

law, intellectual property, and growth, that we can continue to lead the world through American exceptionalism and the world can have an opportunity to have that little part of America, whether it be a great steak from Texas or South Dakota or perhaps jeans manufactured somewhere here in the United States or, if lucky enough, something from the great State of Ohio that said, "Made in America."

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

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: WEALTH CREATION AND THE OP- PORTUNITY GAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to once again have this opportunity to stand on the House floor as part of the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour.

For the next 60 minutes we will have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about an issue of great significance: the growing wealth gap in America that is stratified along racial lines. It is a wealth gap that should concern all of us here in the House of Representatives, and certainly people who are concerned about the well-being of this country in its entirety should be alarmed by any segment of this country being left behind across any measure of economic status.

We will get into that throughout the duration of this CBC Special Order. Certainly, I am glad to be joined by the distinguished gentleman from Nevada, my good friend, the coanchor of this CBC Special Order, Representative HORSFORD.

I will just begin by making the observation that it has often been stated that when Wall Street catches a cold, communities of color get the flu.

We know that in 2008, when the economy collapsed and plunged us into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, Wall Street had a high fever; and as a result, as one might expect, communities of color all across the country have been suffering from economic pneumonia. In fact, a study that was prepared by the Center for Global Policy Solutions illustrates the point that communities of color were hurt the worst by the Great Recession and have benefited the least as a result of our recovery.

And so the wealth gap, broadly defined across measures such as home

ownership and access to good-paying jobs, retirement savings, has gotten worse, exacerbated by the shock of the Great Recession and the disproportionate lack of certain communities benefitting from the recovery that has taken place. So these are some of the topics that we are going to explore during this Special Order.

I am pleased that we have been joined by a very distinguished member of the freshman class, my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey, one of the best-dressed Members of the House of Representatives. I am surprised today that I do not see him with his classic bow tie. He is the ranking member of the CBC freshman class, but I believe he arrived here a little bit earlier.

I am pleased to yield to my good friend, Representative PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. I would like to thank the gentleman from New York for that kind introduction.

I want to also say that we are here tonight on a very serious issue in tonight's Special Order. As so aptly put by the gentleman from New York, it feels like pneumonia in a lot of communities that we represent. I would dare to say that we might even need to call it an epidemic, because it has risen to epidemic proportions.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation is supposed to be the land of opportunity, the land of equality. We are a Nation that says that if you work hard and you do the things you are supposed to do and you do everything that we ask you to do, you too can be successful and provide a better life for you and yours. That is the promise of America.

Unfortunately, for too many in this country, this promise has been broken.

Generation after generation, millions continue to experience generational poverty in this country—and this is especially true for people of color.

Too many of the people in the district I represent in New Jersey have worked their entire lives. They have endured hard labor. They have worked two or three jobs. They have made minimum wage their entire lives. Yet they are still in poverty. The same is true for their parents before them and their grandparents and their great-grandparents.

Unfortunately, for too many people of color, the opportunities to succeed and move beyond circumstances of poverty are too little and far between. This leads to the wealth gap we see today. That wealth gap, Mr. Speaker, is unconscionable.

In the 21st century, African Americans own just 5 cents for every dollar of wealth Whites own. More than 62 percent of African American households do not have assets in a retirement account. The median income of an African American is just over \$33,000, barely above the poverty line. And African Americans are less likely to own homes, with just 44 percent of African Americans owning homes compared to 74 percent of Whites.

In New Jersey alone, the poverty rate has grown to a staggering 28 percent.

Many economists believe that this is an underestimate of the number of people falling into poverty in New Jersey.

How can those who are clawing just to get by even begin to think about creating wealth for their children or future generations? How can a single mother who works 40 or more hours a week still find herself in poverty? How does she begin to dream about saving for her children's college education or to save for a home or to plan for her retirement? The simple answer is they can't. And the racial wealth gap will continue to grow even wider.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much Congress can do to change the course of this country and to help those who are working hard and playing by the rules.

The priorities we place within our national budget determine whether we strengthen our economy and grow our middle class or whether we create a greater wealth gap between the haves and the have-nots.

This Nation has a clear choice, Mr. Speaker. The Ryan Republican budget cuts hundreds of millions of dollars in vital education investments, ends the Medicare guarantee for seniors, and it will cost this country more than 1 million jobs next year alone. And if that is not bad enough, the Ryan Republican budget asks working and middle-class Americans to pay for the thousands of dollars in tax breaks given to the wealthiest among us. That is why, in good conscience, I cannot support such a budget.

