

FINDING COMMON GROUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 30 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the Speaker for his courtesies and the leader for her courtesies for the opportunity to share on the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would offer to say to my colleagues who spoke earlier that we all recognize that the Affordable Care Act has generated opportunities for 9 million Americans, and it is growing. Let's find common ground. We have a law that is legal and affirmed by the United States Supreme Court, but it is affirmed by what is most important: hungry Americans needing good health care to save their lives and the lives of their families.

□ 1900

Frankly, I believe that there needs to be security for all of the Web sites of Federal agencies, rather than have bills that appear to be attacking the Affordable Care Act again, after 46 attempts to repeal it. Let's find a way that we can work together to secure extensively the entire Web sites carefully that are utilized by the Federal Government.

But I have the opportunity and I want to cover, Mr. Speaker, an array of issues that I think are important as we begin this new year. I do want to wish everyone a happy new year. But as I do so, since I come from Houston, and have been a member of the House Science Committee for 12 years before moving to Homeland Security, I want to congratulate NASA and the White House.

First, NASA, for the miraculous and unbelievable space walk just about a week or so ago by two outstanding astronauts. Space walks are not often done. They are much more difficult—in fact, extremely difficult—than one might imagine, as you watched what seemed to be a beautiful effort of activity in space.

I want to congratulate them. That is science. That is genius. That is what these astronauts trained for. They are our neighbors. I was with them over the holiday. I want them to know on the floor of the House that this was outstanding work.

I want to congratulate the White House because, as many of us have advocated over the years, my colleague who is no longer in the House, Congressman Nick Lampson, and myself signed many letters to extend the life of the space station. I am very pleased that it is now to extend the space station for 4 years. I am optimistic when that 4 years is nearing, there will be another assessment that there is more life in the international space station—opportunity for major research, including, when I was on the Science Committee, cancer research in particular, heart disease, stroke, aging. Our

former Senator, John Glenn, took a second ride into space as a member of the United States Senate to test space travel on those who are aging.

Congratulations to NASA and the international space station. It speaks to the genius of America. It speaks to the aspirations and hopes of children around the world. It focuses on the emphasis in the United States on science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM. Teachers continue to emphasize to our children the importance of those disciplines, and it gives us great hope.

And that is a lot of what I will talk about tonight: hope. For when we think of hope, we must have a broad definition that it includes all Americans. In fact, I believe from the very moment of the dumping of the tea in the Boston Harbor, the Founding Fathers of this Nation, in spite of all of the possible inequities like the holding of slaves, had hope. They left their places of persecution because they had hope.

And we have grown through the ages, from the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, 1900s, the 20th century, and the 21st century. It has all been around hope. We were hopeful the turn of the century, even as World War I was flaring. We were hopeful even as the 1928–1929 collapse was happening. We were hopeful even with the horrific, heinous acts of World War II, with the interment and the Holocaust. But people were hoping that we would save people and get out of the dastardliness of that.

We were hopeful in the fifties. We as African Americans were hopeful as we marched in the 1950s and 1960s. We were hopeful with the Thurgood Marshall argument before the United States Supreme Court on *Brown v. Board of Education*. We were hopeful.

Now we come to a situation of wealth inequality. We must assure those who fall in that gap of where they are not where they should be, through no fault of their own, but because of this increasing gap.

For example, the wages of those in the top 1 percent—those making \$352,900-plus—their income grew 281 percent from 1979 to 2007. For the bottom 20 percent, their income grew 16 percent, those making less than \$20,000. For those making \$34,000, it grew 23 percent. For those making \$34,000 to \$50,000, 25 percent.

There is wealth inequality in this Nation.

Some would argue some of that is inherited wealth, some of that is capital gains, some of that is stock revenue. It is wealth inequality.

I am moved by the words of Justice Brandeis:

We can either have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.

That is not snatching wealth from someone who has worked hard. It is to even up the opportunity for that gap—281 percent growth for the 1 percent, and numbers like 23 and 25 and 38 per-

cent for the working middle class. We need to do better.

And so I think we need to start by stop quarreling about the unemployment benefits extension. We did it under President Bush, with no offsets, and, as well, for about 5 years with President Bush even acknowledging that when people work and invest in this Nation and they fall on bad times, give them a transitional bridge.

Some would say our unemployment is going down. My friends, on the chronically unemployed, it is the highest it has ever been, at 2.6 percent. Now that is growing to 1.3 million in 2013. It will go up to 3.64 million.

