

In a 1951 speech to the New York Legal Aid Society, the great jurist Learned Hand challenged his audience: "It is the daily, it is the small, it is the cumulative injuries of little people that we are here to protect. If we are able to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice."

Mr. Speaker, 63 years later, on a street corner in the same city, Eric Garner hauntingly invoked Hand when he pleaded in vain: "Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today. I'm minding my business, officer. I'm minding my business. Please just leave me alone."

Mr. Speaker, it must stop today.

Mr. Speaker, equal justice under law—impartial and uniformly applied—has been for more than two centuries the ideological underlining of American democracy.

But, from the beginning, this noblest aspiration has been intertwined with our struggle with race—a battle that has sometimes come to define our nation, and to divide it in ways that too often cleave us still today.

One hundred fifty years since the Emancipation Proclamation and half a century after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 formally ended Jim Crow, our President, his Attorney General, Secretary of Homeland Security and National Security Advisor are all African-American.

Blacks are now prominent in every facet of American life. And much of this has occurred during my lifetime, because people marched and sat, and voted and demanded greater equality.

But, despite the progress, equal justice under law is not the reality for too many of our fellow citizens and injustice continues to limit their lives and their livelihoods in ways that are difficult for white Americans to comprehend.

Inequality manifests itself at every rung of the criminal justice system, but its most deadly consequences are to be found in the encounters of young men of color with the police.

I have seen the video of the Eric Garner incident in New York and watched the tragedy in Ferguson in the aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown. The agony of their families and the anger of their communities have rightfully moved the nation.

Sadly, they are not alone.

The deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown grabbed national headlines, but decades of strife between police and many poor and minority neighborhoods have resulted in an endemic mistrust of law enforcement there.

One need only consider a phenomenon almost completely foreign to much of America—"the talk."

It is a ritual that plays out in black and brown households across our nation every day—as parents teach their young children about the special dangers they face from law enforcement.

Even the mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, said last week that he and his wife had to prepare their son—"as families have all over this city for decades—how to take special care in any encounter he has with police officers."

As a father, to hear that is heartbreaking. As someone who has long worked with and on behalf of law enforcement, and who has deep respect for the bravery and integrity of so many who wear the uniform, it's a call to action.

First, in the months since the Michael Brown shooting, I have pressed for greater deployment of body-worn cameras to police departments across the country, an idea that the President has now endorsed. Cameras are not a panacea, but they are a first step on a path to greater accountability and transparency.

Second, since cameras alone will not bridge the chasm of mistrust between many communities of color and the police there to protect them; we must invest in 21st Century police departments.

Effective policing requires mutual respect between the public and the police, and a renewed emphasis on community policing strategies. Diversifying police forces so that they are more reflective of the communities they patrol and improving the training of officers to reduce the likelihood of violent confrontations are essential. This cannot be accomplished overnight, however, and generations of injustice have left deep scars.

So the third leg of any law enforcement reform agenda must be enhanced oversight by the Department of Justice, which has a long record of working with state and local police agencies to modernize and improve practices and behavior.

Justice Department intervention, as in the recent release of a report detailing excessive use of force by Cleveland police, can be instrumental in overcoming opposition to reform, and I know that Attorney General Holder's successor will make this a priority.

We ask a lot from our police who have a difficult and often dangerous job, and we grant them enormous power, including the right to take a life under certain circumstances. It is not only proper that we insist this power is used impartially and as a last resort, it is fundamental to a just society.

In a 1951 speech to the New York Legal Aid Society, the great jurist Learned Hand challenged his audience, "It is the daily; it is the small; it is the cumulative injuries of little people that we are here to protect. . . . If we are able to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice."

Sixty-three years later, on a street corner in the same city, Eric Garner hauntingly invoked Hand when he pleaded in vain: "Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today. . . . I'm minding my business, officer. I'm minding my business. Please just leave me alone."

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TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last week, the House passed legislation to extend a number of individual and business tax provisions that expired on December 31, 2013. This legislation would reinstate the provisions retroactively and extend them through the end of 2014.

