

paid the lowest. There were no States in 2007 in which the wealthy families paid taxes at a higher rate than the middle and low classes.

The current tax system affects families in high-income brackets much differently than it affects those in the low- and middle-income brackets. First, wealthy families receive many tax deductions. The government, on average, pays for about 35 percent of high-income families' taxes. A second way in which the wealthy are not affected by the tax system as much as lower class families is that they generally do not have to pay as much income tax. The average millionaire does not earn their money from working; they earn money from their investments. Taxes on long-term investments are lower than taxes on income because the government wants to encourage consumers to spend money. However, this means that wealthy families that earn money from investments pay lower taxes than middle- and low-income working families.

Finally, the families in the top income brackets are almost never hurt by the current tax system because some politicians do all they can to protect the wealthy. Some politicians believe that as long as the wealthy families have money to spare, they will make investments that will benefit the economy and the lower classes. While this theory may or may not be true, the higher classes continue to have lower tax rates than the middle and low classes. The United States' current tax system clearly benefits wealthy families.

Wealthy families are not the only ones that benefit from this system of taxation in the United States. Poor families are often given benefits as well. While families in high-income tax brackets receive many breaks on their taxes, they are not the only people that receive these breaks. Families that are considered to be in poverty by the United States Government are many times given breaks on their taxes as well. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC, is given to many low-income families in this country. This tax credit gives families money back to help relieve the burden of taxes. In some cases, the EITC gives families back more money than they originally paid in government taxes. In some cases, poor families also receive benefits from the current tax system because in some cases the members of the family do not work. In families in which no one works, there are no income taxes or payroll taxes. These families instead receive assistance from welfare. There is no tax on money received from welfare, so families receiving this aid that do not earn additional income from a job do not pay any income taxes. Consequently, the tax system in the United States can be beneficial to low-income families.

In the current tax system, there are certain advantages to being in either high-income families or low-income families, but what happens to those families that fall in the middle? The majority of Americans are hardworking citizens that earn a moderate salary. These citizens are the ones that have to pay for the benefits that others receive. For example, when the wealthy receive tax deductions, the government receives less money as revenue, and the people that fall in the middle are the ones that suffer.

The less money the government has, the less it can provide funding to programs that benefit middle-income families, such as education funding, libraries, and government aid for skyrocketing college costs. A second way in which the middle class is hurt by tax deductions is when poor families receive tax credits. As previously mentioned, sometimes when families receive the EITC, they receive more money from the government than they originally paid.

This money comes from money taken straight from taxpayers. Middle-income families are many times forced to pay the highest tax rates out of any of the income brackets, and they receive no special treatment from the United States government.

In conclusion, in the United States today, most of the burdens of taxation are put onto the average middle-income working families. The system of taxation is extremely unfair for working families; they work their entire lives to have a large part of their income taken away from them by the government when people in both high- and low-income brackets receive special treatment from the government. The average American family falls in the middle-income category, and in the current tax system, this family, the heart and soul of America, is the one that ultimately suffers.

□ 1020

HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the nearly 1 million law enforcement officers who work day and night to protect all of us. All of us sleep more soundly at night knowing that the brave men and women of law enforcement are in our communities patrolling, protecting, and watching over our homes and businesses. They do so bravely and selflessly, and they do not ask for recognition. They put their lives on the line knowing the risks, and they take those risks on with unwavering courage.

I worked for 33 years as a law enforcement officer before I came to Congress. I didn't do that because I wanted to be the sheriff of King County in Seattle. I didn't do it because I wanted to be a Member of Congress. I did it because I wanted to serve my community by protecting it and making a difference. I found that I wasn't alone. Each of my law enforcement colleagues carried in them the heart of a servant.

So this week, National Police Week, is bittersweet for all of us in law enforcement because we remember the tragedy of our fellow officers' loss. Already this year, 40 officers have been killed in the line of duty.

Tuesday was Peace Officer Memorial Day, a day to remember the brave brothers and sisters killed in the line of duty. We've lost them; they're gone, but they're not forgotten.