At a time when too many people are still desperately struggling to make ends meet, I know that the people in my home State of New Jersey deserve better. I believe that all Americans should demand better as well.

In contrast, the budgets that the Democrats and the Congressional Black Caucus have proposed recognize the dangerous course this country is on and work to move us forward rather than divide us deeper.

The Democratic budget builds ladders of opportunities to grow our middle class by investing in education, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and protecting the 8 million people who, for the first time, now have access to affordable, lifesaving health care.

The proposals within the Democratic budget would restore the American promise that if you work hard, you can succeed. And not only can you succeed for yourself, but you can generate wealth and create a better life for your children and your grandchildren.

That is the choice that each Member in this Congress has to make, and it is a choice every American has to make. This choice will determine the direction of this country, not only for this generation, but for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a zero-sum game. We all can be winners with the right kind of focus and investment; and in doing so, we will strengthen this country for future generations.

As I stated and made clear, we are talking about people that have played by the rules and have worked hard, working 40 hours-plus, and yet still find themselves on the margins. We are not even talking about the hundreds of thousands of citizens that I represent that we don't even want to help with programs such as SNAP anymore.

I am not even talking about the needy in this country, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about the people that play by the rules and that are doing everything that they have been asked to do in this great Nation and still find themselves on the margin.

□ 2030

So we will continue to raise these issues. We will continue to talk to the American people and get them to understand that we cannot continue down the path that we are headed. It is bleak. It is grim. It is a total U-turn in where this country has gone.

I can only think of the statements that have been made by several individuals in this country that are distasteful and disgusting over the past several weeks. We need to keep the American Dream alive for everyone.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend and the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey for his very thoughtful and eloquent remarks and observations, and for pointing out that, while we can have disagreements, of course, here in this Chamber on matters of policy, we should all share the same objective as it relates to making sure that every American has got a robust, full, complete access to the opportunity to robustly pursue the American Dream.

As this report and the Color of Wealth Summit will illustrate later on this week, that is not necessarily the case right now in America, where you have such a disparate reality between the wealth in certain communities where the dividing line is race.

It is a wonderful thing that this great country is becoming increasingly diverse. I think our diversity is one of our great strengths.

But the reality of the situation is that if certain communities, the African American community, the Latino community, other communities of color, find themselves left behind, locked out, unable to advance economically in the numbers that they should because of barriers, institutional and historical, that have existed or been erected that we have yet to tear down, that is something that should alarm all of us because it relates to the ability of America to fulfill its promise as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we have been joined by a very distinguished Member of the Congress, someone who has been a champion on issues of fairness and equality and justice for all Americans, and certainly for the district that he represents in Baltimore and in Maryland.

Let me now yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. And I want to thank you and Mr. HORSFORD and the Congressional Black Caucus and certainly Mr. PAYNE for being here tonight.

We are, indeed, at a critical moment in our country's history. As I listened to my colleagues talk about the wealth gap, you know, a lot of times when we address these issues, people say the words, "Here they go again," almost as if to say, let's dismiss this issue; this is an issue that is limited to a limited number of people.

But the problem is, as we listen to the things that have been said here tonight, this is not a Black problem, this is not a Hispanic problem; this is an American problem.

We have to keep in mind that when you have this kind of gap, these kind of gaps, what happens is the driving force that makes our economy run is placed in a position where they cannot make the purchases that are necessary. When I say purchases, I am not talking about purchases of washing machines and dryers and curtains and things of that nature. I am talking about being able to properly educate their children.

A lot of what has been talked about here tonight is whether you can place your children in a position to do better than what you did. So what we are talking about is trying to figure out ways to close that gap so that everybody rises, as opposed to—it has been said, when you have got a wealth gap of 5 or 6 cents for Hispanics and African Americans, as compared to Whites, what that means is that, slowly but surely, you have one part of your society that simply is not participating at any reasonable level.

So the question is, how do we address those issues?

I know that the Black Caucus budget goes in that direction. But one of the things that I have concentrated on quite a bit is the whole situation with the loss of wealth with regard to property.

African Americans and Hispanics, quite often, their wealth is tied up in property. Over the past few years, we have seen a tremendous loss of that wealth.

