

that my good friend and our colleague Representative DARRELL ISSA might be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson, an African American inventor, developed a device to prevent people from stealing cars long before Representative ISSA got into the business.

I encourage my colleagues to look at the books on African American invention.

Mr. Speaker, one of the few important accomplishments of the 111th Congress thus far has been the passage of H.R. 1249, the "America Invents Act," a comprehensive reform of the United States patent system which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on September 16, 2011. H.R. 1249 authorized the transition from a first-to-invent process to a first-to-file process for obtaining a patent, expanded the prior user rights defense and addressed to some extent (although not to my satisfaction) the diversion of fees collected by the Patent and Trademark Office to the general fund. There is little disagreement that patent reform was long overdue and even those who voted against H.R. 1249 recognized how important it was to the American inventor and to American innovation to update and streamline the patent system.

Our country has always respected and admired inventors. As young children we were taught about famous inventors such as Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford and many others. Frequently overlooked in discussions of important inventors, however, have been the accomplishments of African-American inventors. Until this year's publication of the children's book, *What Color is My World?: The Lost History of African American Inventors*, by basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, we've done little to teach children about the outstanding contributions African-American inventors have made to innovation. I would, therefore, like to use this time during Black History Month to pay tribute to some of the many, many contributions African-American inventors have made.

I am not the first member of this body to take to the floor of this House to acknowledge the long legacy of inventiveness in the African-American community. On August 10, 1894, Rep. George Washington Murray, the only African-American in the House of Representatives at that time and himself the holder of eight patents on agricultural implements, read the names of ninety-two African-Americans who held patents and described their inventions on the House floor. Had time allowed, Rep. Murray would likely have highlighted the achievements of even more patent holders, inventors such as: Thomas L. Jennings (1791–1859), a free person of color and one of the earliest African-Americans to patent an invention, who in 1821 was awarded a patent for developing an early dry-cleaning process to remove dirt and grease from clothing; James Forten, another free born man who invented a contraption to handle the sails on a sail boat; Judy W. Reed (the first known woman of color to receive a patent), who created an improved dough kneader and roller; and Henry Blair, an inventor who received utility patents on a seed and cotton planter.

If Rep. Murray had continued to be a member of Congress he would no doubt have come to the floor of the House many more times to brag about African-American inventors and to acknowledge the major signifi-

cance of their inventions. He would have reported that by the year 1900 African-Americans had patented 357 inventions. And I am certain that he would have been especially moved to share with this body that by the early to mid-twentieth century, African-American inventors had obtained patents for innovations in countless industries, including medical, chemical, aviation, automotive, grocery, cosmetics and apparel. For example:

Garrett Morgan (1877–1963) invented the gas mask to protect fireman and other rescuers from breathing smoke and poisonous gas when entering dangerous fires and other situations and he was also awarded a patent for the three-way electric traffic signal.

Charles Drew (1904–1950) created a method to mass-produce blood plasma which led to the formation of blood banks to store plasma for victims of life-threatening emergencies. Unfortunately, he bled to death following an automobile accident which occurred in my native state of North Carolina and his injuries were too severe for the process he invented to be used to save his life.

Frederick McKinley Jones (1893–1961) was the first African-American member of the American Society of Refrigeration Engineers. He developed a means to refrigerate perishables being transported long distances.

Jack Johnson (1878–1946), best known as the great African-American boxer, received two patents, one for an improvement to the monkey wrench and the other for a theft-prevention device for vehicles. I suspect that my good friend and our colleague Rep. Darrell Issa might be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson, an African-American inventor, developed a device to prevent people from stealing cars long before Rep. ISSA got into the business.

Norbert Rillieux (1806–1894) invented a sugar processing evaporator that provided a safer, cheaper, and easier way of evaporating sugar cane juice and made the refinement of sugar more efficient. It is still used for the production of sugar, gelatin, condensed milk and glue, among other things.

Annie Minerva Turnbo Malone (1869–1957) was the first African-American beauty entrepreneur to manufacture a line of beauty products for African-American women. In the late 1800s and the early 1900s she manufactured and sold her products door-to-door. Mme. C.J. Walker, who is often credited with starting the African-American beauty business, was actually one of her sales agents.

Dr. Lloyd Augustus Hall (1894–1971), a pioneer in the area of food chemistry, developed preservative chemicals that were used to keep food fresh without sacrificing flavor. In the 1930s he introduced "flash-dried" salt crystals that revolutionized the meat packing industry.