As a former small business owner, I recognize the tremendous cost that Federal policy can have on American businesses and believe the temporary extension of many of these tax breaks is necessary. However, I have long been a consistent and vocal supporter of

simplifying the Tax Code and decreasing the tax burden of hardworking Americans.

If you listen to the political discussion in our country very long, you will inevitably hear some liberal lawmakers repeat one of their favorite lines: all of our country's budget problems would be solved if only we increased taxes. But our old friend across the pond, Mr. Churchill, once said: "A nation trying to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket trying to lift himself up by the handle." History has shown the truth of this statement: increasing taxes increases government spending and crowds out private sector investment, diminishing our prosperity.

It is ridiculous that Americans labor, on average, 111 days just to make enough to pay the government before starting to keep what they earn for the year.

At 70,000 pages long, the U.S. Tax Code is also far too complicated. It is almost five times wordier than the Bible, minus the grace and mercy. It is so complex and intimidating that the majority of Americans pay good money just to have someone else tell them how much the government is going to take from them.

It is also important that we reduce the number of loopholes in the Tax Code, which is why I have voted for the budget proposals introduced by Chairman RYAN since Republicans regained the majority in the House of Representatives in 2011. These Path to Prosperity budgets provide for comprehensive tax reform, close loopholes, and make our country more economically competitive.

The simple truth is that the United States has the highest corporate tax rates in the developed world. Continuing to make it more expensive to do business in the U.S. than elsewhere in the world will not encourage companies to operate and keep jobs in this country.

As we move forward with comprehensive tax reform in the 114th Congress, it is vital that we enact policies that strengthen and stabilize our economy as well as give individuals and businesses long-term certainty.

RECOGNIZING MINNIE MINOSO

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was a vote by the Major League Baseball committee on who should be inducted into the Hall of Fame from a particular area. One of the players who was up for consideration—and, unfortunately, wasn't chosen—was Minnie Minoso, and it reminded me of the debt I owe Minnie Minoso.

Minnie Minoso was the first African Latin baseball player. And in 1954, in Memphis, Tennessee—a town I was born in and a town in the Southern United States that was especially a

part of the Jim Crow era—I went to a baseball game, an exhibition baseball game. And I was on crutches because I had polio. I had a Chicago White Sox cap on and a Chicago White Sox T-shirt.

A player came to give me a baseball from the opposing team, the St. Louis Cardinals. I thanked him. And I went and told my father. And we came down to thank him. And he said: “Don’t thank me. Thank that player over there.” He was the blackest player on the field, number nine, Minnie Minoso. He didn’t feel comfortable in 1955 to give me a baseball. Yet he was the player with the most compassionate heart and humility on the field because that was the segregated South.

Minnie Minoso became my hero, and I followed his career and became friends with him. We exchanged gifts. He came to Memphis, and I went to Chicago.

In 1960 when he came to Memphis, he was staying at the Lorraine Motel—the segregated African American hotel in Memphis—because African Cuban Latin players, African Americans weren’t allowed at the Peabody Hotel, where the other players were.

I couldn’t believe that my baseball hero, a great all-star, was staying at the Lorraine, which happens to be where Dr. King was murdered. But that is where he had to stay.

I learned about segregation from living in Memphis and from being befriended by Minnie Minoso. The insanity of segregation and the separation of people by race, that period of Jim Crow and previous slavery—which existed in this country for 250 years of slavery and 100-and-some-odd years of Jim Crow—still pervades this country.

There are lingering consequences which must be dealt with. The gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) well addressed them. Much must be done in law enforcement and criminal justice but also in education and opportunities for jobs, which people don’t have today in the South and many other places, in inner cities.

So as I think about Minnie Minoso, and I think about segregation and the effect that it has had on America—America’s original sin was slavery. We haven’t overcome it.

Some write about it and get recognition. People read their books. Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote in the Atlantic. Edward Baptist has written a book about the benefits that America got from the slave trade and how many people made money from it shipping cotton, making clothes, insuring the slave trade. It was the great economic benefit of this country and made this country great, all on slavery. Edward Baptist writes it well.