You talked about it a little bit earlier, about how when America has a cold—is that what you said—then we have pneumonia.

So what has happened is that, disproportionately, African Americans and Hispanics have lost a lot of that wealth in property because they lost their property. And when they lost that property, they no longer had collateral to make business loans, to even get loans for their kids, or to do the things that they really wanted to do to make their lives better.

But just as significantly, they were losing jobs at the same time. So as quiet as it is kept, you have a situation where a lot of Hispanics and African Americans were trying to help their relatives.

So not only were they losing their houses, but then whatever savings they may have had, or the little extra income that they may have had that they could have put aside for a rainy day, or in an effort to create some wealth, it simply was disappearing.

Then we have had some major settlements with regard to these mortgage lenders, and the mortgage lenders have come in and basically, pretty much admitted, through these settlements, that they wronged a lot of people.

As a matter of fact, in my city, in Baltimore, there were certain mortgage companies that admitted that they were pushing people into subprime situations, that they could have done even better, and these were African Americans, by the way, and giving them all these loans, "no doc" loans and things of that nature, and the next thing you know, the people had lost all they had.

So the question now becomes, with two major settlements, what did they get?

As we are doing our research on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and looking at some of this, what we have noticed is that a lot of the people who suffered the most got the least out of the settlements.

There are still settlements that are going to take place, so what we are trying to do is study the settlements that have been resolved to learn from those so that future settlement monies will go to the people who actually were harmed. That is just one area.

But again, we have got to do everything in our power to close this gap. This is our watch. We are here today. We are the ones who must guard the progress that has been made.

Quiet as it is kept, slowly, but surely, we have seen some of that progress go in the opposite direction in a downward spiral. So what we are here to do is to make sure that not only do we stop that slide for African Americans and Hispanics, because, like I said, if we stop that slide there, then the entire economy does well, then all of us do well, and that is what it is all about.

So I want to thank the Congressional Black Caucus for doing this. This is so important. We must be the voice, and we must constantly pound the drums because so often I think what happens—and I will close on this—is a lot of times people see things going in the opposite direction and they say, we will get to it tomorrow, or we will wait another day, or somebody else will deal with it, or maybe somebody else will speak up about it.

So what happens is nobody does anything. Nobody says anything. And the next thing you know, 10 years have passed, 20 years, and you look back and you say, Wow, there was a lot of slippage there.

But you know what?

That slippage also represents people. I heard Congressman PAYNE talk about people in his district. I have heard you talk about yours and Congressman

HORSFORD. These are people. These are people whom we represent. These are people who get the early bus, the ones who go through trying to make it possible for not only their children but their grandchildren to do well.

So again, I want to thank you.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Maryland for his very thoughtful remarks and observations, and for pointing out that if we can find a way to make sure that, collectively, the African American community is uplifted, the Latino community is uplifted, that we can close the racial wealth gap that exists in America across these different measurements, whether that is home ownership or access to good-paying jobs or retirement security, savings accounts, whatever the case may be, that if we can close this gap that exists, that America, overall, benefits, particularly as we become a more diverse country.

Now, 50 years ago our President, Lyndon Baines Johnson, came to this very floor and, before a joint session of Congress, declared a war on poverty. As a result of this legislative effort, there were several things that were put into place that have benefited Americans over time. Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, the school breakfast program, the Food Stamp Act, Job Corps, minimum wage enhancement, college work study—all of these programs were part of the effort to create a great society.

Over the last 50 years, as a result of the war on poverty, significant progress has been made. Tens of millions of Americans have been lifted out of an impoverished condition and set on a pathway toward the middle class. But we know that there is still a long way to go.

In fact, the middle class, broadly defined, has taken a huge hit in the aftermath of the collapse of the economy, and that hit has disproportionately and adversely impacted communities of color, and the African community in particular.

We are here to illuminate the fact that, in our humble opinion, that is bad for America as a whole.

I am pleased that my good friend, and the coanchor of this CBC Special Order, has joined us today, the distinguished gentleman from the Silver State, who has worked incredibly hard on behalf of the district that he represents.

Let me now yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, my colleague, the gentleman from the great State of New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for his leadership and for coanchoring this hour, and for focusing the efforts of the Congressional Black Caucus and the attention on such an important and pressing matter as the issue of the decline of opportunities for millions of Americans.

So often people ask the question, why do you have to talk about race?