Why do law enforcement officers come together today during this week in Washington, D.C., and on this memorial event? To share the fellowship and remember, because we made a promise. Everyone in this room has made a promise and everyone across this country has made a promise, Mr. Speaker, to never forget—to never forget the pain, the suffering, the feeling of great loss, the brokenness of families, the sadness that will touch that family for the rest of their lives. We

made a promise to never forget not only those sad times, the feelings of brokenness and loneliness, but those good times, the funny stories we hear.

I have two friends killed in the line of duty, one in June of 1982. He was my good friend and partner, Sam Hicks. He was shot and killed. But I remember a night when he and I, together, went to catch a robber. We surrounded the house, just the two of us. It was pitch dark outside, and all of a sudden I heard Sam scream, Run, DAVE, run.

So when Sam said "run," I ran. And I ran. Then I heard a barking dog. I looked and saw that Sam was being chased by a large dog. Sam and I jumped in our police car and I peeled out, headed out of the driveway because the lights were coming on inside the house where the robber was, and I began to smell something a little bit funny. Well, what happened is that Sam decided he was going to mace the dog, but instead he maced himself.

That's one of the stories I remember about my good friend Sam. He also taught me how to tie a tie. I only know one knot. It's the knot that I'm wearing today.

My good friend, Mike Raburn, who went to the academy with me, saved my life one night. I was directing traffic in Federal Way just south of Seattle, and I didn't know it, but someone behind me had run up behind me with a knife with the knife raised in the air. Mike had just driven up, and the guy was running toward me to stick the knife in my back. Mike tackled him and saved my life.

I remember those good times. I remember those bad times. We can never forget the sacrifice of our law enforcement men and women. We are all safe today. You can be in this Hall today, Mr. Speaker. We can all be here today, we can walk on the streets safe knowing that our brothers and sisters in law enforcement are there to protect us.

Now, you can help them. This week we passed the Blue Alert bill. All you need to do is watch for those, like those AMBER Alert, the Blue Alert signals on your freeway signs. If an officer has been shot or killed, you'll see information on those signs. Call in.

We can work together to keep the communities safe, because if they hurt a cop, if they kill a cop, they'll hurt somebody, somebody in the community. So help us by participating in Blue Alert.

And also, I ask of you today, Mr. Speaker, and everyone listening across the great Nation of this United States of America to never forget.

God bless you. Thank you.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and to recognize

the many contributions that Asian and Pacific Americans make to our great Nation.

I commend Congresswoman JUDY CHU, who is the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and also Congressman MIKE HONDA, the caucus' chair emeritus, for their leadership and for their efforts on behalf of our communities.

Our caucus represents a very large and a diverse community. The cultures that are represented in our caucus highlight many, many unique traditions, languages, and histories. Despite our diverse backgrounds, Asian Pacific Americans are committed to improving our country every single day.

Today, more than 18.5 million Asians and Pacific Islanders call America their home—18.5 million. We have become the fastest growing minority community in the United States, having increased by more than 40 percent in the last 10 years.

Asian Pacific Americans contribute to every aspect of our lives, from business to education, health care to public relations, sports and recreation to the arts, government, and the Armed Services. Our businesses employ more than 2.8 million workers, who generate more than \$512 billion in annual revenues to our economy. Two Cabinet Secretaries, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, are of APA descent, and APAs currently represent 13 congressional districts and serve in 15 State legislatures. Further, in the last 3 years, the number of judges serving in the Federal judiciary has more than doubled, its highest level in our country's entire history.

From the very beginning, the Asian Pacific American community has sought better opportunities or to escape persecution in their homeland. These can be seen with each particular group: in the experiences of the first Chinese laborers who came to build the transcontinental railroads, the first Japanese workers who worked on plantations in Hawaii, and the first Vietnamese refugees who arrived because of war, and countless APA groups with similar stories. Asian Pacific American history is the larger American story of valuing freedom, continuously working to make our Nation great and giving our children a better future than the ones we have.