Percy Lavon Julian (1899–1975) developed synthetic cortisone, which provided cheaper relief from rheumatoid arthritis. In 1954 he founded Julian Laboratories to research steroids and in 1961 he sold his company to Smith, Kline and French.

By the start of the 21st century and on into the present day, African-Americans have also been awarded patents in many other categories, including the technology and engineering fields. For instance:

Dr. Mark Dean holds more than twenty domestic patents and was a key developer of computer architecture for IBM.

Dr. George H. Simmons obtained a patent for creating a fiber-optic extension of an optic

local area network and another for designing a system to eliminate the unwanted pulses in a dial pulse stream on telephones.

Dr. James E. West is the well-regarded co-inventor of foil-electret transducers, which are the devices used to change sound into electrical signals and are used in items such as lapel microphones, hearing aids and portable tape recorders.

Lonnie Johnson invented the popular "Super Soaker" water gun.

I could go on ad infinitum about these and countless other examples of African-American ingenuity, but my time is limited. So I will instead encourage you to investigate for yourselves and learn more about the unique role that African-American inventors have played in the rich history of American inventiveness. For that purpose I direct you to an outstanding book called *The Inventive Spirit of African Americans* by Patricia Carter Sluby which details the many examples I have discussed, as well as many other outstanding innovations and patents by African-Americans. It is probably the most thorough and best researched and written history of African-American inventiveness available today. I also direct my colleagues to Kareem Abdul Jabbar's recent book written especially for children, entitled *What Color is My World?: The Lost History of African-American Inventors*. I commend these resources to my colleagues as we honor the exemplary achievements of African-Americans during Black History Month and throughout the year.

WE NEED TO MOVE TOWARD ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I watched the President on television the other night defending his energy policy, and he said, "The Republicans say drill, drill, drill, baby, but that's not the answer."

The fact is that the people of this country are suffering under severe energy prices that are rising at a rapid rate. Everything that we buy is affected by energy prices. I went to the store the other day to buy some apples and some tomatoes. We got three tomatoes for \$5, and I think we got four apples for \$5. Now, the reason those prices are going up so rapidly is because when you transport those across the country, or you use energy to produce those products, it costs more.

If you talk to the guys that drive these tractor-trailer units, they'll tell you how expensive it is to transport goods and services, clothes, food, and everything else that we buy. So we really need to move toward energy independence.

Now, the administration has had the ability to help other countries explore for oil. We sent I think \$2 billion or \$3 billion down to Brazil for deepwater drilling, but we cut back on the permits that we could get to drill in the Gulf of Mexico. Because of the environmental "nut cases," as I call them, the President has restricted the ability of the American energy sector to drill for

oil in the gulf. We cannot drill for oil in the ANWR in Alaska. I've been up there and talked to the gentleman who represents Alaska in the Congress, DON YOUNG. He'll tell you there's nothing up there that's going to be damaged if we drill, and besides that, you can do it in an environmentally safe way. But we can't drill offshore because they've limited permits. The President is now saying he'll allow some permits, but they are very minimal.

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We can't drill on the Continental Shelf. We can't drill in the ANWR. We can't do anything to explore really for additional energy. We have probably a couple hundred years' supply of natural gas that we can drill for and use the fracking procedure, but a lot of the environmentalists are trying to stop that as well.

Our dependency on the Middle East is unbelievable. There's a potential for a major war over there because of Iran's nuclear development program, and we continue to depend on energy from that Persian Gulf area, from the Saudis. They're using a lot of our money to support Wahhabism and the madrassas over there that create radical Islam. So we need to move away from dependency on foreign oil.

In South America, President Chavez in Venezuela—who doesn't like us—is working with Tehran. He's selling his oil to China, and yet we buy an awful lot of our oil from him because we're dependent on him. We need to move toward energy independence.

The President will not allow the gulf pipeline, the pipeline from Canada down to Texas, because of environmental concerns. That's been looked at for 3 years. There's other ways around the potential problem, but he won't let it happen because of environmentalists, the radicals.

Now, we can depend in the future, to a degree, on wind, solar, geothermal, and nuclear, but that's going to take a long time. Even if we use all of those technologies today, it will only be a drop in the bucket as far as our energy needs are concerned. You know who's demanding more and more energy all the time? China and India buy thousands and thousands of barrels of oil a day, so that oil that's coming out of other parts of the world is going to be gobbled up more and more and more by China and India. We need to move to energy independence.

