

I have a feeling the citizens will support the candidates and the parties that support their communities. I also have a feeling that the decision to drag this fight out in the courts will be one the Republican Party regrets from a political point of view; just like the decision not to allow a vote on immigration reform over the past 2 years will be seen as one of the biggest and most consequential political mistakes of all time.

How long does a vote take? Fifteen minutes—it might sound too much like a Geico commercial, but just 15 minutes could have saved the Republicans a great deal of heartache.

The failure to take those 15 minutes for a vote might mean that there are no Republican Presidents for a long time who would nominate judges like this one.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I began a series of remarks leading up to tomorrow, Emancipation Day, in the District of Columbia, when Lincoln and the Congress freed the slaves in the District 9 months ahead of the Emancipation Proclamation.

There are no slaves living in the District today, nor is there a single free and equal citizen living in your Nation's Capital. Freedom from slavery did not give residents freedom as equal citizens.

During yesterday's remarks in this series, I spoke about D.C. residents going to war, to every war since the Nation was created, without ever having a vote. Today's remarks fit today, April 15, the day when D.C. residents will be the only Americans who pay Federal taxes without a vote for or against those taxes or anything else. For us, it is not tax day; it is taxation without representation day.

It is no overstatement to say that this House is obsessed with taxes, that is to say, tax cuts. There are tax cut bills on the floor this very week. Our residents are not demanding tax cuts—take the money—but they are demanding the rights that go with the taxes they pay.

We want an end to no vote on this floor; an end to local matters coming to Congress without a vote on this floor; an end to D.C.'s local budget, of all matters, coming to Congress, even though there is not one dime of Federal money in it, only local money.

We want an end to every Member getting a vote on District matters that come to this floor except the Member who represents the District of Columbia. We want an end to this mountainload of injustice, and that comes with statehood.

The best way to see the injustice of paying taxes without representation is

to compare D.C. residents and what taxes they pay with what other Americans pay. Look at who pays the highest taxes in the United States of America, D.C. residents—this is per capita, my friends—compared to who pays the lowest, Mississippi. What is that, a third of what D.C. residents pay?

The two largest States in the Union, New York and California—New York taxpayers pay a little more than \$8,700 per capita, California a little more than \$8,000 per capita—both compared to our \$12,000 per capita. Southern States average between the \$4,000 and \$5,000 per capita range. The Midwest states average in the \$6,000 range. Ohio is \$6,130. Iowa is \$6,019.

Even States with many wealthy taxpayers, like Virginia and Florida, are within the \$7,000 tax range, but D.C.—650,000 residents—pays \$12,000 per resident. Find your State on my Web site. You will not find one state paying what District of Columbia residents pay.

Today is April 15, and nobody enjoys paying taxes, but we believe that the constituents of my colleagues will join the moral outrage of my constituents when they learn that D.C. residents are not only paying more federal taxes per capita than any other Americans, but that added up, this amounts to more dollars than 24 of our States are paying, all with representation.

D.C. residents pay more than their full freight to support the United States Government. The time is overdue to permit D.C. citizens to join the Union of States as the State of New Columbia, the 51st State of the Union.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today is April 15. This is the day that our income taxes are due, a day that is difficult enough under the best of circumstances, but made even more difficult, purposefully, for millions of Americans.

My Republican friends have decided to take out their differences with the IRS by deliberately torturing the American taxpayer. Ours is the largest tax system in the world that relies primarily on voluntary compliance. Most Americans, in fact, do comply, but an ever-increasingly complex tax system makes that compliance difficult.

It should be noted that it is not the IRS that makes the Tax Code complex; it is Congress that makes the Tax Code complex, a Congress that is sometimes so late in meeting its obligations with tax changes that the Service has difficulty even printing the forms on time as these changes occur every single year.

In order to help citizens with Congress' complex tax system, the Internal Revenue Service runs the largest consumer service operation in the world,

but this process has been deliberately sabotaged by the Republican approach to the agency budget.

