

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, for more than 30 years, Monica Pearson has been a voice of WSB-TV, the Atlanta ABC station. She is a sensitive, caring individual, and one of the most loved and admired television anchors in the Nation. You can always see her out in Metro Atlanta somewhere, serving and sharing, giving back to the community of people who have supported her for many, many years.

When Monica delivers the news, people believe it because they believe in her, and they know she believes in them. She didn't just read the news, but as a member of a community she tried to discover the truth, and we trusted what she said. Though she may be leaving the airwaves, she is not retiring from her involvement in our city, our State, and our Nation.

I wish Monica and her husband, John, the very best. We love her. She's been good for our city, for our State, and for our Nation.

A TRIBUTE TO MONICA KAUFMAN PEARSON

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I rise in tribute to retiring WSB-TV anchor Monica Kaufman Pearson, who brought Atlanta the evening news for almost four decades.

Before I go into that, something is compelling me to extol the virtues of a glass of cold iced tea in the middle of the day. After a hard morning at work outside and you come in for your meal, for your lunch, and you enjoy that lunch with a glass of iced tea, it's a Southern tradition, and I want to use that in talking about Monica Pearson.

Monica is the recipient of numerous awards, including more than 35 Emmys. She broke the color barrier and the gender barrier by becoming the first black female to serve as evening news anchor in the Atlanta broadcast market. She is known for her commitment to excellence, her commitment to professionalism, and also for her optimism and her compassion.

She is also known for sharing her talents by mentoring aspiring female news anchors across the Nation. It was Marian Pittman, news director of WSB-TV who worked with Monica for more than 15 years, who said, "Monica is to WSB what sweet tea is to Atlanta."

Yes, she was a quenching force when she arrived in Atlanta. It was at a time where Atlanta had recently elected a blunt-spoken man of action, Mayor Jackson, as the mayor of Atlanta. It was a time of transformation. At those kinds of periods you have a lot of turmoil going on among people—one group losing control, the other group taking control. They were difficult moments during that time politically, and people were polarized and divided. Then Monica arrived on the scene, a young, beautiful, personable, non-threatening,

cheerful person. WSB-TV did something that was revolutionary: they made her the first African American and the first female to have that evening news slot. And boy, I'll tell you, you're talking about a glass of iced tea in a hot time, that's what she was.

Monica was so enthusiastic—she still is—upbeat, and she just lit up the TV screens. I personally just couldn't keep my eyes off of her. She was so cheerful. Her laugh and her smile are still infectious. She continues to light up Atlanta. She created and hosted one of the most remarkable interview programs in the Nation—"Monica Pearson Closeups." She interviewed world leaders, elected officials, and celebrities. Many of the people that she interviewed were just astonished at the depth of her preparation for the interviews.

While we are all wishing her Godspeed in her well-deserved retirement, we can take heart that she will continue to be a fixture on the Atlanta scene, always ready with a smile and an insightful word.

Monica Pearson is and will remain an Atlanta treasure and a glass of good, cold iced tea.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, this week, we're marking the second anniversary of the passage of the Affordable Care Act. I wanted to take a few minutes to speak to a number of groups that have benefited from the health care reform, a reform which I strongly supported.

If you think back to the time of the debate 2 years ago, it was at the height of hearing stories about people across the country, millions of people, who were struggling to access the health care system. So let me speak to the struggles of two or three particular groups.

Many adults across the country had had the experience of trying to get health care coverage, health care insurance, and discovering that because they had a "preexisting condition," as it's so called, that they would be denied that coverage. If you look at some of the policies even today, you can see that the list of preexisting conditions is a long one. You don't have to have some kind of exotic disease or condition. Diabetes, hypertension, other things that plague millions of Americans across the country could be the basis for an insurance company denying coverage to you.

As difficult as that experience was for many adults to have when they went to try to purchase coverage because they had a preexisting condition, the most heart-wrenching stories we heard were of parents who had a child that suffered from a preexisting condi-

tion, and that child was unable to get health insurance coverage. It literally was tearing the hearts out of families across this country. One of the things that the Affordable Care Act put in place was a prohibition against denying coverage for children based on a preexisting condition. That is now law as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Those who argue that we should repeal the Affordable Care Act, I cannot believe that they want to go back to a time when a family would have to look at their child who had a preexisting condition and know that they couldn't get coverage, couldn't provide health care for that child. I can't believe that we want to go back to that.

A second group that benefited are young people, many of whom after they graduated from college could no longer stay on the health insurance plan of their parents because it wasn't provided for. Under the Affordable Care Act, if you're a young person, you can now stay on your parents' health insurance plan until age 26.

□ 1110

This is making a huge difference for millions of Americans across the country. Already hundreds of thousands have taken advantage of the opportunity to stay on the insurance plan of their parents, which means that young people, many of whom think that they're invincible but then something happens to them and they need that health insurance coverage, now they'll have it. It's still in place because, under the Affordable Care Act, there's now a requirement that health insurance plans cover young people until age 26.

I cannot believe that those who want to repeal the Affordable Care Act want to go back to a situation where millions of young people can't access that health insurance coverage.

And let me talk about the third group, our seniors who, 2 years ago, were dealing with the situation of having to come out of pocket for prescription drugs because of the so-called doughnut hole under the prescription drug benefit program. Under the Affordable Care Act, we put in place the opportunity now to begin closing the doughnut hole and making sure that seniors who are in the doughnut hole have access to a 50 percent discount on prescription drugs, brand-name prescription drugs.

