

on apprenticeships and vocational education and training.

As co-chair of the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus, I applaud these international partnerships and recognize their role in helping us to close our Nation's skills gap.

The skilled trades are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States, with recent data citing 550,000 jobs open in the trade and transportation sectors and 246,000 jobs open in manufacturing.

Working with our allies to address this issue will undoubtedly benefit our economy and allow us to remain globally competitive.

I am confident in our ability to make continued progress in the area of workforce development and am grateful for the assistance of our international partners.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to have an important conversation, a conversation that is long overdue, a conversation that is crucial to healing America's deep racial wounds, our topic being the Confederate battle flag and why racial symbols matter.

The Charleston 9 killings focused many of our attention on the significant appropriateness and bigoted history of this flag. In 2015, why do so many still revere a flag that tolerated the shackling of people because of their skin, a flag that allowed human beings to be counted as three-fifths of a person, a flag that was flown during lynchings, the holding of children, and one that symbolized a movement to deny education and equal treatment under our laws?

Fifty years since Selma, we think of the Freedom Riders, marchers, boycotters, protesters, and policymakers who pointed our Nation in a more positive direction. They knew it was time to reject the traditions of the past.

The civil rights movement symbolized the quest of equality and a change in mood for America. Thousands from all backgrounds had the courage to join in peaceful protests, lunch counter sit-ins, and boycotts at the expense of being jailed, beaten, or killed. They did this for one Nation and one flag.

And in the way of these Americans stood those who believed in the perseverance of inequality, who believed in an America of White and colored, an

America of two flags, and the Confederate battle flag represented their America.

Jim Crow America saw States that seceded from the Union, reacting to the growth of the civil rights movement, with the use of the Confederate battle flag as the representation of their resistant movement.

In 1956, the State of Georgia incorporated the battle flag into its official State flag design. The movement continued into the sixties, where it met renewed and intensified opposition, opposition that waved the Confederate battle flag in the name of continued racial oppression.

In 1961, just 2 months after the sentencing of nine students arrested for a lunch counter sit-in in Rock Hill, South Carolina, the Confederate battle flag was raised over South Carolina's State house during a centennial celebration of the Civil War's opening.

That same year, in neighboring Georgia, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes were the first two African American students to be admitted to the University of Georgia. Their admission only came after a court order sent from Federal court.

Eleven days after arriving on campus, Hunter and Holmes were attacked by a mob of White rioters who threw rocks and bottles at them while waving the rebel flag. The attacks were so fierce that the dean of students suspended both Hunter and Holmes for their own safety.

Now, even with me highlighting this violence, we are told that the stars and bars are about heritage. That heritage, Mr. Speaker, is not so subtle a reminder to African Americans that they are less than—maybe not three-fifths of a person, but still not equal.

This is a reminder that there are two classes of citizens. And despite our Declaration of Independence clearly stating that all men are created equal, this is a reminder that there is a lesser class and will never be equal.

But why are we honoring the heritage and flag of the hooded night riders of the Klan at our State houses and in this Congress instead of the flag of the Freedom Riders who died for a single, fair, and equal America?

Two years after Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I have dream" speech before 600 civil rights marchers, including our friend and colleague from Georgia, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, a different group of civil rights heroes were greeted by police officers in Selma, Alabama, proudly displaying the Confederate flag on the side of their helmets.

These officers brutally beat the marchers, and their actions were a reminder that Dr. King's speech had not yet resonated in the hearts of those who needed to hear it most.

But it was the undeterred resilience of the protesters who refused to back down and refused to resort to violence that persevered. It was the love, the respect, and the mutual understanding

that displayed what was the strongest symbol of strength, honor, and heritage than the Confederate battle flag.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way since 1965, but we still have a ways to go. We must move forward. The needed progress, however, will not come if the Federal Government continues to provide American citizens with reminders of our hateful and oppressive past in a manner that legitimizes such hate.

I am glad to host this important Special Order hour with my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) to talk about where we go from here and why we continue to give energy to symbols of hate and division.

I yield to the kind gentleman from Newark, New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois.

This is a very timely topic, as we have seen what has transpired in our Nation over the past several weeks. It is incredible to me how fast this issue has moved over the past month. But it always seems that it takes a horrific act in this country for us to wake up and realize that maybe something isn't right.

□ 1930

Nine people at church study on a Wednesday night, not knowing their fate, were gunned down in cold blood by someone who actually said: You know, they were so nice to me, I almost didn't do it, but I had to.