The agency has 30,000 fewer employees today than it had in 1992. The real budget adjusted for inflation is about the level we had in 1998, when we had fewer taxpayers filing returns and a Tax Code that was smaller and less complicated.

If Congress had truly been partners with the agency in improving its service in streamlining and modernization and giving them today's computers, maybe it would be possible to keep pace, but the IRS has been given a budget that prevents it from modernizing its information technology. It uses applications for its computers that were running in the early 1960s.

The IRS is virtually a museum of computer technology, but you cannot modernize the simple call service function of answering phones and talking to taxpayers, yet Congress has deliberately slashed that money available for those positions.

When you visit the IRS offices, which I have and which I hope every one of my colleagues does before they reduce those budgets yet again, they will find employees who simply cannot meet the needs of their customers.

Our employees don't like putting people on hold for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or more or dropping the calls altogether. It frustrates the taxpayer, and it breaks the hearts of our employees.

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Now, it is no secret that some people forget to declare all of their income, and, frankly, there are some people who actually cheat on their taxes, but Congress has not equipped the IRS to do the audits necessary to actually collect the money that is due—billions and billions of dollars—which would pay for badly needed government services or reduce our debt.

They refuse to fund some positions that would not just pay for themselves but would collect 10, 20, 30 times or more their annual salaries, and Congress is deliberately making it worse with yet another budget cut while watching the exodus of highly trained, skilled professionals who have better things to do with their lives than work in an impossible situation and constantly be under attack.

I have no doubt that there are times when the agency has not performed in ways that we would all like, but the solution is not to torture the taxpayers and fail to equip the agency to do its job while continuing to make the Tax Code ever more complex.

This is gross political malpractice. It is not fair to the taxpayers; it is a disservice to our employees; and it makes it hard to fund the needs of our Nation. They may think it is good politics to make the taxpaying experience as miserable as possible, but it is, ultimately, bad judgment; it is poor politics; and it is a disservice to the American public.

Many of my colleagues have been looking at scandal within the IRS. Whatever problems they uncover or imagine, the real scandal is how the Republican budget is treating the American public and the people who work for them at the vital service of the Internal Revenue Service.

TRIBUTE TO KATRINA ADAMS, PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. TENNIS ASSOCIATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Katrina Adams, president of the United States Tennis Association.

Mr. Speaker, the community in which I live, work, and represent is well-known for its production of high-profile and world renowned male athletes, individuals like Ernie Terrell, world heavyweight champion; basketball stars Doc Rivers, Isaiah Thomas, Mark Aguirre, Mickey Johnson, Kevin Garnett; footballer Darryl Stingley; and countless others who have excelled in athletics. All of them are males.

However, I take this opportunity to mention two females. One is Dorothy Gaters, the girls' basketball coach and athletic director at the John Marshall High School in Chicago, Illinois, the winningest high school basketball coach in the Nation. The other is Katrina Adams, who grew up not far from Marshall High School and whose parents still live in the East Garfield Park community.

Earlier this year, Katrina Adams became the first African American and the first former pro tennis player to become president and CEO of the United States Tennis Association, which is a 134-year-old organization that had barred Black athletes from its premier event—the U.S. National Championship, currently known as the U.S. Open—until 1950, when it allowed Althea Gibson to compete.

At 46, Adams is the youngest of the 53 people—among them, just four women—who have been the USTA leaders, an unpaid volunteer position.

In an article done by the Chicago Tribune, the writer states that, although her term lasts only 2 years, Adams understands that her being the face of the U.S. Tennis Association can have a significant impact, especially at a moment when the best female player in the world, Serena Williams, is also an African American.

Katrina is supposed to have said:

I think having an African American as president is a huge statement. It shows how far we have come within the USTA as a whole.

As family, friends, community leaders, old coaches, volunteers, and tennis fans gathered to congratulate and honor Katrina, they were reminded of something her mother, Yvonne, told her many years ago.

Her mother said:

Katrina, other little Black girls may not want to reach where you are, but they will want you to do well, and you are showing them they can do it if they put their minds to it.

