

the highest ratio of Blacks to Whites in the country.

He was right, 57 percent.

We have no skinheads, we have no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the Internet. Well, someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.

Mr. Speaker, bigotry continues to exist in this country. This Congress should not pass any legislation, today or any other day, that would embolden those who continue to hold racist beliefs.

The Calvert amendment—the Calvert amendment—is misguided, and it emboldens bigotry. I ask my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, respectfully, let's defeat the Calvert amendment this afternoon, and even if the gentleman would consider to withdraw his amendment and not put this House through this turmoil today.

HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in a terrible attack, over 200 people were killed across these United States. This headline should lead every TV news show, hit the front pages, and generate outrage from across the country, but it did not appear. This is not make-believe. The news is real, but no one reported it.

We lose more than 80,000 people a year now to suicide and drug addiction overdose. That is over 200 people a day. Where is the news?

Now, these are the sudden and tragic deaths. Then there are the slow-motion deaths which we can't even count, those who have a mental illness and ended up homeless, or have a co-occurring chronic illness, such as diabetes or heart disease, and face that slow-motion death sentence. In fact, people with serious mental illness tend to die 25 years earlier than their cohorts.

And then there are the mentally ill who are victims of attacks. Last week, The Washington Post revealed how, in the first 6 months of this year, a person who was in mental health crisis was shot and killed every 36 hours by police. The vast majority were armed, but, in most cases, the police officers who shot them were not responding to reports of a crime. More often, they were called by relatives, neighbors, or other bystanders, worried that a mentally fragile person was behaving erratically. The crisis built, and it ended in death.

Further, the mentally ill are more likely to be the victims of violence, robberies, beatings, rape, and other crimes. These individuals are also 10 times more likely to be in jail than in a hospital.

If you are a minority, chances are your mental health treatment comes in a prison, not in a community health center.

Have we become so numb we no longer notice? Are we so numb, we no longer care?

Tragically, government tries to help, but, frankly, it is a mess. The chaotic patchwork of current government programs and Federal laws make it impossible for those with severe psychosis, schizophrenia, and serious mental illness, to get meaningful care.

For example, when someone with serious mental illness is haunted by delirium and hallucinations and doesn't even know they are ill, they frequently stop taking their needed medication. They don't follow up on appointments and their health declines. Our Federal laws prevent a caregiver from getting their loved one to the next appointment or to follow up on their care.

We need to provide treatment before tragedy and get these individuals help before their loved ones dial 911. The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 2646, provides millions of families the tools needed for effective care.

H.R. 2646 empowers parents and caregivers to access care before the mental illness reaches the most severe stage. It fixes the shortage of inpatient beds, so patients in mental health crisis can get proper care, not be sent to a jail, not tied to an emergency room gurney, and not sent home.

It helps reach underserved and rural populations. It expands the mental health workforce. It drives evidence-based care. It provides alternatives to institutionalization. It integrates primary and behavior care.

It increases physician volunteerism, advances critical medical research, brings accountability to mental health and substance abuse parity, and it also provides crisis intervention grants for police officers and first responders. This training helps law enforcement officials recognize individuals who have a serious mental illness and learn how to properly intervene.

My bill eliminates wasteful and ineffective programs and directs money where it is needed most. It restructures the Federal mental health system to focus on serious mental illness rather than behavioral wellness and feel-good fads that yield no meaningful results yet cost taxpayers millions each year.

My bill elevates effective programs and helps communities adopt programs to stop the revolving door of mental health crisis, violence, incarceration, ER visits, and abandonment.

This bipartisan legislation, now with more than 50 cosponsors, marks a new dawn for mental health in America. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 2646. Let's no longer turn a blind eye and, instead, help those that need it the most.

Whether on the fast road or the slow road, the 200-plus deaths per day, the 80,000 deaths per year and unknown number of victims is far, far too many. Compassion calls us to act—and act

now. The cost of delay is deadly. For those families who are suffering, how can we look them in the eye and defend our delays to act?

CONFEDERATE FLAG AMENDMENTS

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, there are days in this House when morality and the values of our country, as articulated in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of our country, summon us to vote as Americans, as moral representatives, and as representatives of the values of our country. Today is such a day, my colleagues.

Three Democratic amendments were adopted earlier in the consideration of the Interior bill that would end the practice of displaying or selling Confederate battle flags and flag merchandise in national parks and National Park Service cemeteries. Those amendments were adopted by voice vote. They reflect the strong consensus in this country and, hopefully, in this Congress, that a symbol of slavery, secession, segregation, and secession has no place in our national parks or in the cemeteries whose grounds have been hallowed by the veterans who rest there after having served and given their lives in defense of freedom and justice and the values of our country.

Unbelievably, however, Mr. Speaker, several hours ago, in the dark of night, the chairman of the Interior Subcommittee offered an amendment on this floor that would effectively strike those amendments which surely reflect the values to which all of us have risen our hand and sworn to protect.

Today, on the anniversary of the ratification of the 14th Amendment to our Constitution—how ironic that we would meet this vote on this day—which enshrined the principle of equality for all Americans, we have this shameful Confederate battle flag amendment on our floor.

This amendment would keep in place a policy that allows Confederate battle flags in our national parks and National Park Service cemeteries, a symbol, as my colleague JIM CLYBURN, the assistant leader and the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and an extraordinary Representative in South Carolina, said yesterday was so offensive and hurtful to so many millions of our fellow citizens and our fellow colleagues in this body.

Even in South Carolina today, where the Confederacy was born, that flag is being taken down from the State capitol grounds after both Republican-controlled houses of that State's assembly voted to remove it.