The President says, oh, you know, we can't solve the problem by drilling. The fact is we can. There's a lot of things we can do: the pipeline from Canada, drill offshore, drill in the gulf, drill in the Continental Shelf, use more natural gas, do away with all the regulations that are strangling the private sector as far as energy development. So what does he want to do? He says we've got to raise taxes on energy exploration, on the oil companies. That's going to be passed on to the consumer in higher prices.

This administration, nice guy, good smile, gives a great speech, but he's not solving our problems, and our dependency continues to increase on foreign energy. We need to move toward energy independence, and we need to do it now and not wait until after the election.

CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting listening to the fantasy Republican talking points. The fact is we are now drilling more oil in the United States than ever before. The inconvenient facts get in the way of political talking points. But what is not a fantasy is what is happening on the political screen.

In the final 3 months of 2011, the campaign to reelect President Obama and the Democratic National Committee raised \$68 million, an impressive sum, all the more impressive because it was donated by 583,000 Americans who gave an average of \$55 each. But earlier this month, at a retreat at the exclusive Renaissance Esmeralda Resort in southern California, the conservative billionaire Koch brothers said they would donate a combined \$60 million to super PACs to defeat President Obama. Two billionaire brothers with opinions radically at variance with most of America are poised to cancel out the efforts of half a million American citizens.

To understand this gross perversion of the political process, we don't have to wait for the general election and the avalanche of negative campaign ads against the President. We can look right now at the primary election for the Republican Presidential nomination, where we've seen a handful of billionaires and their super PACs outspend all the Republican candidates and help turn that contest into a circus.

The sad reality is that the super PACs have shaped the political campaign more than the candidates. That's the world we live in since the Supreme Court's tragic decision in *Citizens United*, which overturned a century of settled law and opened this floodgate of unlimited campaign spending, drowning out small donors and individuals that most of us learned in school were the cornerstone of our democracy. This Supreme Court ruling was based on the perverse idea that the Court's out-of-touch majority somehow felt corporations should enjoy the same constitutional rights as people. This threatens the integrity of the political process, not just from the appearance of corruption, but actually, blatantly, distorting the process.

As companies and sham independent organizations that are actually run by candidates' friends and employees blanket the airwaves with an ava-

lanche of vicious negative advertising, now somehow they are protected under a First Amendment right of free speech which would be beyond the comprehension of our Founding Fathers. Mitt Romney may believe that corporations are people, but do the rest of us need a comedian like Steven Colbert to remind us that only people are people?

There's an outside chance of relief from a century-old Montana law banning corporate corruption in their political landscape, which was passed after the most egregious and well-documented abuse in Montana. A case about this law would provide the Supreme Court a lifeline to climb down from the precarious and dangerous constitutional ledge, a ledge that they have not only crawled out onto, but they dragged the American people and the political process with them with their *Citizens United* decision.

There's a chance that the Supreme Court will use this Montana law to reestablish the basic parameters protecting the political process from the corruption of vast sums of unregulated corporate money. But in the meantime, it's important that we advance a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the notion of corporate personhood, explicitly stating that the rights of natural persons may only be afforded to real people, not corporations.

As we work to overturn *Citizens United* and ban corporate personhood, people should not have to wait to judge whether a candidate is representing the public or representing their benefactors. We should pass the DISCLOSE Act, H.R. 4010, to require political spending by corporations and individuals to be fully transparent. We should be unstinting in other efforts in the regulatory and legal process to make sure that shareholders of corporations have an opportunity to at least know, and maybe even have a say, about what the corporations that they are supposed to own are doing on their behalf. We should support H.R. 1404, the Fair Elections Now Act, to promote public campaign financing to ensure the public's voice is not drowned out by moneyed special interests.

The Supreme Court's decision on *Citizens United* was based on fantasy, the fantasy that vast sums of money from hidden special interest are not inherently corrupted; the fantasy that corporations should be afforded all the rights of citizens; the fantasy that super PACs run by individuals who are the closest allies, friends, and employees of candidates are somehow independent.

What is not a fantasy is what we see right now on the political landscape, the terrifying effect of super PACs and the flood of money hopelessly distorting the campaigns. We should all fight to change it.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from