Why do you have to raise issues in the context of the disproportionality of issues as it applies to race?

□ 2045

If there is any question about why that is the need or why there is a need to do that, unfortunately, the events over the last week and the comments by individuals over the last week indicate why these issues are still so prevalent in our country.

They talk about the original sin being slavery in this country, and the fact is so much of the disparate treatment of color is based on some institutional issues that are so pervasive in a number of different areas.

For me, it is necessary because I represent a district that is very diverse, like many Members in this body. My district is home to Cliven Bundy, the rancher that has received so much national attention, not just because of the issues around his use of public lands, even though he had failed to pay the grazing fees and was prohibited from being on that land, but because of the racist, hate-filled words that he talked about pertaining to African Americans.

The fact that he said that people didn't take the time to understand his way of life in a town in Nevada's Fourth Congressional District, but yet he would profile another community based on the fact that he just drove by and looked and observed their situation and then judged and made the judgment that maybe they were better off under slavery.

Maybe it is the recent remarks by the owner of the L.A. Clippers, the fact that, in a private conversation, he would talk about what his true feelings are about the people who have made him such a wealthy individual; and yet it is that hate-filled racist view that we are here to expose today.

So when we talk about opportunity, it is fundamental. It is a fundamental tenet of our great Nation, and we still are trying to live up to that ideal of an equal opportunity for every individual.

So just like I advocate for constituents who live out in Bunkerville and Mesquite, in Moapa Valley, in Virgin Valley as part of my congressional district, in rural areas that may not have a lot of diversity, just as they are concerned with the armed militia that are still in their communities tonight—and I have spoken up and asked law enforcement agencies to help remove those armed militias from that local community that just wants to return to normal—I am also here to speak up for communities throughout my district that are very diverse, that have Latino communities and African American and Asian American communities that are faced with this opportunity gap issue that we are here to talk about.

This is not a one-way conversation that we are having. We want to invite those of you who are watching on C-SPAN or those of you who are following us on Twitter at #CBCtalks to get involved in the conversation. Tweet us your comments about what this opportunity gap means to you.

The ability to work hard and achieve success, no matter what part of society you were born in, this is what has produced the world's largest middle class and has propelled all of us to be the most powerful and wealthy country in the world; and it has also been an economy that works for everyone, in that it grows wealth from the middle out. That has produced our country's most prosperous times, and that is what we are here to defend tonight in this conversation.

But in the past two decades, in particular, and particularly during our Nation's recovery from the great recession, as my colleague from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) illuminated, the promise of opportunity is not materializing for millions of Americans.

It is not because these individuals don't want that opportunity. It is not because there is a lack of willingness or hard work on behalf of individuals. The question is: What is keeping so many people from that same opportunity?

More and more Americans are falling out of the middle class and into poverty while those in poverty are unable to climb beyond the first rung of the economic ladder.

Just last week, we learned from The New York Times that America no longer has the wealthiest middle class in the world, falling behind our neighbors to the north, Canada; and this should not come as a shock to anyone, given the troubling economic trends of the past decade or so.

We have to recognize that these income inequalities and a shrinking middle class is a crisis for our Nation and one that will not go away if we do not act. In fact, it is a crisis that will only grow worse and will ultimately catch up to our ability to sustain our position as the world's wealthiest country.

Now, as my colleague from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member, just said, it is not an easy crisis to solve, and no single policy will address all of the factors that are contributing to the growing opportunity gap, but one issue that I want to speak about specifically is the fact that experts have consistently and nearly universally identified the area that will go the furthest in providing expanded opportunities for all, and that is education and particularly early education.

Positive social and cognitive development starts very early, and children who are encouraged to actively learn, starting from when they are as young as 3 or 4 years old, experience tremendous long-term benefits.

Research also shows that high-quality early childhood education can provide children from poor working class backgrounds with the similar early learning experiences as children from wealthier backgrounds.

Now, why is this important? The enrollment and graduation rates by race matter. For those individuals who belong to the Asian American community, they have the highest graduation

rates, at nearly 70 percent. Among the White population, it is about 62 percent. Among the Latino community, it is 51 percent.

But for African Americans, according to the 2005 cohort, we have just a 39.9 percent graduation rate compared to enrollment. So if we are going to change these statistics, we have to start at the beginning, and that is an investment in education, in early childhood education.

