

Paul's Episcopal Church and Emmanuel Church on the Hill Episcopal Church in Alexandria.

As we remember Dr. Johnson, with his family present today in the Well of the House Chamber, it was this humble member of the Greatest Generation and his contributions that made the American Century possible. He is survived by his wife of 63 years Margaret Ann (Emhardt); three children Thomas Emhardt (Julianne Mueller), William Harrison (Tracy Schario), and the Rev. Sarah Nelson; and seven grandchildren—Gaelen, Caleb, Eliza, Keegan, and Maren Nelson and Natalie and Garrett Johnson.

We owe Dr. Johnson and his peers deep gratitude for their achievements and their courage—facing down incredible challenges. We live in the greatest country in the world because of men like Dr. Johnson—ones that always believed in America's promise for the future.

ECONOMIC CLIMATE IN BLACK AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus will present eight or nine speakers on the Democratic side in just a few minutes. I am the first of many who will be speaking.

We come to the floor today to express our deepest sympathy and support to the family of Freddie Gray and to the citizens of Baltimore, Maryland.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, the events in Baltimore are not just about police misconduct. It is about pervasive poverty. It is about unemployment, lack of opportunity, hopelessness, and despair.

Since the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson nearly 9 months ago, more than 25 bills have been introduced by members of the CBC that address the need for law enforcement accountability. Today, I call on my House and Senate colleagues to put aside partisanship and take up some or all of these bills. This issue has an impact on all of us.

We must address economic disparities that face Black communities all across the Nation. Baltimore, Mr. Speaker, is not unique.

The economic climate in Black America and the divide that has persisted for generations is due largely to our country's history of disparate treatment of African Americans and lack of opportunity.

While much of the country has experienced an economic recovery over the last 6 years, it has not reached the African American community.

Recently, the CBC and the Joint Economic Committee released a report on the economic challenges facing African Americans. African Americans are struggling and continue to face high rates of persistent poverty, unemployment, long-term unemployment, as

well as significantly lower incomes and slower wealth accumulation.

More than 400 counties in the United States suffer poverty rates greater than 20 percent. These rates have persisted now for more than 30 years. The median income of African American households is \$34,000, \$24,000 less than the median income of households. The median net worth of White households is 13 times the level for Black households. Black Americans are almost three times more likely to live in poverty.

At 10.1 percent, the current unemployment rate for Black Americans is double the rate for White Americans. Black Americans currently face an unemployment rate higher than the national unemployment rate reached during the recession.

African Americans are less likely to obtain education beyond high school than White students. They are less likely to earn a college degree. Even among college graduates, Blacks face worse job prospects than Whites. The unemployment rate for Black workers with at least a bachelor's degree is 5.2 percent, compared to 2.9 percent for White workers.

Forty-four percent of Black Americans own a home, compared to 74 percent of Whites.

In my home State of North Carolina, the unemployment rate for African Americans is 9.9 percent, based on an unemployment rate of 3.2 percent for Whites. The poverty rate for African Americans is 27.5 percent, while for Whites it is 12.6.

Right here, Mr. Speaker, in the District of Columbia, the median household income for African Americans is \$38,300 for Blacks and \$115,900 for Whites, a gap of \$77,000. The D.C. poverty rate is 27.4 percent for African Americans, compared to 7.6 percent for Whites.

Colleagues, these statistics tell the story. These numbers are staggering, troubling, and problematic. It is time for a renewed focus on Blacks in America and a need for real solutions on issues that have persistently plagued our communities.

I will end, Mr. Speaker, by quoting some excerpts from President Johnson's 1964 State of the Union Speech. And he said: "Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity."

"This administration today," he said, "here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort," he said.

"It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won."

President Johnson said: "The richest Nation on Earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it. One thou-

sand dollars invested in salvaging an unemployable youth today can return \$40,000 or more in his lifetime."

President Johnson said: "Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the State and local level and must be supported and directed by State and local efforts."

He said: "For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House."

"The program I shall propose," he said, "will emphasize this cooperative approach to help that one-fifth of all American families with incomes too small to even meet their basic needs."

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, January 8, 1964, from this Chamber.

IT IS SILLY SEASON IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, it is silly season again in Washington. It is that time of year when we have our annual budget debates and when we realize that only in Washington can an increase actually be considered a decrease.

Later today, we will vote on a bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs. That bill increases the Department's funding in real dollars from last year by 5.6 percent, and yet, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle claim it is a decrease, when, in fact, it is the highest level of VA funding ever provided to the Department.

But even worse, we have a Secretary of Veterans Affairs who is peddling this same intellectually dishonest line as well, the Secretary of a department in which negligence in the past year contributed to the deaths of veterans. Those are the words confirmed by the Office of the Inspector General.

And yet, despite the failure of the Department, the Secretary, earlier this week, had the audacity to go behind closed doors with members of only one party and claim that somehow the 6 percent increase being provided by our committee will, in fact, further the VA's failures of the past.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary has exhibited a level of audacity only seen in Washington. If we are honest, it is an audacity that reflects a style of leadership likely to fail—fail the VA, but most importantly, it is going to fail veterans across the United States because, you see, here is the real story.

We still have hundreds of thousands of veterans waiting for health care and for benefits. We know there is malfeasance in VA construction, and we know the VA continues to declare veterans and dependents dead when they are, in fact, alive. But here is the most important and the most offensive part of the

Secretary's messaging: in the midst of all this, this body has actually continued to trust the Secretary.

You see, when the VA Secretary came before our subcommittee, I asked him, point blank: What will it take to clear the veterans' benefits backlog? And he said: Resources. We need over 700 more employees. We need an increase in resources.