Michelle Alexander writes in “The New Jim Crow” about the incarceration rate of African Americans, that it is wrongfully high. If you are African American, the likelihood that you are going to be arrested and incarcerated is so much greater than a Caucasian for

living in the same society and doing the same things.

We must put an end to discrimination in all its forms and fashions. In the criminal justice system, sentencing reform needs to take place. In the criminal justice system, we need to see that law enforcement agencies and prosecutions of law enforcement officers are done transparently and fairly and justly.

We need to be sure that Americans continue to have faith that this is the land of the free and the home of the brave, and that our Nation is one in which people get equal justice, as was planned by our Founding Fathers but was never quite implemented.

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss mental health services for veterans.

As you know, physical injuries are not the only ones endured in war. Many soldiers return home with wounds that we cannot see. For some veterans, the psychological trauma endured on the battlefield affects them and their families long after the shots stop firing.

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Of the 2 million Americans who served in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan, as many as 300,000 meet criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder. Another 300,000 may have suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Mr. Speaker, for these servicemen and servicewomen, access to quality mental health care is crucial, so imagine being one of these soldiers who recently returned home with the lasting psychological effects that so commonly result from war.

Now, imagine that in seeking treatment from the VA, you are forced to go 67 days without an appointment. Sixty-seven days is the new average wait time for new mental health patients at the central Alabama VA; and, Mr. Speaker, that number has gotten worse. In May, the wait time for new mental health patients was 57 days.

Mr. Speaker, administrators claim that scheduling and labeling errors have contributed to making the problem appear worse on paper than it actually is, but if after all of this time we haven’t figured out how to properly schedule patients at the VA, we have worse problems than I thought. I don’t expect it to magically improve overnight, but we shouldn’t be moving in the wrong direction.

My primary focus is improving care for veterans in Alabama, and there are ways that we can do it. I am eager to see greater utilization of the Patient-Centered Community Care program, otherwise known as PC3, which connects veteran patients with local doctors or specialists.

It makes no sense to make a veteran wait 2 months for an appointment when we can refer them to an outside provider right away. I believe PC3 is a difference-maker, and I will continue to insist the VA leadership utilize it on the mental health side.

Mr. Speaker, a 2-month wait for mental health patients at the VA is obviously a disservice to our veterans, but it is also a major safety concern for veterans, their families, and the public. It might be uncomfortable to talk about, but the fact is we have a very high suicide rate among veterans.

Twenty-two veterans commit suicide every day. The tendency is even higher for young, male veterans, the very type that are returning home right now from war. The last thing that we should do is make it harder for veterans to get the treatment that they need.

That is why I rise today in support of H.R. 5059, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act. This bipartisan bill aims to, number one, increase access to mental health care for veterans; number two, better meet the demand for mental health professionals; and number three, improve accountability of suicide prevention efforts through the Department of Defense and the VA.

The bill is named for Clay Hunt, a Marine veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, earning the Purple Heart. He was diagnosed with PTSD and actually worked to raise awareness about problems facing people like him returning home from combat.

Like many veterans, Clay ran into roadblocks in his efforts to access care for his PTSD. I encourage everyone to look up Clay Hunt’s full story and read about the difficulty he faced getting needed care from the VA. For some veterans, it might sound all too familiar. On March 31, 2011, at the age of 28, Clay took his own life. Clay’s story is sad, it is disheartening, and it is infuriating. But what Clay’s story is not? It is not uncommon enough, 22 veterans a day.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go as a Nation in making sure veterans in need of mental health care aren’t left behind, but let’s start this week by passing the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act.

HONORING PALO ALTO COLLEGE IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Palo Alto College on the famed south side of San Antonio. Making a high impact through education, Palo Alto College has been meeting the needs of first generation college students in the San Antonio area and in the surrounding communities.

In doing so, Palo Alto College prepares students for a 4-year degree program or to enter the workforce with