Now, we can't do that by supporting the budget by Congressman PAUL RYAN, which would cut investments in Head Start, which we know greatly helps all children develop social and cognitive skills that they otherwise might not receive at home.

In addition to early education investments, it is critical that we invest in our middle schools and high schools, so that every student has an opportunity to succeed and to be prepared to go to college and ultimately graduate with a college degree.

Still, to this day, schools are not even close to receiving equal amounts of funding; and that is why groups, such as the Children's Defense Fund, talk about be careful what you cut and that our budgets reflect our values, that if we don't invest properly in education, in early childhood education, then we are not going to get the type of return on investments and improved outcomes through high school graduation and college. Low-income African American students, in particular, suffer the consequence from these circumstances.

If I could talk about this chart for just a moment, dealing with the access to a full range of courses in math and science among the White, Asian, Latino, and African American population—again, this is an issue of access.

If students aren't being exposed to a curriculum in science, technology, engineering, and math, then they are not going to be able to learn or perform or graduate in these areas.

In this chart, we see an incredibly reduced rate for African Americans when it comes to math and science courses. Only 57 percent of African American students have access to a full range of math and science courses. These are subjects that have major impacts when it comes to college readiness and achievement scores on standardized testing.

Now, in my home State of Nevada, the graduation rate discrepancy between White students and students of color is striking: 72 percent for Whites, 55 percent for Latinos, and a staggeringly low rate of 48 percent for African Americans.

Nevada's high school graduation rate is the lowest in the Nation. In fact, today, they just released the most recent high school graduation statistics for every State in the country, and Nevada was at the bottom.

It contributes greatly to our State receiving the lowest opportunity score in the country by Opportunity Nation,

which factors in economic, educational, and community conditions that affect people's ability to succeed and climb the economic ladder.

So if we don't address education and invest in education, then we are never going to really be able to truly close this wealth gap that exists.

That is why the CBC and the Democratic alternative budgets both propose investing billions of dollars—in fact, reinvesting because, under the budgets that were passed when we were in the majority in this House, the funding was there for school and the training of our teachers to properly address the growing opportunity gap between high-income and low-income students; but under the GOP here in the House, they have slashed those budgets. It is time for us to reinvest.

The Republican budget ignores the long-term opportunity gaps that arise in our Nation's low-income schools. It would pull the rug out from under as many as 3.4 million disadvantaged students and 8,000 schools across the country. It cuts 29,000 teachers and teacher aides, educating disadvantaged students by 2016. The GOP budget cuts 170,000 vulnerable children out of Head Start, as I said.

So it is pretty clear to me that the differences between the House Republican budget and the Democratic priorities stand when it comes to investing and providing opportunities to the next generation of middle class workers, but it starts with education. That is why we need to fulfill that promise of opportunity for all and allow those who work hard and who play by the rules to climb that economic ladder and to achieve economic stability in their lives, no longer living paycheck to paycheck.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend for that very comprehensive presentation and, in particular, for focusing in on the importance and the significance of investing in education in order to create a bright future for everybody.

Certainly, we cannot continue to allow so many people across this country to find themselves trapped in a dysfunctional public school system that essentially dooms them to life sentences of disadvantage and despair and fails to adequately prepare them for the challenges of a 21st century economy.

Now, we are here today talking about the racial wealth gap in America; and invariably, there will be some commentator who is going to make the observation: There they go again, members of the Congressional Black Caucus taking to the House floor, speaking about race.

Actually, it is not that frequent an occurrence, but we are compelled to do so today; and then, as my good friend made the observation: Who should we allow to talk about race in America? Should we just leave it to Paula Deen to talk about race in America? Does that reflect positively on this great country?

□ 2100

Should we just allow Cliven Bundy to talk about race in America? Does that paint our country in the best possible light? Or should we just leave it to Donald Sterling to talk about race in America? Does that reflect the views of the great many good-hearted people across this country? Of course we shouldn't. And so we are here today to illuminate a problem that we think America should deal with for the good of the country—not just the African American community, because there is a significant gap in terms of wealth generation, creation, and maintenance that threatens the economic security of this country.

Let me just briefly highlight a few points along this spectrum, one, in terms of the unemployment rate is a significant difference. The White unemployment rate is 5.8 percent in this country, as this chart illustrates. The Latino unemployment rate is 7.9 percent, and the African American unemployment rate is 12.4 percent.