Now, I question that. I will be honest. I think there is a culture that has changed. I think we need infrastructure and IT that has to change. But he said resources, and so we trusted him. Our bill provides full funding for his request to clear the backlog, and yet he continues to say that our side of the aisle somehow, in providing the request that he made of our subcommittee, is going to fail his administration.

It is a despicable display of partisanship at the helm of a department that has no place for partisanship. And so a department that last year was defined not by its successes but by its failures is now needlessly defined by its politics.

And you know the one thing the Secretary did not ask for? Additional funding for the Office of the Inspector General, the office that uncovered the negligence, that reported to Congress on the negligence. Zero increase in funding was requested. So our subcommittee stepped in and we provided an additional \$5 million for that office.

Now, very importantly, we have to acknowledge that this gamesmanship, this leadership failure, should not reflect on the men and women who serve our veterans on the front lines every day. We have great men and women who serve in the VHA and the VBA. I have had the opportunity to visit with them.

Just last week, at our local VA hospital, an elderly veteran was brought to tears telling me how much he appreciated the loving care he was receiving from the employees of the hospital. We must acknowledge their service, their contribution, every day, just as we acknowledge the failure of leadership in Washington, D.C.

So you see, this week's dysfunction, this week's intellectually creative dishonesty, this week's audacity is just Washington "small ball" peddled by this administration, but with real consequences that undermine the confidence of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, only in Washington is a 5.6 percent increase actually a decrease. It is appropriations season. It is, indeed, silly season again in Washington, D.C.

THE HOUSE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my friend and chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, G.K. BUTTERFIELD, in offering condolences

to the parents and family members of Freddie Gray.

I also want to say to Ms. Toya Graham that I feel and can appreciate her anguish and the pain that she showed the world a few days ago.

I want to say to her son, Michael, that I have also felt his pain and anguish, having been on the receiving end of such discipline from my mother. But I want to say to him that he can rest assured that the love of his mother, her passion for his future, will pay great dividends if he continues to show the deference to her love and affection and her concern that he showed when he was the object of her frustrations.

Mr. Speaker, responding to the situation in Baltimore several days ago, President Obama said: "We can't just leave this to the police. I think there are police departments that have to do some soul-searching. I think there are some communities that have to do some soul-searching."

But, he went on to say: "I think, we, as a country, have to do some soul-searching."

I want to join President Obama in calling for the country to do some soul-searching.

Let's take a look at just a few of the institutions of learning in the Baltimore community.

I would like to call attention to one school, Frederick Douglass High School, a school that lists among its graduates the likes of Cab Calloway, Thurgood Marshall, a school that I understand that the father of the current mayor of Baltimore also attended.

I understand there are 789 students at Frederick Douglass High School today. Eighty-three percent of them are listed in U.S. News & World Report's index as economically disadvantaged, and only 53 percent of them are listed as proficient in English, only 44 percent proficient in algebra.

I understand that Carver Vocational Technical High is 100 percent minority, with 79 percent of the students economically disadvantaged.

Coppin Academy, 100 percent minority, with 77 percent economically disadvantaged.

Now, as we listen to all of the pundits, editorial writers reflect on what is taking place or has taken place in Baltimore, I would like to call attention to the lack of soul-searching that is taking place here in this body as we represent the people of America. We have just seen the conference report, or the budget, being proposed by the House Republicans. That conference agreement guts strategic investments in education, workforce training, public health, scientific research, advanced manufacturing, and public safety. It does nothing to help those Americans who are looking for jobs. It does nothing to boost paychecks of working Americans. It disinvests in America.

□ 1045

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FALL OF SAIGON

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the last century, a godless totalitarian ideology moved from theory to practice when Communists took over Russia and a global war against freedom began. In the following decades, this ideology slaughtered millions across what was the Soviet Union.

In the 1940s, Communists rolled through mainland China, bringing another reign of terror that killed millions more and that still today limits freedom for the Chinese people.

Also in the 1940s, Communists moved into Vietnam. Those living in northern Vietnam were its first victims. Like other lands under communism's iron grip, Hanoi's rulers killed hundreds of thousands of their citizens. Those who desired and had the means fled to the south.

Throughout the 20th century, America fought against totalitarian ideologies that stripped people of human rights and dignity.

After defeating fascists in World War II, we recognized communism as the single greatest threat to freedom. Indeed, well into the cold war, President Kennedy proclaimed to the world that we would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

The cold war at times flared hot, and in Southeast Asia, more than 58,000 Americans gave the last full measure of their devotion fighting for the freedoms for which their nation stands.

Today we mark the 40th anniversary of the tragic fall of Saigon. In doing so, we remember the sacrifices made by our Vietnam veterans and their families, sacrifices that continue to today, such as when a Gold Star mother or wife looks at the photograph of a son or husband who never came home, or when a veteran makes a trip to the local VA for chemotherapy for a cancer caused by Agent Orange, or when a congressional colleague notices he does not have full use of a limb because of the torture he endured as a POW, or when the 65-year-old veteran has the same repeated nightmares, or when a 40-something son or daughter envisions the father he or she never got to know. The sacrifices are noble but painful.

The cause they fought for lives on and will continue so long as humanity dreams of freedom, dreams like those of the thousands of boat people who risked their lives to escape Vietnam, including the 65 boat people President Reagan spoke of in 1982 who had the good fortune of being spotted by the aircraft carrier USS *Midway*. When they were picked up, they cried "Hello, American sailor. Hello, freedom man."