

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.

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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."

Since the last helicopter left the U.S. Embassy roof in Saigon 40 years ago, Vietnam has been under Communist control. And with Communist control has come a shameful human rights record. What was a hot spot in the cold war is now a cold spot for people aspiring to walk, to borrow a phrase from Hubert Humphrey, in "the warm sunshine of human rights."

Vietnam's postwar history began with a purge that resulted in the deaths of thousands. Hundreds of thousands of refugees escaped. Many died in the process, but many survived. Some made it to America, where they pursued the American Dream. They have undertaken diverse endeavors, from running small shops in Orange County, California, to fishing operations in Louisiana, to practicing medicine in places like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

For those who are still living under the Communist regime, they must be ever-fearful of a government all too willing to crush freedom. Political freedom. Religious freedom. Freedom of the press. Freedom in family life.

In Vietnam, Catholics, Buddhists, Falun Gong, and other religious minorities have been harassed, imprisoned, and persecuted for their faith. In Vietnam, hundreds of political prisoners are held in jail or under house arrest. The Vietnamese Government continues to restrain the press, and they have engaged in coercive population control practices.

Never forget: our servicemembers fought, and many died, to prevent the tragedies Communist rule would impose upon the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian people, the latter of whom suffered an outright genocide that killed millions.

We are grateful that our servicemembers were able to save thousands of Vietnamese.

To the Vietnam veterans who undertook Operation Frequent Wind 40 years ago this weekend in the chaotic days before Saigon fell, be proud you rescued 7,000 Americans and South Vietnamese. God alone knows the ripples in history that their having escaped will cause.

As we look to the future, let us have a final accounting for all our MIAs. Let us insist that if Vietnam desires to integrate further with the community of nations, then it must allow much greater freedom for its people. And let us hope that the people of Vietnam will not have to endure another four decades of repression and that one day, perhaps this decade, the freedom for which our servicemembers died will finally take root by the South China Sea.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California, Congressman BARBARA LEE, for her courtesy.

I join today in standing with my chair, Congressman BUTTERFIELD of the Congressional Black Caucus. I, as well, am overwhelmed with the pain that we have seen not only in Baltimore, which we have seen most recently, but in cities like Ferguson, in North Charleston, in New York, where we have seen the convergence of poverty and the need for criminal justice reform converge.

I too want to offer my sympathy to the family of Freddie Gray. We have watched them over the past couple of days. In the midst of their mourning to be able to stand up and call for peace, nonviolence, nonviolent protests, they should be honored.

And to those in Baltimore, and particularly my colleague from Maryland—I will call him Congressman CUMMINGS with the bullhorn politics, the bullhorn leadership—he should be commended for the stunning and outstanding engagement, that he touched the hearts and minds of his constituents, walked those streets, to be able to acknowledge the pain, the poverty, but that there is a better way, that there is a way toward the stars that we all want our children to have.

And, yes, to Ms. Graham, who wanted better for her son Michael. I want him not to be embarrassed but to be proud that he had a mother with such deep love that she wanted to take him away from doing it wrongly—not against protests, not against the quiet marching of the spirit of Dr. King, but to know that engaging in violence is intolerable and will not allow him to reach the very high heights that he can reach.

Today I stand here to acknowledge the convergence of the need for criminal justice reform and the deep and abiding poverty in the African American community. One in every six Americans is living in poverty, totaling 46.2 million people. This is the highest number in 17 years. Children represent a disproportionate amount of the United States poor population. It falls heavily on the African American community.

In my district, there are 190,000-plus living in poverty. It falls heavily on the African American community.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a standing invitation for the door to open and say, let's blame President Obama. President Obama has been a stellar leader on the questions of realizing the investment in people. From the stimulus that brought us out of the depths of collapse of the markets and a complete imploding of the capitalistic system, he provided the stimulus that moved us toward an economy where we were creating jobs.

But here we have in Congress this dastardly sequester that is cutting Head Start seats, not investing in infrastructure, not creating jobs or providing opportunities for our young people.

So today I say that there needs to be a call for action. That call for action is that this Congress must get rid of se-

quester and must look at the Baltimores and must look at the Fergusons and Houstons and L.A.s and New Yorks and cities across America and realize that we are coming upon a summertime. And if we don't act to invest in our children and to begin to give an agenda to release ourselves from poverty, we will have doomed ourselves.

And I would offer to say that the inertia of moving toward criminal justice reform in this Congress is unacceptable.

I call upon Members to come together collectively to be able to pass legislation, the Cadet bill that I have introduced, the Build TRUST bill. But, more importantly, I am calling upon our government to invest in our youth, to get rid of the poverty, to prepare them as they go into higher education, as they go into upper grades. We must have a program of summer jobs this summer, and we must have a collaborative effort with corporate America.

Wake up, corporate America. Wake up, corporate Baltimore. Wake up, corporate New York. Wake up, corporate Houston. There must be an investment in summer jobs, collaborating with the Federal Government to make a difference to lift families out of poverty. We do know that summer jobs with young people elevate families' ability to pay their bills and to provide resources for their families.

So if the story of Baltimore is any, it is one, don't jump to conclusions. Don't jump to conclusions that Freddie Gray tried to hurt himself. Don't jump to conclusions that these young people don't mean well. Don't jump to conclusions that they shouldn't have done what they have done. Jump to the conclusions that these are young people who are hungry and looking for leadership and are in pain, as Congressman CUMMINGS said.

Look for the opportunity for them. Help rebuild Baltimore. Help give them jobs. Help tell them that the improved relationships between police and community are going to be moved forward as a number one agenda for the United States Congress and this government that they call the United States of America.

Let us have a call to action—not of condemnation, but of action.

I want to thank the young people who nonviolently marched all over America, indicating Black lives matter and all lives matter. The Congressional Black Caucus stands to stamp out poverty, and we stand, Mr. Speaker, to bring opportunities to young people.

HONORING SANDERS-BROWN CENTER ON AGING

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Kentucky's Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, which was established in 1979 and is one of the original 10 National