In terms of annual median income, you see the same type of disparity. The average median income for White Americans is \$57,009. The average median income for African Americans is \$33,321. And in terms of overall wealth, for White families, \$113,149, but for African American families in this great country, the average collective wealth is \$5,677. That means for every \$100 in a White household, a similarly situated African American household only has \$5. That is a problem for America that we should all feel compelled to confront, and that is why the Congressional Black Caucus wants to invest in education and job training, invest in transportation and infrastructure, invest in research and development, invest in technology and innovation, and invest in preserving the social safety net so that you can lift up communities left behind by the recession, but also collectively lift up America for the good of everyone.

It is now my honor and my privilege to yield to the very distinguished gentleman from New York, a prominent member of the Ways and Means Committee, someone who has given so much of his life to public service and made such a difference for so many people in Harlem, in New York City, in the country, and, in fact, across the globe, the Lion of Lenox Avenue. I am proud to now yield to Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. I want to thank you so much for pulling together this special hour. I got from New York a little late, and in working, I turned on the TV and saw these eloquent spokespeople, and I am just so glad I got here in time before our time has expired. So all of those that made this possible, it starts my new week down here with a breath of fresh air.

Last Sunday, I participated in ceremonies at Grant's Tomb. That is General Grant. That is President Grant. And his great-great-grandson was there to speak on Grant's not wanting slavery. They even had a few people dressed up in Union uniforms, which I had not seen before. But at the conclusion of listening, just a few generations ago, this guy talking about General Grant and President Grant, it convinced me that in some parts of the United States of America, they don't believe that the Union won. The reason I come to that conclusion is that, as I never saw that many Union uniforms, I have never seen so many Confederate flags that represent groups that are proud of the fact that they call themselves the Tea Party. And then I was thinking, because it was a long ceremony, where do these Tea Party people, what areas of the country are they most comfortable? And I reached the conclusion they are from that part of the country that the States owned slaves. And then I thought, well, are they Democrats or Republicans? They used to be not only Democrats, but they fought against every civil rights bill we had here.

I never thought in the 54 miles I marched with Dr. King from Selma to Montgomery that we ever would get the civil rights and the voting rights, but when we got it, somehow the Dixiecrats disappeared. And all of a sudden, they came up in the South as Republican, Republicans that really hate this President as much as their predecessors probably hated Abe Lincoln. And it was all about slavery—all about slavery. And if you go to the parts of South America and the Caribbean islands, Mexico, all you see are remnants of slavery—even Puerto Rico.

But here in this country where we thought we had broken out of the Civil War, what the heck does it take for people to understand that you shouldn't hate the President so much that you are ready to destroy the Republican Party, the entire Congress, but most of all the people of this great country? We have been able to take people of all colors, all blood, all languages, and they didn't come here and just fall in love with each other. They hardly knew each other. But somehow they set aside these differences and in 300 or 400 years became the power of the world.

That power just wasn't in dollars and cents and the ability to have more than any other country in wealth, but it was hope. It was the ability to believe that no matter what level of the economy you were in, you could achieve. This could not be said for many of the countries in Europe. That is why they loved their countries, but they cared more for their families here.

And now we have millions of people whose complexions look more like the people who were here when Columbus so-called discovered them. And then you find a hatred which defies economics and sound politics against people who want to come to this country, who

have invited constructively as we say in the law because they came, they got paid, everyone was happy, but the more that came, the more that wanted to come, their complexion started changing the complexion of the Nation.

And why they refuse to allow the President to try to remove this cancer from America, why they don't understand that we just can't afford to destroy everything this country stands for? We are talking about immigration laws so that we can bring more talent. But, most of all, most of my colleagues, we are talking about education. How the heck can we allow party differences with the President to agree that we have got 2 million human beings locked up in jail? Most of them have—the only people they ever hurt was themselves. The cost of keeping them incarcerated—cops, courts, food, and health care—is mind blowing compared to the infinitesimal fraction of America's education as paid to by this Congress. So much of the setbacks has to do with the stigma of having come from slaves rather than slave owners.

But the thing is, if a nation like ours is going to maintain any degree of similarities, we have to all pull together and not be divided by color, sex or where a person has been born or the language that they speak.

So I came over wondering what can 43 people of African background, combined with scores of people that have Latin American backgrounds, combined with so many other people that families can remember poverty and the pain of not being a part of the middle class, and to see this shrinking and missing a paycheck, a check on unemployment compensation, a month in rent, homelessness, being in shelters, not being able to get a job, losing your kids—man, that is pain. That is not America.