Last week in South Carolina, there was a monumental step in removing the Confederate flag from its State capitol, where it had shamefully flown for 54 years; but here in our Nation's Capitol last week, Republicans tried to go back to the future.

House Republicans had to pull a vote on a spending bill because some of their Members opposed a measure that would ban Confederate flags from national cemeteries, and when the Democratic leader, NANCY PELOSI, presented an opportunity for Republicans to do the right thing and immediately remove the Confederate flag from the Capitol Grounds, they punted.

South Carolina, the birthplace of the Confederacy, had the courage to do what the House Republicans did not, remove that dreaded symbol. It is the symbol of an incomprehensible hate, a hate that manifested itself in a massacre. Since that unfortunate day 1 month ago, we, as a nation, have been forced to look inward at who we are and who we want to be.

Mr. Speaker, out of this immense grief of that dark day in Charleston came a resounding call throughout our Nation to remove the Confederate flag and other symbols of racism and racial supremacy. For many, the removal of these symbols is a logical step in the trajectory of our Nation, a necessary action on the path toward the more perfect Union.

For others, calls to remove these symbols of hate are seen as an attack

on the Southern identity, heritage, and culture; but arguing that the Confederate flag is a symbol of Southern pride celebrates a single homogenous culture.

It means listening to only some voices at the expense of others. It means ignoring the African American experience throughout our Nation's history from the dark period of slavery to the civil rights movement to the present day.

According to a report by the Equal Justice Initiative, 3,959 African Americans in 12 States were killed by the terror of lynching between 1877 and 1950, 3,959 Americans lynched.

If we are going to refer to the past and debate over the Confederate flag, certainly, we need to take all of this into account. The Confederate flag has always stood for racial supremacy and bigotry, and if we are to realize our Nation's promise of justice and full equality, we cannot embrace this symbol. Eradicating symbols of hatred, violence, and cruel oppression steeped in racism is a critical step to confronting prejudice in our society.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have all heard complaints that this debate does not matter and that removing the Confederate flag and other symbols of hatred is a distraction from the larger problems facing our Nation, such as rampant gun violence.

I agree that significantly more must be done to address racism and persistent inequality in our Nation. I agree that we need meaningful gun reform from expanding background checks to reducing unchecked online ammunition purchases. I agree that we need to create jobs, reduce wealth disparities, and expand educational opportunities.

But symbols matter; symbols legitimize public opinion and, in doing so, entrench attitudes and beliefs. At the same time, they create a meaning, shape actions, and connect us to one another. Just as a symbol can connect us, they can tear us apart.

Mr. Speaker, as I go to my seat, I was talking to my staff the other day about this and how much we were happy to see that flag lowered. The symbol is gone, but the sentiment remains.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congressman PAYNE, for those words. Right now, it is my pleasure to introduce the Congressman from North Carolina and the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank you, Congresswoman KELLY and Congressman PAYNE, for your leadership. Your leadership is very much appreciated, and your constituents in your respective districts should be very proud of each one of you. I know the Congressional Black Caucus is proud of you.

For the past several weeks, Mr. Speaker, the Nation has been focused on the Confederate battle flag. Most fair-minded Americans have been ask-

ing the question: Why is this flag continuing to fly on State grounds and Federal lands? And why are policy-makers refusing to squarely address this issue?

The Confederate battle flag, Mr. Speaker, represents an era of American history that ended—or at least it should have ended—150 years ago. This flag represents the years following President Lincoln's election. Those years starting in December of 1860 saw 11 Southern States leave the Union.

The fancy name for their leaving the Union, Mr. Speaker, was called secession, but the reality was that these Southern States were rebelling. They were in rebellion against the Union. They organized a so-called government called the Confederate States of America. They took up arms, Mr. Speaker, and they fought against the Union for 4 long years until they surrendered.

They then returned to the Union. The Confederate flag represents that era where Southern States were resisting freedom for 4 million slaves. There continues to be elements today in our society who subscribe to separation of the races—how unfortunate. There continues to be elements in our society who believe in White supremacy.

The question now, Mr. Speaker, is: Do we constructively address the question of hate groups in America? Do we continue to insist that other States remove symbols of White supremacy as South Carolina has done? Or do we continue to simply ignore racism?

Other States continue to display Confederate flags, and even in this Capitol—even in this Capitol—you will find eight statues of Confederate soldiers who fought against the Stars and Stripes.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon every American to bury for good the dark history of slavery and bigotry. We are a great nation, and we will be even greater when we can judge our neighbor on the content of their character and not on the color of their skin.