Certainly—certainly—on this day we ought not to see a Republican-led Congress move in the opposite direction. My colleagues, together, not as Republicans and Democrats, but as Americans deeply committed to the values of

equality and justice and opportunity for all, we ought to remove that flag from our national parks, the cemeteries where our veterans rest and, I would say further, all public places. That includes the United States Capitol.

And I support my friend Representative THOMPSON's resolution that sits now in the House Administration Committee that would remove the flag of Mississippi, which contains the Confederate battle flag, until such time as Mississippians, as South Carolinians did yesterday, make a statement and remove that from their flag.

I urge my colleagues, my fellow Americans, the 434 of my colleagues that have raised their hand and sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, I urge my colleagues, let us do the right thing and reject this amendment and send a powerful message about what America truly represents: equality, justice, respect for one another, freedom for all.

Let us make America—every American—proud of us this day and reject the amendment adopted in the dead of night.

NEGOTIATIONS ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

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

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the negotiations taking place right now in Switzerland over Iran's nuclear capability. With all that has been going on lately, I fear not enough attention is being paid to what I believe is one of the most important issues facing our country right now.

Last week, the Obama administration quietly announced yet another deadline extension to the multilateral negotiations over Iran's nuclear capability, and this week, negotiators blew past that deadline once again.

Of course, the goal for the United States and our allies must be to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. However, recent reports out of Switzerland have raised concerns that our negotiators have already conceded too much on major points like uranium enrichment, economic sanctions relief, and inspection access.

Mr. Speaker, the very fact that we keep extending the deadline tells you all you need to know about the priorities at play for this administration. It seems that President Obama and Secretary Kerry are so concerned with striking a deal—any deal—that they are unwilling to walk away from a bad one as deadlines keep passing.

The Boston Globe reported that negotiators have spent their downtime speculating which movie stars would play them in a Hollywood movie about the Iran deal.

If this is true, Americans should be outraged. This is an extraordinarily important issue that will have an extraordinarily far-reaching effect on

this country and the world for many years to come.

The fact is we have had extension after extension and concession after concession to the point that I am not sure a good deal is even possible at this point.

A few months ago, I traveled to the Middle East with the Speaker as part of his delegation to the region, and we visited countries that would be directly affected by dealing with a nuclear Iran—Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia.

Our allies in the region are rightfully concerned that what is being brokered isn't good at all.

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We cannot forget how high the stakes are here. If a bad deal is ratified, we aren't just talking about a nuclear armed Iran.

We are talking about setting in motion a nuclear race, a chain of events that could allow multiple countries in this very volatile region of the world wanting to become nuclear as well.

And after seeing the international community reward Iran's hostility and obstinance with a nuclear deal, who would blame them?

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership of my colleagues in this Chamber and in the Senate. And I agree with Senator CORKER, who is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who wrote a letter to the President, "Walking away from a bad deal at this point would take courage, but it would be the best thing for the United States, the region, and the world."

We may not be able to control the outcome in Switzerland, but we can control how we respond if a bad deal is put forward.

This Congress can have the final say whether or not to lift sanctions in Iran. It can have the final say on the deal, itself, by way of a resolution of disapproval.

I believe Members of Congress must prepare to stand up and have the courage that it would take to stop a bad Iranian deal from happening. For some, this will take a lot of courage, but it is necessary.

We cannot allow President Obama and Secretary Kerry to put their desire for a legacy achievement above the best interests of this Nation and our allies.

CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG SYMBOLISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, had this Confederate battle flag prevailed in war 150 years ago, I would not be standing here today as a Member of the United States Congress. I would be here as a slave. Over the last 150 years, we have made tremendous progress in this country, but we still have a long way to go.

As the tragic events in Charleston, South Carolina, illustrated, when nine God-fearing, churchgoing African American citizens were killed by a White supremacist, there is much work that needs to be done to eradicate the cancer of racial hatred.

When Dylann Roof committed this act of domestic terror, his emblem was the Confederate battle flag.

Later on today we are going to have a vote on the legitimacy of this flag. On Tuesday, it appeared that House Republicans were prepared to do the right thing in support of three amendments to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the purchase, sale, or display of the Confederate battle flag on National Park Service land.

But less than 24 hours later, House Republicans reversed course in the dead of night under cover of darkness to introduce an amendment supporting the Confederate battle flag, which is nothing more than a symbol of racial hatred and oppression.

There are some in this House who have made the argument that the Confederate battle flag is about heritage and tradition. I am perplexed.

What exactly is the tradition of the Confederate battle flag that we are supporting? Is it slavery? Rape? Kidnap? Treason? Genocide? Or all of the above.

The Confederate battle flag is nothing more than a symbol of racial hatred and oppression. And I stand here with chills next to it because the red in this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by Africans who were killed when attempted to be kidnapped and thrown into the institution of slavery.

The red on this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by millions of Africans who died during the Middle Passage when being transported from Africa to America.

The red on this flag is a painful reminder of the blood that was shed by African American slaves who were beaten, raped, lynched, and killed here in America as a result of the institution of slavery.

What exactly is the tradition the Confederate battle flag represents?

We were sent here as leaders to make decisions on the morality of America. And where we are, notwithstanding our painful history and the legacy of slavery, we have an opportunity today to make a definitive statement to be leaders, not individuals who cower in fear of some narrow-minded Americans who aren't aware that the South lost the war 150 years ago.

Let's choose racial progress over racial poison. Let's choose harmony over historic amnesia. Let's choose togetherness over treason. Let's come together not as Democrats or Republicans, not as Whites or Blacks, not as northerners or southerners.

Let's come together as Americans and vote down the Calvert amendment and relegate the Confederate battle flag to the dustbin of history, which is where it belongs.