So what can I do? Well, I am 84, and I guess I don't want to say anything that would jeopardize my getting to Heaven without any hassles with St. Peter and the rest of them up there. So I will make an appeal to the priests, the ministers, the rabbis, and the imams in saying that you deal with a higher authority. You deal with all people. God can't possibly have expected, when He would have us to believe we are made in His image, that He could be so many different colors. He is one in our mind as He used these colors to make the world.

I want to hear their voices when we talk about education, hunger, nakedness, thirst, and being locked up and having some comfort, because that is what we are talking about today.

So let me just thank you. We can't give up. We can't give in. We can't give out. We may not have an answer in this Chamber, but the will of America can change this Chamber, and we just have to have good people, whether they are in synagogues, mosques, or cathedrals, to call their Congressperson and say that this is not the time for our great

Nation to be divided by class, color, or wealth. It is time for us to do what that sign says: "In God we trust." And we have got to trust. We have got to fight, and we are going to win.

Thank you for the opportunity for all of us to express ourselves.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from New York for his incredibly eloquent, thoughtful, and insightful presentation and analysis.

We have now been joined by a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security Committee, a voice for the voiceless, someone who has fought to promote justice and equality across a wide spectrum of issues but certainly in the economic arena in such a compelling way during her career in the House and throughout her entire career in public service. Let me now yield to the distinguished gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the gentleman from New York for convening this dialogue with our colleagues and, through our colleagues, the American people and Mr. HORSFORD as well as the Congressional Black Caucus and the passionate words of our colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), and others who have come on this floor to challenge our colleagues.

I think the backdrop of this whole discussion is the Ryan budget, which we debated before we left for the work recess. And I think it is important that we not allow that budget to just pass with a vote and let it not represent the moral document that now the Republicans have tied themselves to.

Interestingly enough, while we were away, it seems that America caught on fire. For some reason, the season generated a number of unfortunate and sad incidents that really reinforce this wealth gap that is so very important.

I have 10 points that I would like to succinctly mention in the backdrop of the Ryan budget, which cuts drastically the social network of America which really makes America great. Some of us had the opportunity to be in countries outside, countries as we were, during the recess, South and Central America, Europe and other places.

□ 2115

You come back to this country and you thank God for its greatness, and I still do that. But I also know that it is great, or it was great, because people pull together and realize there is no shame in a social safety network because it was people of all backgrounds—Caucasians, Hispanics, African Americans and others—who were in this country who celebrated the creation of Social Security under Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Medicare and Medicaid back in the 1960s.

This is the 50th year of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and so it is tragic that we still have to look at numbers that show the wealth inequality. It is more tragic

that we compound this discrimination with ugly words that really suggest that there is a lack of understanding for why these numbers exist.

I might say to Mr. Bundy, who suggested that government subsidies is all that African Americans receive, and that we would be better off as slaves with a garden and picking cotton: maybe if there had been a fair distribution of wealth at the end of slavery, as it was supposed to be, there would have been the investment in that now-free population where you could look at them and say, Why didn't you succeed?

Well, if you read your history books, you know that we lived under a discriminatory society for much of the 20th century. And in actuality, there was not an equalizing or trying to equalize rights until the 1960s.

Even today, the decision that was just rendered on affirmative action, some people would shout for joy, but in actuality it undermines America's great quality, and that is diversity. It takes away from Hispanic and White students and African Americans students and Asian students an opportunity to go to school together, a very unfortunate decision in affirmative action, compounded, of course, by the atmosphere and the attitudes of the likes of the owner of the Clippers, who today, in 2014, suggests I don't want to be sitting next to, taking a picture with, don't promote it, whatever his heartbroken situation might have been with an ex-girlfriend, it still sets a tone that speaks, if you will, to the discrimination that exists in wealth.

Some would say, how do you tie that together? We have to change our attitudes about all of us. And frankly, unemployment rates emphasize the discrimination in employment: African Americans, 12.4 percent and higher among young African American men; Hispanics 7.9 percent.

I don't want unemployment in any group. I fight for full employment for everyone because I know that is what America is about, giving opportunity and creating the working middle class. That is what we should fight for, and I hope our discussion focuses on the fact that we want that to occur.