Let's remove these symbols from our view. I thank each one of the floor managers.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congressman BUTTERFIELD, for those fine words. Many questions, many questions: Why are they still holding on? Is it just heritage and tradition? Or is it something more?

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Illinois, and my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey, for their important leadership they are exercising here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to speak about why symbols matter and why this symbol, the Confederate flag, must not stop with the flag, but must also go to what to do not only about the flag, but about the guns that took down the Charleston 9.

To be sure, symbols matter, Mr. Speaker. To take two of the most powerful symbols in the world, the cross and the Star of David, we know well these symbols can sometimes mean everything. We also know that the Confederate flag is a symbol of a different and lower order.

A symbol stands for more than itself; the symbol tells a story. The religious symbols evoke tears; they evoke joy, and they evoke their own set of stories. The Confederate flag, when it led to the extraordinary tragedy of the Charleston 9 will always—should always—make us think of the gun that was responsible for the Charleston 9—not just the symbol, but the story behind the symbol.

In the 19th century, the flag signaled the importance of slavery. In the 20th century, it had a different meaning. Robert E. Lee had told his soldiers:

Put down the flag. We are one Union now.

He was, in a real sense, the counterpart to Abraham Lincoln, who was trying to draw us together after Lee had lost that war.

In the 20th century, the flag was revived. It was revived by Southern Democrats—Dixiecrats, as they called themselves. It has been, in the 20th century and, now, the 21st century, a symbol of discrimination and racism. No matter what it stood for in the 19th century about heritage, it lost that meaning when, in the 20th century, George Wallace raised it and said “segregation now” and “segregation forever.” Nobody who now speaks of heritage then said: Wait a minute, Governor Wallace, don't take away our heritage.

Only when African Americans have the nerve to raise the notion, after we lost nine good people in Charleston, does it somehow now become a symbol of heritage.

I will give Senator MITCH McCONNELL some credit. He wants to remove the statue of Jefferson Davis from the Kentucky State Capitol, but when asked about removing the Jefferson Davis statue from the United States Capitol, Mr. McCONNELL grew silent.

We have got to come to grips with what this flag meant to this boy who used a gun. I am not going to forget those who died and what we owe those who died.

The Dixiecrats bolted from Harry S. Truman when Truman refused to embrace their racism. These were Southern Democrats, and we owe them the 21st century meaning of the Confederate flag.

Mr. Speaker, why are we talking about this symbol and not another symbol? The other symbol is the gun in America.

The grace of the people of Charleston so overwhelmed the country that there were many who were simply grateful that, instead of bursting forward with rage, they showed their extraordinary Christian heritage, the heritage they undoubtedly shared with the gunman. We were so grateful, all of us, and so proud that we have not talked about

what took the lives of these nine good people.

Well, I want to talk about it because the Confederate flag for me now will always represent those nine people and the gun that took their lives. That 21-year-old kid didn't know anything about them except their Christian love when they invited him into their sanctuary.

But, he knew about what that flag stood for, and he raised that flag before he went into that sanctuary.

□ 2000

We must not forget not only the flag—we cannot live by symbols alone—we must not forget the gun that took down the Charleston 9.

Now, I understand—I read—that Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOHEY are interested in reviving their gun safety legislation. There are several bills here in the House that do that in one form or another.

We know what happened. There was a breakdown in the background check system, which is why this young man was even able to get a gun. He would have been denied a gun if those who opposed any bill hadn't assured that the bill would have only a 3-day time period, during which, if you couldn't find something on the individual, then he got his gun, no matter who he was. That is how he got his gun.

There are some of us who know full well that the Confederate flag has done more than put the flag back on the agenda—on the Nation's agenda—it has put gun safety once again on the agenda.

I must say, I don't believe we, who celebrate the extraordinary grace of the families of the Charleston 9, owe them only our speeches about the flag. They probably, once they saw it come down, have moved on; and now, they have only their loved ones to think about.

If I were one of them, I would wonder: What are those who celebrate the flag coming down going to do about making sure that, never again, will people like our loved ones have to suffer because of gunfire?

The flag is the symbol that is important to raising our consciousness in the long run. If all we have is our memory of the symbol and not why that symbol became important, then we will leave on the table a real memorial to the Charleston 9.

I appreciate the time.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman HOLMES. I am so glad that you and Congressman PAYNE brought up the issue of the gun because we cannot forget that either. I look at Charleston as when racism and hate found the gun.