Philip Hersh also mentions in his article something that Billie Jean King is supposed to have said to her friend Katrina. She said:

Katrina, if you can see it, you can be it.

Her being the first person of color as the U.S. Tennis Association president—and as a former pro besides—sends a strong message.

Her family, friends, and former classmates at Whitney Young High School, at Northwestern University, and in the East Garfield Park community were, indeed, a proud bunch as they gathered to salute the young lady they had watched grow up in the inner city, become a high school and college tennis star, a tennis pro, and, ultimately, the president of the United States Tennis Association.

Congratulations to you, Katrina. We are all proud of your accomplishments.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME EQUALITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing a bill to extend the Supplemental Security Income program, known as SSI, to Puerto Rico.

Of all the disparities that Puerto Rico faces because it is a territory and not a State, few are as damaging as its exclusion from SSI.

SSI provides monthly cash assistance to blind, disabled, or elderly individuals who have limited or no income. We are talking about the most vulnerable members of our society. SSI applies in all 50 States and in the District of Columbia. However, since the program's inception in 1974, it has not been extended to Puerto Rico. Instead, the Federal grant program, known as Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled, or AABD, applies in Puerto Rico.

The Social Security Administration sends monthly SSI payments directly to beneficiaries; whereas the AABD program is administered by the Puerto Rico Government, using an annual block grant provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The gap between the treatment that is provided to beneficiaries in the 50 States and the treatment that is provided to their fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico is, in a word, shocking.

According to the most recent Federal statistics, the average SSI payment to beneficiaries is \$540 a month and is close to \$650 a month for beneficiaries who are under the age of 18. By contrast, based on the most recent data that has been furnished to my office, the block grant that the Federal Government provides to the Puerto Rico Government is only \$33 million a year.

With this limited funding, the Puerto Rico Government provides an average payment to adult beneficiaries of just \$74 a month. Let me repeat that—\$540 a month in the States versus \$74 a month in Puerto Rico. To add insult to injury, the Puerto Rico Government is legally required to meet a 25 percent match in order to receive this block grant. The States, obviously, do not have to make any matching payments for their residents to receive SSI assistance.

In 2014, the GAO estimated that, if Puerto Rico were a State, it would receive up to \$1.8 billion a year under SSI. That is 54 times as much as the territory receives annually under AABD. Again, let me repeat that—54 times greater. The GAO estimated that, if Puerto Rico were a State, 300,000 island residents would qualify for SSI payments. Under the current program in Puerto Rico, only 35,000 individuals receive assistance. Thus, Puerto Rico's exclusion from the SSI program means that its government cannot provide decent monthly payments to residents who cannot support themselves. It also means that the Puerto Rico Government cannot assist hundreds of thousands of extraordinarily needy residents at all.

Those who seek proof of how Puerto Rico is harmed by its territory status need look no further than the treatment it receives under SSI. Those who want to comprehend why, roughly, 240,000 island residents relocated to the States between 2010 and 2014 in search of a better quality of life should realize that Puerto Rico's unequal treatment under key Federal programs, including—but not limited to—SSI, is a major contributing factor to this migration.

Let me be crystal clear on this point. Politicians in Puerto Rico and the States who defend Puerto Rico's current status must accept the undeniable truth that this status is harming the people of Puerto Rico. When they rationalize or excuse Puerto Rico's territory status, they are complicit in Puerto Rico's mistreatment.

But make no mistake. The era of inequality is coming to an end. I stand side by side with a large and growing army of proud U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico who refuse to accept such shameful treatment any longer. We believe in full equality for Puerto Rico under the American flag. We will fight for it until we achieve it, and we will achieve it soon.

BRING BACK OUR GIRLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I address the House to discuss a number of concerns that I believe we need to confront as quickly as possible.

Yesterday and today commemorate, sadly, the snatching of over 200 girls from northern Nigeria—the area in which the girls lost their innocence and their right to a good quality of life.