit of Federal attention from both parties in the last year or so; and in the last 10 years the Federal Government has stepped up to the plate and provided special assistance to the 113 historically black colleges and universities. They were established and they achieved a very important role, have come to a very important role, achieved a very important place in African American society by educating those who could not get an education anywhere else. Many of our leaders of today still are graduates of historically black colleges and universities.

But the history of those institutions is a history where they got very little help from the mainstream society, and they received a lot of hostility and animosity from the local communities. The southern communities were often very hostile toward the so-called intellectuals who were in the black colleges and universities.

Even after the Morrill Act, the Federal act which established land grant colleges in every State, even after that Act was amended to establish a parallel land grant college in the segregated States where blacks were not allowed to attend the land grant colleges, even after that happened, there was tremendous discrimination. The amount of money received by the land grant colleges which blacks attended, were allowed to attend, were allowed to set up and provide a faculty for, et cetera, was much smaller. The amount of money was much smaller. That historically was the case, and even today those same land grant colleges established by the Federal Government are receiving less funding from the States than the land grant colleges that serve primarily the mainstream population, traditionally white land grant colleges.

So every step of the way there have been impediments. Is race a factor? Yes, unfortunately, it is. All over the world you have racism, and certainly you have racism in the United States. But the important thing is to note that we must operate and act and work constantly to make certain that the negative impact of racism is not used to make other people suffer. We must alleviate as much racism as possible, counteract as much racism as possible, pass laws which keep racism in check. That is the best we can do.

History has shown us that the only way we can guarantee that you will be able to make the progress that these institutions have made and be able to cite the positive accomplishments is that some group has to work against the prevailing, ongoing racism. We have had in America a golden opportunity to do that.

□ 1845

What makes America great is that it provides the room, it provides the leeway, to fight; and we have fought and accomplished a great deal, despite the racism.

I would like to look forward to the day when an American President could say that he wants to apologize for slavery and receive the overwhelming support of the American people. Unfortunately, when President Clinton implied that he might want to do that in the last year of his term, he was criticized; and there was a poll taken and the majority of white Americans, 70 percent, said no, there should be no apology for slavery.

We can apologize for the Holocaust. The Germans can apologize for the Holocaust, and the Japanese asked to apologize to the Chinese and Koreans; but there should be no apology for slavery, the majority of American people said.

That is unfortunate, because the opposite of not apologizing is covering up. It does not mean I refuse to apologize; but it means I will cover up, and we will continue to cover it up.

The only way we can break the back of racism and guarantee that racism will not be harmful is to recognize it and jointly, black-white, all minorities, work together to try to alleviate the harsh impact and effect of racism, so everybody in America has an equal opportunity to go forward.

Black History Month is a time to celebrate those positive achievements; it is also a time to remind everybody that we cannot achieve unless we recognize the truth of racism and attempt to combat it.

REQUEST FOR OUT OF ORDER SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous request to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, my understanding from the gentleman's side was that they were, first of all, going to run about a half an hour, but they certainly are entitled to an hour, so I have no objection to that.

But now this is the second 5 minutes, and I would like to know when the speakers are going to end. We have another speaker behind myself, and we would like to stay on schedule. I was assured by the gentleman's side a few moments ago they had one 5-minute request, and now we are into two 5-minute additional requests. They have had an hour.

I guess I would just like to know from the gentleman's side, how much longer it is going to continue.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCINNIS. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if there was a misunderstanding. We thought the gentleman was advised there would be two speakers. However, the gentleman certainly has the right to object.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation, I am going to let the gentleman go if he will just let me know, is this it?

Mr. PAYNE. This is definitely it.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

THE COLOR LINE REVISITED: IS RACISM DEAD?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for removing the objection, and we certainly do apologize for the misunderstanding.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening on this year's theme for Black History Month, "The Color Line Revisited: Is Racism Dead?"

While we all wish that we could proclaim the end of racism, we know that we are not there yet. We continue to hear disturbing stories about racial profiling in my State of New Jersey, where it has been admitted by the New Jersey State Police that they were not only doing it, but trained in how to perfect it by disguising numbers and falsifying reports.

We hear the question is racism dead, but we hear about the unequal opportunities in our school system, where the dropout rate continues to soar, where the great author Jonathan Kozol wrote a book, "Savage Inequalities; Children in America's Schools," where he highlighted how race and economics have a great deal to do. In the mis-education of people, we ask, Is racism dead?

We take a look at the whole question of home ownership and employment, where we find that only 45 percent of African Americans own homes in the United States, where 75 percent of other Americans, white Americans, have been able to achieve that level. We find that it is difficult in many instances to get the finances to do that.