At this time, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), our former head of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I want to thank my colleagues, Congressman

PAYNE and Congresswoman KELLY, for leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour tonight.

Mr. Speaker, if you have not noticed, the people of this country are fed up. Quite frankly, so am I. We are at a point in our Nation's history when we can no longer give lip service to equality and opportunities to succeed. We must take action to show we mean what we say; otherwise, it is nothing more than empty rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, the Confederate flag is more than just a piece of fabric. It is more than just a visual representation of the Confederacy or part of the storied history of the South. If that were true, we would not be having this conversation today. We would not have buried nine Americans murdered because of the color of their skin, and the Confederate battle flag would still be flying in the State of South Carolina.

Let's be honest about the history of the Confederate battle flag. While the majority of this House may want to ignore the facts and rewrite history, we will not be ignored. The Confederate battle flag and any adaptation of it is a painful reminder of intimidation, torture, and murder for all of us in the Black community. It is a flying symbol of hatred and injustice that tells Black and Brown people in this country: Your lives have no value, and you don't matter.

It is an embarrassment to all Americans that the majority of this House introduced a spending amendment which included language allowing the battle flag on Federal properties.

It is just plain shameful that they would go even further and use procedure to stifle a motion to openly discuss a ban of the Confederate battle flag imagery from the Capitol Grounds.

How can the Members of the majority of this House continue to say that they represent all Americans when they refuse to have a real discussion about what is really happening in our country? Have we learned nothing from what has happened in the past few weeks?

In a June Gallup poll, African Americans ranked race relations as the most important issue facing the United States. Will taking down the Confederate battle flag immediately change this perspective? Absolutely not—but it will certainly do more than letting it continue to fly.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we do away with lip service. It is time we listen to our constituents and take real action toward healing the racial wounds of this country. It is time we move forward.

The flag must come down.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman FUDGE for her eloquent words and the truth of what happened in Congress last week and what we need to do to go forward.

At this time, I yield to the gentlewoman from Houston, Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the managers of this very

Special Order and my words to them and to this House. I want you to take note of the spirit in which these Members have come.

If our constituents are seeing us and watching us, if those who agree with us are watching, no one has come with anger and a cry of hysteria. They have come with a reasoned request and pronouncement of the wrongness of the present situation in this House.

Let me say that it was in 1864 that the States were given the call to send forward two statutes to come to represent their States in the United States Congress. In addition, we know that the United States Congress has a number of flags representing various States.

This was to be the people's House, and the people's House would reflect the people of the United States of America. History should be something that grows with the Nation and reflects the goodness of the Nation. Yes, there is history that should be taught, such as the ugliness and violence of the slave history; but it is not to be honored.

I join my colleagues today to be able to call for the taking down of signs of Confederacy in the United States Capitol—in particular, as I am in the House of Representatives, in the people's House.

Let me give you a credible basis upon which to do so, why this Supreme Court decision has been so ignored. Let me cite it for my colleagues, Walker III v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, issued on June 18, 2015—ironically, the day after the martyrdom of nine wonderful African Americans practicing their Christian faith.

This particular decision indicates that the State of Texas was to be supported. This was a case that engaged many of our constituents in Texas. We organize and galvanize.

I want to thank Dr. Clark, the president of the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Reverend Max Miller, who came up as we argued this case. We were convincing. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles board agreed that a Confederate license plate issued by the State of Texas would be offensive and would be considered, in essence, a public action or public speech.

For those who want to raise the question of the First Amendment, this cry that we, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, are making is perfectly constitutional and legitimate. We are talking about flags that are flown on State property or Federal property.

This caucus should be congratulated. It is succinct in its argument; it is detailed in its argument, and no First Amendment opposition can be raised because the Supreme Court of the United States has said that we can deny utilizing the Confederate flag that may be considered State action as it is placed on Federal lands on the Federal property here.

Our colleagues, in particular HAKEEM JEFFRIES and Mr. HUFFMAN and others, understood that when they acted last week. Now, the considerate thing to have done is there are amendments to stay in place, the Interior bill to be voted on, and the right thing would have been done because they argued the point that this was State or Federal action.

We now come again to try and clarify for our colleagues that these flags should come down. In the privileged resolutions that have gone on last week, they made the point very clear that it was an insult to the dignity of the House.