So I am not asking for the whole piece. I had a bill that said 1 year. Let's extend it for 3 months on an emergency basis and then begin to discuss how we can fund it.

There are 68,000 jobless workers that are in Texas, and we expect that as it grows in 2014 to 1.9 million and more—as I said 3.6 million and growing—it will be 106,900 Texans.

I have spoken to some of those Texans, and I have heard the stories of a welder who liked his job, was laid off, through no fault of his own, and needs this transitional funding so that he can be presentable for a job. Or a person in technology, administrative assistant, or somebody who worked in home health.

I believe that we have a legitimate basis for the creation of 200,000 jobs—a real dent in the economy and an acknowledgment that the unemployment rate in the United States in 2012 was 8.1 percent. States range from 3.1 percent, to Texas, which is 6.8 percent. Missouri is 6.9 percent. We have 5 percent and 5.7 percent. We have 7 percent in Alaska. Delaware is 7.1 percent. It goes all over the gamut. The individuals are not able to find work because for every job, there are three persons looking.

It generates into inequality of wealth. There is nothing that will refute this except for a transitional hand-up for those unemployed. And, yes, job creation.

My good friends, the Republicans, say they passed a bill on job creation last year. Yes, they did. And we have a bill on job creation, the Jobs bill. That seems to me a compromise in the making. That seems to me an opportunity for us to sit around the table and talk about technology and then talk about other aspects of job creation, because people have to be trained and retrained.

This week I will introduce a bill that is studied not as a bill introduced by a Democrat, but studied for the substance of the bill, called the New Chance for a New Start in Life Act of 2014. This is where you invest in people. It creates an opportunity for someone who is unemployed and still on their unemployment benefit—remember, they have worked and this is unemployment insurance—to get a stipend for certain accredited specific job training that ties to the market.

My friends, all of us are going to say, Well, they are going to take their money and they are going to be on the basket weaving training program; or they are going to take a truck training program, but they have no license. Accredited programs so that person can provide for their family and their training can be paid for.

And we are going to work through accredited social service agencies. We are going to partner with cities and non-profit agencies for apprenticeships and internships. Every job is not an apprenticeship. We want to work with our friends in the trade and the labor community.

Unions have done well for America. Thank you for increasing our minimum wages and conditions in the workforce. Let's find a way to work together, but sometimes it is an internship in an office or an engineering company.

And then we have to provide training and employment enhanced for veterans. There are 22,000 veterans included in that large number of those who are needing transitional funds. We need to work with community colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Hispanic-serving institutions to be able to find a way to get chronically unemployed persons in the workplace, investing, paying taxes, and loving it every moment.

I have talked to folks who said that the most they want for Christmas and the new year is to have the alarm clock go off at 6 a.m. and jump out of bed to go to work. How are we going to cut these people off? What sense does it make?

And then it is important to note that added to the component of problems that we have is that poverty in America still exists. The 49 million poverty rate for African Americans and Hispanics greatly exceeds the national average. In 2010, 27.4 percent of Blacks and 26.6 percent of Hispanics were poor, compared to 9.9 percent of non-Hispanic Whites and 12.1 percent of Asians.

That is not targeting quotas. It is going where the problem is.

You know where else the problem is? Single women of any race, head of households. In 2010, 31.6 percent of households headed by single women were poor, while 15.8 percent of households headed by single men and 6.2 percent of married-couple households are in poverty.

In my district, 18 percent of households in the State of Texas, first in 2009 and 2001, ranked second in the highest rate of food insecurity. In my district, 151,000-plus families live in Poverty.

To the extent that we can't solve that problem, that is not shameful. We have seen the poverty gap close nationwide, even though we know children still live in poverty. President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who spoke on the war on poverty on January 8, said, We must live for hope, as I paraphrase.

And I worked diligently with programs from VISTA to Medicaid to

Medicare to job-training programs to infrastructure programs to programs allowing young people to go to college. I am a witness of all of those programs. Frankly, I worked in the President's summer youth program in the hard rumble area of my youth.

And I have seen Members mention in the last 24 hours how they participated in the same programs. They happen now to be Members of the United States Congress. I would like to know how many Americans would call in the Congress and say, I am a beneficiary of the war on poverty, the Great Society.

Why can't we find common ground to recognize that we can be efficient, but we can also invest in people?

So I raise an ancient philosopher in my remarks on this question:

Any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich; these are at war with one another.

Plato said that.

□ 1915

And the question is can we now, in the 21st century, rebut that. Can we find a way to have hopeful people who are poor work with hopeful people who are rich and find a way to enrich both of them, to give them work and to make them shining examples of what America is all about?