I represent the people of Guam. I represent the U.S. Territory of Guam. The people are an important part of our Asian Pacific American community and are extremely loyal and proud of their citizenship. Case in point, this year will mark the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Guam from a brutal enemy occupation during World War II and the return of freedom to the island as part of the American family. Guam has one of the highest per capita casualties in the more than a decade that our country has been at war, yet our people continue to enter military service as a calling to serve their country.

And our island is being called upon to sustain one of the most complex and important force posture realignments in the history of the United States. Today, per capita, we also are number one when it comes to people who serve in the National Guard. Guam is number one per capita.

□ 1030

This May, we once again celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Despite the many successes that the APA community has experienced, there is still so very much to be done. APA Heritage Month is a celebration of our diversity, a recognition of the sacrifices and the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans make to our Nation, and an opportunity to educate all Americans of the unique role that our community plays in our country.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, or as we say in Guam, Si Yu'os Ma'ase—thank you, and God be with you.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BISHOP BARNETT K. THOROUGHGOOD

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize, to honor, and to pay tribute to the life of Bishop Barnett K. Thoroughgood, founder of New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ in Virginia Beach, who passed away too early from this Earth in February. He was a man of God, an inspiring leader, a tremendous, positive influence in our community, and a truly outstanding American.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to please help me welcome his family here today, his wife of 39 years, Ernestine; son, Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; handsome grandson, Caleb—who was just in my office—and many other distinguished guests who have come with the family today.

I think the measure of a man or a woman is the legacy they leave to their children, and the legacy left by Bishop Thoroughgood is exemplary. The good bishop dedicated his life to serving God, his fellow man, and his community. He was a titan in the field of human rights. He was loved by fellow clergy and the community in which he served. He was a truly gifted speaker, and he used that gift to be a blessing to others. This is what was written about the bishop in the *Virginia Pilot*:

Bishop Thoroughgood liked to say he started preaching at the age of five, when he spent many days sharing Jesus with the prison work crews that came to clean ditches in his Seatack neighborhood. At 20 years old, he started the New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ. Across his career, he received many educational honors leading to his doctorate of ministry. He served as the district superintendent to the Virginia Beach district and second administrative assistant to Bishop Samuel L. Greene, Jr.

He was amazingly active in the community and received so many awards

that if I read them out today, I think it would fill the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

He also served as a member of the Virginia Beach Clergy Association and Ministerial Alliance. He was the founder and president of the Hampton Roads Ecumenical Council of Bishops. He led mission trips to Haiti and outreach to the poor.

His sermons were literally broadcast around the world. So many were touched by his words, which I think explains why at the wake the night before his funeral 2,500 people were there, and 4,000 folks showed up to the funeral. I was honored to share just a few words with the family.

I just ask that God would bless the family and watch over them, give them peace, and that the message that the bishop had lived his life conveying would be continued. That truly is the way, I believe, we honor the bishop's life is by continuing his work, his compassion for others, his commitment to making sure that all Americans cross the finish line, always centered on family, always centered on God, and always mindful of his obligations as an American.

Bishop Thoroughgood leaves to cherish his memories, again, his lovely wife, Ernestine Thoroughgood; his sons, Bertram, Emmanuel, and Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; four brothers—large family, wonderful family that we had here this morning—five grandchildren, and many children they've adopted and helped through the social services foster care program; the New Jerusalem Church family; and the members of the Church of God in Christ worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I close as I began, just knowing that it's a high honor to pay tribute to his life. I think it embodies the very best of what it means to be an American, to be part of our Hampton Roads community, and to be a Virginian.

So with that, I ask God's continued grace on the family.

ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

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

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, this month is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. It is a time for us to take pride in our country's diversity and to celebrate the ways in which Asian Pacific Americans have contributed to the vibrancy of our Nation.

Today, Asian Pacific Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the country and now account for nearly 6 percent of the total population. Asian Pacific Americans are an incredibly diverse group comprised of over 45 distinct ethnicities and speaking over 100 different language dialects. We are represented in every arena of American life, from college presidents to public servants and CEOs, and even to an NBA basketball star, Jeremy Lin.