I have introduced H. Res. 342 that I hope will complement, and it is one that talks about the enhancement of unity in America and stands on the Walker decision and, in particular, makes it very clear that divisive symbols—license plates, specialty license plates, replicas, and flags—on public buildings or government property and symbols on State or Federal action, State public speech—that is a speech of those you represent—should not be allowed.

How divisive is that point of view? It is not. The divisiveness is those that stand on a false sense of history, yet want to offend those who likewise have great leadership.

Let me make this point about the battle flag, this Confederate flag. Might I ask the question: Have southerners not fought in the War of 1812, in World War I, in World War II, in the Korean war, in the Hungarian war in the fifties, and in Vietnam and shed their blood under this flag, have they not been honored when they have shed their blood?

Not only that, when Confederate soldiers died, they were honored appropriately in graves where those who desired to honor that shedding of the blood were allowed to do so. We did not run into the funerals of those Southern fallen soldiers and cast upon them and curse them and deny them. They were allowed to be honored appropriately, and they now go into the annals of history.

When you understand what grounds they stood on, what their general stood on, such as Jefferson Davis, who called the individuals who were slaves as unprofitable savages—that is what one general who has been honored has called them, “unprofitable savages”—is that the history that we should be honoring?

Is that what we should be lifting up? Is that what should be placed in the place of honor in the United States Congress? Is that engaged in the uplifting of the dignity of the House? Or is it insulting the dignity of the House?

To my colleagues, I stand with you today to join in trying to create an understanding of the rightness of the work of our colleagues last week on the Interior bill, of the rightness of the Congressional Black Caucus going, as someone would say, on and on and on

about this flag; and my good friend from New Jersey said it is symbols, and we need to bridge the gap of the inequity and wealth, we need education, we need jobs.

Let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus and my colleagues and the Democratic Caucus and good will Republicans are fighting for jobs—or should be—fighting for education. We are not languishing along the side highway of life. We fought to maintain the ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act. We are not ignoring the other desires of our constituents.

Let me close on this final point, and I am glad that my colleague from the District of Columbia raised it, and Congresswoman KELLY has been a leader, and Congresswoman KELLY, let's rise again, and that is the horror of gun violence.

□ 2015

Let me say to Director Comey, since I am on the Judiciary Committee, thank you for your honesty, but let me make it very clear that we suffered this loophole because of the opposition to the sensibleness of the Brady anti-gun violence legislation.

Imbedded in it was this nonsensical point that, if I don't hear from you, then I am going to sell it. Who is selling it? The gun store.

I have no opposition to our fellow citizens who make their living and provide for their families by selling guns. I do have opposition to the evil and vile perpetrator who went into that Mother Emanuel Church and killed illegally with a gun that he should not have had.

He did so because the 3-day time had expired, because there was a time when the NICS was closed—that is the entity that the FBI relies upon—and the 3 days expired, and the owner said, “I am going to sell the gun.”

This week I will be introducing a single piece of legislation—and I ask my colleagues to join me—I know there are many other bills—to eliminate the 3-day period of discretion, that no discretion will exist. They either answer the question that he or she is eligible or it is denied.

So on the graves of these wonderful martyrs, I stand in honor of them. I mourn them, and I mourn for their families. I say to them: We will never forget.

Once and for all, bring the flag down and remove these items in this place of honor that have denigrated and considered one race of people vile and unequal.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE. Always detailed and insightful. Thank you for all of your work on the Judiciary Committee. It is very much appreciated and hailed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES), who took center stage last week as we discussed and worked toward the removal of the flag.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I want to thank my good friend, the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois, ROBIN KELLY, for once again presiding over this important CBC Special Order hour, as well as her co-anchor, the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey, who is right across the Hudson River, and who so ably serves the communities of Newark and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, this evening we have heard from so many distinguished members of the Congressional Black Caucus, most recently from the gentlewoman from Texas, with whom I serve on the Judiciary Committee, about the importance of the moment in time in which we find ourselves right now related to not just the Confederate battle flag, but perhaps more importantly: What is the legacy that we want to have as Americans, as Members of Congress, in dealing with the complicated issue of race?

It is an honor and a privilege to once again have the chance to come to the House floor to have this conversation.

This is a most distinguished venue from which to speak to the American people, an appropriate one, I would add, given the House's constitutional relationship to the people of America, this, of course, being the only institution that was envisioned by the Founding Fathers as one in which the people serving in the institution would be directly elected by the people.

The Senate's Members, of course, in its original constitutional version, were elected by the State legislature. Then, of course, the Presidency, to this day, is a vehicle through which the individual is selected by the Electoral College.