We have the question of health care, where African Americans' life expectancy continues to drop about a month or so each year, where the white population's life expectancy increases about 2 months per year, therefore making a disparity in a widening gap in life expectancy in our great Nation.

However, we in the Congressional Black Caucus have worked hard to overcome these obstacles. Despite setbacks along the way, we are making sound progress. We continue working on innovative initiatives at all fronts as we meet weekly to promote our agenda, and we have seen much success and progress as we continue to move forward.

Black History Month offers us an opportunity to honor many African American heroes who have been largely left out of the history books.

When I was growing up, I loved history; and I learned about the midnight ride of Paul Revere who came and warned the colonists that the Redcoats were coming. However, I never was taught about the first man who gave his life for our Nation's independence, who was an African American, Crispus Attucks, who was killed during the Boston Massacre incident the night of March 5, 1770. Today, there is a monument to Crispus Attucks in Boston inscribed with the words of John Adams: "On that night the foundation of American independence was laid."

As a student I was taught about Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders and the crucial battle at San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. However, I did not discover in school, but later, about the story of the Buffalo Soldiers, who had a very low desertion rate, who had a low alcoholism rate, which were prevalent in the cavalries at that time; and the fact it was the Buffalo Soldiers who prevented the annihilation of Teddy Roosevelt at the battle of San Juan Hill. That was kept out of the history that I learned. The Indians gave the Buffalo Soldiers that name because the buffalo to them were a symbol of courage.

Finally when we were taught about Admiral Peary and told of his skill and courage in reaching the North Pole, I was so proud of that great explorer. However, it was only in recent years that we did learn that much of the credit should have gone to Matthew Henson, an African American who was on the expedition. Admiral Peary became sick, became snow blind, his feet were injured, and he had to slow down and stop. But Matt Henson went forward, provided a camp, and waited for Admiral Peary to come there. At that spot, it was the North Pole, and it was Matt Henson that got there first. However, when Admiral Peary returned home, he was given awards by the White House and the Congress. Mr. Henson was not invited to participate.

So as I conclude, I think we should resolve to teach our children the lessons of history every day, so that they may take pride in their rich heritage. We are all proud to be Americans today, more than ever before; and we are especially proud of our African Americans who have contributed to the growth and development of this great Nation.

THE ISSUE OF WATER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I wanted to talk about a subject that is near and dear to my heart, obviously a subject that is important to all of us, no matter where you reside or what district you represent in the United States, and that is the issue of water.

Now, water generally is a pretty boring subject, as long as it continues to run out of the tap, or when you turn on the bath water it is there, or when you want to go fishing and the lake is at the right level. But water is a very critical issue for us to keep an eye on.

The United States is very unique in that the geographical layout of this country is such that water is dramatically different and the issues dealing with water are dramatically different in the western portion of the United States than they are in the eastern portion of the United States.

For example, half of the land mass of the United States, half of the land mass, which I will point out a little later on, only has 14 percent of the water. If one draws a line down, say, between Kansas and the State of Missouri, from north to south, that eastern portion has 70-some percent, maybe 72 percent of the water in that smaller portion of the Nation. So we have got a Nation that is large, but the water is not equally divided.

Likewise, the State that I represent, the State of Colorado, is the only State in the Union where it has no inflowing water. No water comes into Colorado for use within the borders of Colorado.

Colorado is a very unique State, and I intend to spend some time this evening talking about the relationship of Colorado to the Nation's water, specifically the Colorado River. The Colorado River, of course, is called the Mother of Rivers.

Colorado is interesting in that Colorado is the highest State in elevation of all 50 States in the country. In fact, there are about 67 mountains in the United States, including Alaska, that are over 14,000 feet, and of those 67 mountains, 56 of them, I think, 56 of the 67, you find in the State of Colorado. Mountains over 13,000 feet, there is like 700 mountains in the United States that are over 13,000 feet; and of those 700, 600 of them are located in the State of Colorado.

That is critical. The reason the elevation is critical because, obviously, at the higher elevations is where you have your massive accumulations of snow and moisture during the winter months. That, of course, is very determinative as to what kind of spring runoff and what kind of water you are going to have for a good portion of the Nation as far as surface water is concerned for your months where you do not have heavy moisture.

Colorado really is a very dry State. In fact, that part of the west of the United States is a very arid portion of the Nation. It gets very little moisture. I will give some statistics as we go on into this conversation we are having this evening.

But when one takes a look at Colorado, it is very arid during most months of the year, which makes it even more dependent on those winter months and that snow accumulation and its relationship to the months that we have very little rain.