Laying that groundwork, I hope my colleagues will join me on the Second Chance Job Act that I have just introduced that will go alongside the kinds of incentives in the jobs bill that President Obama has offered and the bill that was passed here in the House.

Why can't we both be on the same page of caring about getting a bill passed that both bodies will look at favorably, taking pieces? Why can't we get back to legislating again, giving and taking, making amendments, finding out what my friend on the other side of aisle wants, finding out what we want here, having amendments being accepted, making the bill one that is not only through the regular order of the committee, but here on the floor of the House, getting amendments that would satisfy and work with all of us?

I think there is more work to do in many, many areas, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to continue now to be able to offer some of my concerns.

Last evening, on CNN, there was a recounting of a young lady, tragically, who attempted suicide, a young bullying victim, first tragically being raped, not being believed, and ultimately coming forward. I am sort of summarizing the facts. And then because this person was a star athlete in one of the Midwestern States, the town turned on this young girl and her friend, bullying everywhere.

And I think it is time for America and the Congress to make a statement on it, a simple statement. I am not asking for much, but I have introduced H.R. 2585, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Act of 2013. You will be surprised how simple it is:

To be able to allow groups from all over America, 501(c)(3)s that may be under the jurisdiction of faith institutions, youth groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, tennis clubs, social service agencies, schools, to put their best practices forward and how they believe they can stem the tide of bullying, what kind of intervention, and add to that, cyber bullying. It also provides for gang prevention programs, turn our children toward socially beneficial pathways.

I had one Member say to me, What would be wrong with the Congress making a unified statement that they want to prevent bullying and they want to intervene?

That is the simple process, four corners of the bill. And research studies have shown that approximately 25 percent of school bullies will be convicted of a criminal offense in their adult years.

I believe in intervention. And I would say to my friends who are experts, all of the advocacy groups, I believe it would be very important if we came together and had this one statement that came out of the Congress, that we want parents and schools and communities and baseball clubs and basketball clubs and football leagues to understand that we have all got to pour our energy into letting children know that to live healthy and free of intimidation is a good thing, that have your fun somewhere else.

I don't know whether bullying led to this absurd game of knockout, but we have got to take a stand alongside of the personal intervention that comes about through the normal community ways.

Just for the record, it is important to note, 30 percent of U.S. students in grades 6 through 10 are involved in moderate or frequent bullying as bullies, victims, or both. According to the results of the first national survey on this subject, bullying is increasingly viewed as an important contributor to youth violence, including homicide and suicide. One out of four kids is bullied. The Justice Department says that in this month, one out of every four kids will be abused by another youth.

Surveys show that 77 percent of students are bullied mentally, verbally, and physically. We have to find a way to make a national statement. What better way than a Congress that is the symbol of the most powerful Nation in the world and the most powerful law-making body.

Why is it so difficult to pass something as simple as that?

It does not stop us from looking down the future when we have many more resources to deal with to put a huge amount of funding in it once best practices—once we give the spark plug and get people excited about our Federal Government is concerned about this, let's look for enhanced best practices. Let's make a statement on this,

which I think is enormously important.

I want to quickly, and I hope, as we debate these issues on the floor, that there will be Members who will want to have a conversation. I want to say, as well, that many of us have experienced violence in our communities. I am going to discuss that a little later, but I want to say it now. I have had a number of incidences of violence, through knives, through guns, in my own school districts in Houston.

Even though we know that does not define our school districts, I say to them, when you have an incident like that, it is not a reflection on you, but it is a signal and a sign that the community must come together. We will look forward in Houston to putting together a Stop Violence Commission under the 18th Congressional District, bringing people from the faith community, bringing other leaders, working with the Mothers Demand Action, MDA, who have come out every moment to stop gun violence, working with mothers and fathers who have had to bury their children, funerals that I attended over the holiday or before that time frame. I want to tell that mother whose son's funeral that I attended, I have not forgotten. We will embrace you, and we will find a way that we can sit together and make a difference.

Let me switch now for a moment—I will come back to that issue—and remind us of the humanity of comprehensive immigration reform. I said that I had any number of issues that I think are weighing on many of us as Members of Congress, weighing on those of us who are doers and want to do, and I would venture to say that that is this entire body. But we are getting stalled, and for what reason, I don't know.