So this is the people's House, the institution most intimately connected to the people of America and the place where we should be able to speak truth to power.

We witnessed that last week as we were forced, unfortunately, to discuss the issue of the Confederate battle flag at a moment when people of all races—Democrats and Republicans, Blacks, Whites, the extraordinary leadership from the Governor of South Carolina, and the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina, JIM CLYBURN—came together.

At the moment when the Confederate battle flag was coming down in South Carolina, there were Members of this House trying to lift it up.

It was quite unfortunate that we needed to detour from this moment that we were having in America, led in South Carolina, to address the battle flag issue on this House floor; but I am hopeful that, as we move forward now in a more productive way, we can begin to confront some of the public policy challenges that we face in America that supporters of the Confederate battle flag have fought against.

As others have detailed during the presentation here today, the battle flag, which met its initial defeat in 1865 at the end of the Civil War, remained

largely dormant in American history until 1954 in the Supreme Court's decision of *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

It was decided that this facade of separate and equal was constitutionally suspect and that African Americans were being denied the opportunity of being educated in quality public schools in the Deep South and in other places in America.

Really, it was in the mid-fifties and then into the early sixties when the Confederate battle flag was resurrected as a symbol of the segregationists who were fighting to uphold Jim Crow.

It was a symbol of those who were fighting to stop the efforts of courageous individuals like Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who in 1965 was the co-chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

It was a symbol of those who were trying to fight efforts by JOHN LEWIS and others to make sure that the franchise—the right to vote—was color-blind in nature and that the 15th Amendment could actually be brought to life all throughout America and in the Deep South, where there were those who were trying to prevent African Americans from being able to vote. The battle flag was resurrected in the fifties and in the sixties to stop certain things from happening.

It seems to me that, rather than having the discussion about whether it should come down, no reasonable person can take the position that it should have a place of honor. So it is extraordinary to me that we had to take to the House floor last week and have to come to the House floor today to continue to address this issue.

Hopefully, reason will prevail over the next couple of weeks or the next couple of days—even prior to the August recess—and we can move beyond the Confederate battle flag issue and address some important, substantive issues that many would argue remain as part of the legacy of the Confederacy. We don't want to see the ghosts of the Confederacy invading the United States Congress from a policy perspective.

Those nine souls—God-fearing, church-going African Americans—who were killed simply because of the color of their skin died because of someone who charged into that church with the intention of sparking a race war that was inspired, in part, by the Confederate battle flag.

One of the things that has happened as a result of that tragedy is the battle flag has come down, but that is just the beginning of the work that we need to do in response to that tragedy and the conditions that so many people find themselves in all across America.

As has been mentioned, we have got to confront the gun violence issue that we have in the United States. How can it be that we have 5 percent of the world's population, but 50 percent of the world's guns?

It is estimated that we have more than 285 million guns in circulation.

Nobody can give you an exact estimate because a chokehold has been placed around the Federal agencies charged with preventing gun violence and dealing with gun safety in America. It is an incredible act of legislative malpractice, but it is estimated that we have got over 285 million guns in America.

Isn't it reasonable, particularly in the aftermath of this tragedy in Charleston, South Carolina, that we come together and figure out a way to prevent those guns, consistent with the Second Amendment, from falling into the hands of individuals who would do us harm? It seems to me to be a reasonable thing that we can do as Americans.

It also seems important that we would find a way 50 years after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to stop trying to prevent Americans from exercising their sacred franchise and participating in American democracy.

Yet, something happened in the aftermath of 2008, a real interesting moment in November of that year, that seemed to have shocked a whole lot of people across this country. As a result, 2 years later, when there was a midterm election, subsequent to that, there was an outbreak with this concern of voter fraud, fabricated because no one can point to any evidence of an epidemic of voter fraud.

Not a scintilla of evidence has been presented anywhere in this country that we have got a problem that needs to be addressed; but we have had all of these voter suppression laws enacted that are consistent with the ghosts of the Confederacy and what those folks stood for who were waving the Confederate battle flag in opposition to the changes of the fifties and sixties.

What shocks me is that even the Supreme Court has gotten into the act by decimating the section 5 preclearance through claiming that section 4 is outdated, and this House refuses to act on fixing the Voting Rights Act.

I would argue that—again, consistent with our democracy and the spirit of coming together—that, perhaps, that is one of the things we can address so that we can take down, on the one hand, the divisive symbol of hatred—the Confederate battle flag—from here in this Capitol and in whatever form it hangs all across America so that we can lift up policies that make Americans safer, policies that are consistent with our values and that everyone—White, Black, Latino, Asian, Democrats, and Republicans—should be able to rally around.

