

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to address the statement made just yesterday by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver.

As we all know, Mr. Speaker, Commissioner Silver dealt swiftly, decisively, and broadly with the reprehensible racist tirade that has been attributed to Los Angeles Clippers owner, Mr. Donald Sterling.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to applaud Commissioner Silver for his swift, forward-thinking, decisive action and for taking a meaningful step forward in improving racial relations here in America, and having a very progressive impact on the culture of our Nation by forbidding the racial and racist attitude of any individual that may seek to hide behind the popularity and celebrity status that we give to our athletes and other entertainers.

Commissioner Silver's response to Mr. Sterling's appalling statements sent a message to all those who may hold racial or discriminatory attitudes that there is no place to hide here in the United States of America.

Whether it comes from the floor of the House, whether it comes from the other body, whether it comes from any quarter, we should all be outraged at the racial attitudes of intolerance and indifference and the hatred that is being spewed across the airways of our Nation. Three times over this last month we have heard reprehensible commentaries by others. We should all have felt a sense of enormous outrage at the comments of these individuals.

Much is left to be done, Mr. Speaker.

The one thing that is before the Nation and the NBA is that the owners have to do what they are required to do. I urge the owners to do what is best for the Clippers, what is best for the players in the NBA and the NBA itself, what is best for the fans of the NBA, and what is best for the Nation. I ask the owners this morning to remove Mr. Sterling from the privileges of owning an NBA team and remove him from the equation that he currently operates in. And do that finally, firmly, and quickly.

We need a decision by the NBA owners now to remove Mr. Sterling.

TOLLING WILL CRIPPLE OUR ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the United States Department of Transportation yesterday delivered to Congress a draft highway reauthorization which proposes to remove the prohibition on tolling existing capacity on interstate highways.

As my colleagues are aware, the interstate highway system was created to enhance the flow of goods and services throughout the country.

□ 1030

These investments have served to improve our economy and the lives of our

citizens, while allowing America to remain competitive in a global market.

Plain and simple, tolling existing capacity will do nothing more than cripple our economy. In fact, Mr. Speaker, any attempt to remove the prohibitions on tolling interstate highways must be highly scrutinized.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, in 2007, a scheme was put together to toll Interstate 80. This was a prime example of a betrayal of public trust, where the Commonwealth, under then-Governor Rendell, aimed to use toll grants on other projects unassociated with the interstate.

Mr. Speaker, tolling can work for new capacity or to mitigate congestion by providing alternative lanes of travel, but it must be done in a transparent manner. Pennsylvania's plan was not crafted for the public good, but to cover up for a history of highway mismanagement and cronyism throughout the bureaucracy.

Now, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on finding a fiscally responsible way to maintain investments in critical transportation infrastructure projects across the country.

As we move forward on a new highway reauthorization, let us restore the public trust, not further erode it. The American people deserve as much.

TURNING DARKNESS INTO LIGHT AND HATRED INTO LOVE

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, on the afternoon of Sunday, April 13—Palm Sunday and the eve of Passover—it was a beautiful spring day in Overland Park, Kansas. Many families were gathering across the community to be close and to celebrate these meaningful and important religious holidays; yet on that day of great beauty, tremendous evil was arriving in my community. On that day, hatred, combined with bigotry, would spur a tragedy of horrific proportions in Overland Park.

That afternoon, a singing competition for the best high school singers in the metropolitan area was occurring at the Jewish Community Center just down the street from where my family lives.

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City has been in operation since 1914 and is a bustling center for events, meetings, discussions, exercise, and service of a diverse community where all people and all faiths are welcomed.

That day, two members of my church, the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, were driving into the parking lot of the Jewish Community Center to participate in this competition—a grandfather and his grandson—when, out of nowhere, a man driven by hatred, anti-Semitism, and a life of racism decided to take their innocent lives.

Reat Underwood, one of the victims, a 14-year-old boy and freshman at Blue Valley High School, had an amazing voice. Reat's love of theater came naturally to him. With that training, Reat began his theater career at age 4 in Camelot Academy.

Reat was heavily involved with volunteering, and he cared about his community and was very active in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. Carrying on the traditions of his grandfather and uncles, Reat was a Cub Scout with Pack 3097 at Blue Valley Middle School and then a Boy Scout with Troop 37, the Red-Tailed Hawk District, where he had reached Life Scout. He was preparing for his Eagle Scout boards with Troop 92, to be held in May.

Reat will be missed by his family, especially his younger brother, Lucas, who gave a beautiful tribute at Reat's services.

Reat's grandfather, Bill Corporan, who was taking Reat to this singing contest, also was a victim. Reat's family all lived in Overland Park, and his grandparents had moved there from Oklahoma, so they could live near their grandchildren.

Dr. Corporan had met and married his wife, Melinda, in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and they were married in 1965. He graduated with a doctorate of medicine from the University of Oklahoma in 1972, and the whole family became very big Sooner fans.

He operated family medicine practices throughout Oklahoma before finally moving with his wife to Overland Park to be close to their family. He continued serving his community as a physician and a medical director to the very last days.