But my hometown paper was eager to review H.R. 1417, which is a bipartisan product that has come out of the Subcommittee on Border Security and Maritime Security, my colleague from Michigan, and out of the full committee, with the chairman and ranking member of the full committee, a bill that has now been joined under H.R. 15, to put a bill forward in the House.

And I would just ask, why can't we end the suffering of so many, end the divide and deportation of so many families, in the thousands, and begin to look, as the faith community and business community, educational community, health community, research community, business community wants us to do?

Comprehensive immigration reform, Texas is a prime example: 16.4 percent of Texans are foreign born; 42 percent are Latino or Asian; 33.2 percent of immigrants in the State are naturalized U.S. citizens; 11.8 percent are registered voters or new Americans; 87.7 percent of children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens; 75 percent of children with immigrant parents are English proficient; 70 percent of naturalized citizens have a high school di-

ploma; 61,511 foreign students contribute \$1.4 billion to the State economy, and they make up 21 percent of the workforce; 9 percent of the workforce is unauthorized.

We need to get people from underneath the underground economy. We need families able to walk the streets together, mothers not being dragged out of homes. We need the DREAM Act children to be able to raise their heads as U.S. citizens. We need access to citizenship.

This coming Monday, I will gather at Catholic Charities with people from all over the community in Houston, Texas, and we will be standing together, raising our voices as humane Americans. We will be speaking about Latinos and Asians. We will be speaking about Africans. We will be speaking about people from the Caribbean, people from Europe, people from Canada, people from Ireland. We will be speaking about people from all over the world that happen to be in Houston, Texas.

It is time to pass comprehensive immigration reform and pass it now.

I mentioned very quickly that I would be going through a number of issues, but let me just turn to the issue of guns.

Let me pause for a moment and find out how much time I have, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 3 minutes remaining.

Mrs. JACKSON LEE. Let me quickly mention that we must stop the violence of guns. When we think about 5,740 children being killed by guns, I would like, again, for this Congress to look at H.R. 2812, which is a bill that deals with stand your ground that we have not addressed from the Trayvon Martin case.

And I would like them, also, to quickly look at gun safety and gun access prevention, H.R. 65. I find that a way of being able to come together and keeping guns out of the hands of underage children and teaching gun safety to parents and children.

I want to also join with my colleague on the Foreign Affairs Committee and mention human trafficking is a major issue. It will be commemorated on January 11, but I will be hosting, with the Homeland Security Committee, a hearing on human trafficking in Houston, Texas.

Quickly, I want to make mention of the Congressional Gold Medal that I have for Malala, who is a voice of strength, a young teenager gunned and shot—I wouldn't say gunned down because she lives in Pakistan, only because she wanted girls to have education.

I ask my colleagues to join myself and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN to insure that we do have, if you will, the honor of presenting this to her, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, spoke before the United Nations, and I hope that we will do that.

Let me close, Mr. Speaker, by mentioning two quick things, and that is,

let us not forget our veterans, enormously important, and let us also move quickly for NSA reforms.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee that helped write the Patriot Act, section 215, that was not our interpretation. That was not legislative history for trolling mega-data collection. We can be safe and secure, and we will be presenting a briefing on privacy and security next week in the Judiciary Committee, 2226, at 10:30. I hope all of the colleagues will come.

But I have introduced legislation to make sure that there is a people's advocate in the FISA Court, but more importantly, that we restrain and find a way to restrain the mega-collection. And I hope the President, in the reports that he has just received, will be able to do that as well.

Let me also indicate that internationally, I think this Congress should deal with where we are in Syria and where we were in South Sudan, two places that I am concerned about, the human cost, if you will.

We have a lot to do, Mr. Speaker. I just gave just small bits this evening, but we have a lot to do that we can do together in a bipartisan manner.

And we can look at the Affordable Care Act, just as a point, in closing, because it has been so divisive, and look at it that it is working. People want insurance. We can do that, and we can make sure that, as we do so, Mr. Speaker, then America will see us working together. That is what I would like to see happening.

I have given an array of an agenda that touches the lives of people. Let's get to work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1930

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) for 30 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it is a privilege to be able to come to the great well of the House of Representatives, the greatest deliberative body in the history of the world, to be here and have an opportunity to bring a voice to the table and to speak to the American people as well as my constituents in the Sixth District of Minnesota.

I want to join my colleagues in wishing a happy New Year to all the people in the United States. We look forward to a wonderful year in 2014. There are so many things that are good that we can look forward to this year, so many things that this body can get done, that we can agree on.

We can agree on our veterans, standing for them, thanking them, first of all, that tonight, as we are here in this Chamber, we have men and women