I am thankful for Congresswoman KELLY's and Congressman PAYNE's leadership—this wonderful tandem, R. KELLY and D. PAYNE, who are tremendous advocates here in the Congress—and for their giving me this opportunity to share these thoughts.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congressman JEFFRIES, for reminding us about the Voting Rights Act. Again, thank you for everything you did last

week in this Congress. It was so commendable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), who gave a passionate speech on the floor last week about the flag.

□ 2030

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I am honored to be with the team of KELLY and PAYNE tonight. You do outstanding work, and you also provide an opportunity for other Members to have an opportunity to call to the attention of our constituents some of the concerns that we have to address in Congress. I will always be grateful for the wonderful work that you do in Congress.

I am also very grateful and thankful to the many persons who worked to bring down the Confederate battle flag in South Carolina. It was not easy. There are many who said they never thought they would see it happen, but it did, and it happened because of a willingness to forgive and an understanding that we had an opportunity to do something meaningful for a good many people across the length and breadth of this country who saw the Confederate battle flag as a symbol of segregation, a symbol of racism and bigotry, a symbol of slavery. Not all did, but it was painful for a good many who did see it this way, many who suffered the indignation and humiliation of segregation, who suffered knowing that their bloodline had suffered slavery.

So I am here tonight to thank those who worked so hard to get this done. It was not easy, and I want to thank you for what you did. But I also know that there are a good many people now who would like to see us go back to normal. They are ready to get back to the normal things that we have in this great country of ours, the richest country in the world. For them, normal is a very pleasant thing. Normal means new homes. Normal means greater opportunities.

But let's talk about normal for some others in this country because normal is not always the same for everyone. Normal for the month of June 2015 unemployment: normal for Whites was 4.6 percent, that is the unemployment rate. That is normal for Whites. Normal for Latinos was 6.6 percent, and normal for Blacks was 9.5 percent.

Now, I have already heard the arguments about how President Obama ought to resolve this; this is all his fault. Not so, my friends. If you look back through the vista of time, you will find that unemployment for African Americans is usually about twice the unemployment rate for White Americans. This is not something new to President Obama. This is not something that started in 2008 when he was elected or when he was sworn in in 2009. This is not something that is new to us, those of us who know and see the pain and suffering that results from a lack of employment.

We understand that the flag coming down was a great moment for us symbolically. It was symbolism. Now, the

substance is what we ultimately have to deal with, and the substance is the normal life that people lead under conditions that are abnormal for many others in this country.

Let's look at normal as it relates to lending for businesses. Minority businessowners in 2012—this is the latest information that I have from the Federal Reserve—paid interest rates that were 32 percent higher than what Whites paid—32 percent higher. That is normal.

Some people don't want to go back to this normal state of affairs. They see the flag coming down as an indication that we need to move on in other substantive areas. Lending, mortgage lending is an important area. Normal for African Americans meant that in 2013 only 4.8 percent of loans made to buy homes were made to Blacks, when Blacks comprise 13.2 percent of the total population. Normal for Latinos meant that in 2013 only 7.3 percent of the loans made to buy homes were made to Latinos, Hispanics, when they make up 17.15 percent of the total population. That is normal.

Normal in 2013 meant the conventional mortgage loan denial rate was, and this is according to CNN, 10.4 percent for Whites, 13.3 percent for Asians, 21.9 percent for Hispanics, and 27.6 percent for African Americans. There are a good many people who don't live normal lives in this normal climate that we want to get back to—we, in a generic sense.

I, not the personal pronoun for me, I don't want to get back to this. I want to see us move on with substantive change. I appreciate what was done in bringing down the flag. I celebrate its coming down, but it is time for us to initiate greater action in areas where we can integrate the money. I am an integrationist. I think we ought to integrate every aspect of American society, including the money.

Let's talk about normal. Normal means that Black applicants are 2.1 times more likely to be denied loans by mortgage lenders than non-Hispanic Whites. That is normal. For Hispanics, it means that they are 1.7 times more likely to be denied loans. That is normal. For Asians, 1.2 times more likely.

So I am saying to us that we have got to create a new normal. It is time for us, those of us who sit on committees of jurisdiction, to use our influence on these committees of jurisdiction to bring about the substantive change that lowering the flag and placing it in its place of honor, proper place where it should be, lowering that Confederate flag. That means that we must do that, but do it in such a way that we acknowledge that there is more work to be done, and we can do it on our committees of jurisdiction.