A third victim, Terri Lamano, was arriving at Village Shalom, a retirement community almost a mile down the street to visit her mother. She too became a victim of vile bigotry and hatred from that violence that afternoon.

Terri worked as an occupational therapist at the Children's Center for the Visually Impaired in Kansas City. She spent her time working with children and families of those in need.

Her daughter, Alissa, described Terri as "a beautiful soul who always thought of everyone else before herself. She was the best mother, wife, sister, and friend that anyone could ask for."

Sadly, Terri was taken from us just 2 days before her 25th anniversary with her husband.

Today, I rise to pay tribute to these victims. We will never forget them. Our hearts break for them, and this Congress honors them for their beautiful lives and legacies.

Although the events which transpired are evil and will have long-lasting effects in our community, they have also brought us together and strengthened the bonds between all of us.

Mr. Speaker, my district is a diverse one, demographically. It is a strong community with a strong community spirit. With urban, suburban, and rural

areas, the Third District of Kansas is a microcosm of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, these hate crimes were shocking to our community as these types of actions were so foreign to us. The days following the horrendous act, though, were filled with love, community, and comfort as members of our entire community came together to support one another.

Hundreds and hundreds of community members gathered together for an interfaith unity service at the Jewish Community Center. Vigils were held. Thousands turned out for memorial services.

Mr. Speaker, this type of hate and violence has no place in our society, and our Kansas community, as many often do, rallied and demonstrated in unified voice and spirit that one act of violence cannot break our bonds and tear us apart.

Mindy Corporan, a friend of mine and the woman who tragically lost both her son and father that day, stated something profound after these events. She said:

We want something good to come out of this. We don't know what that's going to be, so we want people to let us know if they think something good has come out of it.

Mr. Speaker, I was there for the week following the shooting. I saw the reaction of the entire community and the support and comfort our community has shown each other.

Mr. Speaker, the entire Third District of Kansas honors Reat, Bill, and Terri and every single other human being who has been the victim of racism, discrimination, hatred, and evil. We honor them, each and every one of us, by doing our part to turn darkness into light and to turn hatred into love.

INCREASE IN CARGO PREFERENCE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we have challenges in the United States with the notion of how we are going to protect American-flagged ships, the capacity to be able, in times of national emergency, to provide the transport services that we need.

I have been a supporter of the Jones Act. I think it is important to have cargo preference. I think it is important to be able to manage. I am interested in other areas that we might explore to be able to make sure that the United States is not at the mercy of other nations in times of emergency.

I will say that I have been dismayed at recent activities to force, in the Coast Guard reauthorization, to increase the cargo preference for American food aid from its current level of 50 percent to 75 percent. This is outrageous, and it is not the answer.

The situation we face today is that we require this food to be delivered in American ships. It increases the delay in terms of when the food gets there,

and we are competing with local communities.

Mr. Speaker, in an ideal world, we would do what most international aid countries do when they deliver assistance. They use money to buy local products. This helps support local agriculture, and it provides the food when it is needed, not months later.

The United States primarily delivers surplus commodities that we produce in the United States that are shipped halfway around the world, that arrive often too late, and it is in direct competition to local producers.

It undercuts their capacity to take care of themselves, while our assistance gets there too late, and it increases the cost of doing so.

Now, in times past, the government had reimbursed the cost differential. That was eliminated in the Budget Control Act, so that is gone, and we have had this provision that was snuck in. It was not widely debated. Members of the House and the Senate did not understand what was going on.

We have had terrific leadership from Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL in the House Foreign Affairs Committee to try and focus on ways to be able to provide greater flexibility to United States aid, so we can help more people at less cost and not undercut their capacity to support themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that my colleagues will take a good, hard look at this provision. We need to make sure that this is removed, to at least go back to where it was at 50 percent; but more important, we ought to look at how we provide this food aid around the world.

At a time when we are providing lavish support to American farmers and ranchers, they don't need the additional support to undercut production of food in some of the poorest and most desperate countries in the world.

We ought to stretch those dollars. We ought to make sure that that aid arrives sooner, when it is needed; and we ought not to have this artificial mechanism that is both more expensive, less efficient, and most important, it hurts the people that we are trying to serve.

There is bipartisan leadership in the House that is trying to fix this, working with NGOs around the country and around the world. We ought to roll up our sleeves and do this in a cooperative way and prevent undercutting these poor countries and eliminating the ability to get food to them quickly.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Lead us this day in Your ways, that our Nation might be guided along the roads of peace, justice, and goodwill.

Recent events, including the tragic murders in Kansas motivated by religious bigotry and the unfortunate high-profile racism displayed in Los Angeles, remind us that we as a nation still have work to do to guarantee that our founding documents and their soaring ideals are realized by all who dwell in our land.

Grant strength and wisdom to our Speaker and the Members of both this assembly and the Senate, to our President and his Cabinet, and to our Supreme Court, as well as to us all, that all our institutions and all our communities fulfill the noble promises of our representative form of self-government.

Grant us the courage to become whom You have called us to be—our better selves—so that the United States might continue to be a nation worthy of emulation.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

NO BONUS FOR IRS TAX DELINQUENT EMPLOYEES

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address