Decline in wealth. We can clearly see that the decline in wealth has gone to some 53 percent in the African American community. And then of course bankruptcy filings; likewise, you can show that the highest amount is in African Americans.

Let me conclude by simply saying the budget that Mr. RYAN has will never answer the question of solving the problem of lifting the boats of all Americans. I thank the gentleman for having yielded to me. The challenge tonight is clearly to find a solution that ends the evilness of racism, but more importantly lifts the boats of all of our fellow Americans because they deserve the kind of equality and wealth opportunity that goes for poor Whites, Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians. A solution must be found.

KEY MESSAGES

The median wealth of White households is 20 times that of African American households. Put differently, African Americans own just five cents for every dollar of wealth whites own.

Buying a home is the single largest investment most families can make.

Asset accumulation is the foundation to economic mobility for low- and middle-income families.

Public—such as Social Security, Medicare, and Unemployment Insurance—and private assets are important for the economic security of communities of color.

Investing in assets and limiting debt can help families build wealth and improve their financial security.

Families of color lack the necessary savings and assets to climb up the economic ladder.

This wide gap in wealth between families of color and White families is a reflection of systemic and social barriers that have limited economic mobility.

Along with a history of discrimination, communities of color face obstacles getting a good job or using banks to save for future investments.

Public policy—rooted in historical discrimination—created the racial wealth gap and it will take public policy to overcome economic inequities.

The national budget is a primary vehicle through which public assets are protected and strengthened.

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

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

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

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be here tonight. Today is a significant day. It is Holocaust Remembrance Day. And the greatest ally that the United States has, Israel, had a remarkable experience that they hold every day because of the unique situation that the Jewish people have endured, and that is, the entire nation and all of the people in Israel come to a complete stop. Cars literally stop in the middle of highways. Buses literally stop in the middle of highways. Metros stop. If a pedestrian is walking on a street, kids playing in a park, they stop. A siren goes off for 2 minutes' time, and during that time every person in the nation comes to a standstill. Why? Why this extraordinary action?

Because, quite simply, nothing like the history of Israel has ever happened anywhere in the annals of recorded human history. It is this: 6 million people lost their lives. They lost their lives simply because they were Jewish. They were children, they were grandparents, they were moms and dads. They were disfigured. They were disabled. They were high functioning. They weren't even necessarily in Israel. They were in countries all across primarily European areas. But 6 million died. And it is important that we never forget. That we never forget

that a people were so brutally targeted that 6 million were killed virtually in silence; silence because of the devious ways in which the German regime carried out this horrific action. That is what happened about 70 years ago.

We will commemorate D-day, the 70th anniversary this June 6, as we should, probably one of the greatest sacrifices ever made by one people for another, led in large part by the Americans to liberate Europe as they were under this cloud of Adolf Hitler. It is a horrific past, but it is something that we have to remember because we can never forget. We can never, ever, ever forget.

We join with our great ally Israel today as we remember this horrific act. It was a racist act on the part of Adolf Hitler. It was a bigoted act on the part of Adolf Hitler, and I think that is why today we are all rather shocked when the story was disclosed that our American Secretary of State had made comments last Friday behind closed doors in a meeting with members of the Trilateral Commission, and he had said that if Israel does not go along with the proposed two-state solution, that Israel would risk becoming an apartheid state.

Now that is a shocking comment to come from an American Secretary of State, particularly to have this comment revealed on Holocaust Remembrance Day, to accuse the Jewish people who have undergone what no other people have undergone, a horrific act to be targeted by Adolf Hitler some 70 years ago, within the lifetime of some people who remain alive today. And yet our Secretary of State, accusing this nation of engaging in an act, an institutional act against another people based upon race with no evidence whatsoever because there is none.

I want to read the definition of the 1998 Rome statute. It says:

The crime of apartheid is defined as inhuman acts committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.

Now, that would apply to an Adolf Hitler. That did apply in the case of South Africa. It does not in any possible imagination or universe apply in any possible sense to the Jewish State of Israel, and yet that is what our Secretary of State said last Friday in reference to our greatest ally. Our Secretary of State needs to apologize humbly to the people of Israel, and then he needs to tender his resignation immediately to the President of the United States.

But our Secretary of State did not stop there. He went on to reiterate a statement that he had made prior that merely was an echo of what the Palestinians had intimated, and it was this: That Israel could be looking at a third fatwa—that is a war—that Israel could look at a war by the Palestinians, by people who would engage in