So now our seniors, many of whom before were having to make a choice between do I cover the cost of food, do I pay the rent, or do I cover the cost of my prescription drugs because they were having to come out of pocket, now, many of them don't have to make that terrible choice because of the assistance provided by the Affordable Care Act.

I cannot believe that those who are urging the repeal of health care reform want to take our seniors back to a place where they have to make that terrible choice between whether to

cover the rent, buy food, or pay for their prescription drugs.

Madam Speaker, there are so many good things already in place as a result of the health care reform, and I cannot believe that those who want to repeal it want to deny our children, want to deny our young people, want to deny our seniors the benefits that it provides.

JUSTICE FOR TRAYVON MARTIN

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, Trayvon Martin was a 17-year-old young boy who lived in my district and attended school within walking distance of my home. I have known his family most of my life, and they are pleading, begging, crying for justice. The whole city of Miami is pleading for justice as they try to remain calm.

Every day, every day I will come to this floor and announce to America how long justice for Trayvon Martin has been delayed by using this charge.

Today marks the 25th day. Trayvon Martin was murdered 25 days ago, and still there has been no arrest. The evidence is overwhelming. Every single day new evidence emerges, and still there is no arrest.

To date, the FBI, the DOJ, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, FDLE, and the State Attorney's Office are all involved in investigations surrounding his death. And still there has been no arrest.

What does it take? What more does it take?

The eyes of people pleading for justice in this Congress and everywhere I go are watching Sanford, Florida. The grand jury has been selected, and the grand jury is not reflective of Trayvon's family nor Trayvon. That must be corrected immediately.

I've heard from Trayvon's family. I've heard from his brother, his uncle, his classmates, his teachers, community leaders, the school superintendent. I even spoke to his mother again late last night. Everyone is calling for justice.

What happened to Trayvon was a classic example of racial profiling, quickly followed by murder of our dear, sweet Trayvon Martin.

Do you know that it took 3 days, 3 whole days, for the police to release Trayvon's body from the morgue to be shipped to Miami for burial and the funeral simply because the Police Department would not submit the necessary paperwork?

Sanford Police, do your duty. Arrest the murderer today. Twenty-five days is much too long.

We must stand up for justice. We must stand up for Trayvon. And we must stand up for our children.

JUSTICE FOR TRAYVON MARTIN

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Before I begin, let me just mention that today, visiting us in the Capitol, is the former mayor of Jacksonville, Mr. Peyton, and I want to welcome him to his Capitol.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Miami for her comments and, really, all of our colleagues from both sides of the aisle.

This is a very tough time for us, being the Representative from Sanford, Florida.

I want to commend, first of all, the mayor, Mayor Triplett, and the county commissioner, Ms. Williams, and the city manager. We met Friday for over 5 hours, discussing what we could do to bring some kind of clarity to this situation.

This is a tragic situation. In having met with the family, met with the mother, it was very, very difficult to talk with the mother and father and know that I truly feel that justice has not taken place.

In the society that we live in, it's very important that we have to feel that the criminal justice system is fair and is fair to all parties. I cannot stand before you today and say that I feel that the system has operated fairly.

One of the first things I asked to happen is that there be an arrest. Well, we don't have an arrest. It's 25 days.

The second thing I asked is that we release the tapes, and we have released the 911 tapes. I've got to tell you, it has taken on a life of its own, because the things that were told to me in the meeting are not the things that were reflected in the tapes.

So you have the media looking into it, and I call them the fourth branch of the government. They can verify what's on the tapes. They can verify whether or not you would take someone's comment as to what they said happened when this young man is not there to tell his side of the story.

We have a person that everyone talks about was over the Neighborhood Watch. I want to point out, self-appointed over the Neighborhood Watch—self-appointed. That means, was not trained.

Clearly, if you listen to the tapes, the police dispatcher told him to stand down. Less than 5 minutes later, this young man was dead. He was just walking at the time. He was a black African American that on the tape said looked suspicious. It was raining, and you're looking suspicious in a neighborhood when just walking on the sidewalk.

He started following him, and the dispatcher said clearly, more than once: We need you not to follow this young man. We are on the way. We will handle it.

Less than 5 minutes later, this young man is dead.

This is not acceptable in this society. I have asked that the Justice Department—and I want to thank all of the

tri-caucuses for weighing in on the importance of having an independent investigation, and that's the Justice Department. They've committed that there will be no stones unturned and that they will look into what has happened as far as the violation of his civil rights, whether it's a hate crime. But, in addition, we want to make sure that we have an independent review of how the police force has handled this situation.

□ 1120

I have some grave concerns when I discuss some of the things that have happened. For example, he was drug tested. He was tested. He had alcohol in his system. Yet, the person that did the shooting was not tested in any manner—no drug tests, no alcohol tests, no lie detector tests. It is just his word that he felt threatened. So, therefore, he shot to kill. That's unacceptable.

We are a better society than that, and we are going to work to make sure that this will never happen again. To whom God has given much, much is expected.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Carl Hickerson, Springfield Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, we confess our hope for the future is challenged by present circumstances. As we read or watch the news, our faith often falters.

Thank you, God, for examples of steadfastness and belief in the future. We thank You for people who plant trees though they may not live to enjoy them. We thank You for public servants and grassroots folks who struggle to preserve our society so that our children and grandchildren may inherit an inhabitable world.

We know, O God, that all people who believe and hope for the future are not necessarily doing it in Your name; but we acknowledge them as Yours, and we pray that You help us, each of us, to join their ranks.

Restore our faith. Remind us that You are our hope. For the sake of Him who died young so that we all might have a future, we pray.

Amen.