So, given that I serve on the Committee on Financial Services, I will be calling to the attention of the committee the need to investigate the mortgage lending culture in banks. We need to understand why it is that Afri-

can Americans and Latinos who are equally as qualified as Whites can go into a bank and not get a loan when a White can. We have got to find out why. I know that there are many people who are uncomfortable with the language of Black and White and Brown, but that is the language we have to use to communicate clearly a message of what is taking place.

So on my committee, I am going to push for an investigation of banks. We need to know why banks consistently do this. Not all banks, but we need to know why those who do it are doing it.

The way you do this is to test, to send people out who are equally qualified of different ethnicities and acquire the empirical evidence. In every instance—maybe with a few exceptions, but in every instance, in a general sense, we find that Blacks and Browns who are equally as qualified as Whites do not receive their loans.

I encourage all of my colleagues to use your committees of jurisdiction to create a new state of normalcy for those who have been suffering continuously.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you so much, Congressman GREEN, for your words, your passion, and your call to action.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues for participating tonight. Symbols of the Confederacy have been an inescapable and often haunting part of life in many Southern States. Every day the Confederate flag is flown proudly in front yards, worn on T-shirts, and you will find them on pickup trucks, and that is the right that folks have.

Many argue this is a symbol of Southern history, tradition, and honor. I would argue against the merits of that. After all, what are we proudly honoring and looking upon nostalgically? The Confederate flag represents a dark time in our Nation's history, full of pain, suffering, and loss.

Why do we allow the mascot of terrorist groups to fly high on the government grounds? Would we permit ISIS the luxury of putting their symbols on our Federal grounds? In modern society, people have made a decision to eradicate materials that do not represent our country's core values: the value of inclusion, the value of non-discrimination, and the value that our Nation can be the beacon of hope for everyone regardless of the color of their skin.

The institution of slavery destroyed families, killed millions, and formed the beginning of a systemic inequality faced by African Americans today. That is what the Confederacy sought to preserve when it seceded from our great Nation. Every time a Confederate flag flies, whether it is the intent of the owner or not, that is what is being celebrated.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take down the flag and we also need to have a serious conversation about gun violence. On behalf of Congressman PAYNE and

me, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus, to discuss tonight's CBC Special Order Hour: "The Confederate Battle Flag: Why Symbols Matter." I stand here today fully acknowledging that the eradication of this hurtful flag from state and federal grounds is only one step in fully addressing race relations in this country; but, just as so many of my CBC colleagues have stood on this very floor to exclaim that "Black Lives Matter," so too do symbols. Symbols of hatred, institutionalized racism and white supremacy, they matter. Symbols like the flags of Apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, embraced by Dylann Roof, the terrorist responsible for the unspeakable events at Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston last month, Mr. Speaker, they matter.

Last week, the South Carolina legislature voted overwhelmingly in favor of removing—once and for all—the confederate battle flag from their Capitol grounds. I applaud the state of South Carolina for this historic gesture and for the outstanding leadership necessary to ensure that this flag comes down in the aftermath of the "Emmanuel Nine" tragedy. I implore other southern states that still fly the battle flag on state grounds to follow suit and have the flag removed. As a Member of Congress, I pledge my support to any legislation that completely eradicates this symbol from all federal lands.

To understand why the confederate battle flag has been offensive to millions of Americans for so many years requires a proper framing of American History. The version of the confederate battle flag that most people are familiar with today was first used by the Army of Tennessee during the Civil War. Shortly thereafter, it became widely known as the symbol of the Confederacy—eleven states who wished to secede from the Union over the right to own slaves. For the many Americans who deny a basic historical fact by refusing to believe that slavery was a central point of conflict in the Civil War, I quote directly from the declaration of secession from my home state of Texas:

"We hold as undeniable truths that the governments of the various States, and of the confederacy itself were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable."

Similarly, overt references to slavery as a motivation to secede from the Union are also present in the declarations of secession of South Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi.

Repeatedly, throughout the 20th century, the confederate battle flag flew as a symbol of direct defiance to advancements in civil rights. The flag was first displayed at the South Carolina state Capitol in 1938 after angry Members of Congress defeated a bill that would have made lynching a federal crime.

In the 1940s, the flag became the symbol of the Dixiecrats, the segregationist political faction birthed out of its firm stance against the civil rights agenda of the national Democratic party of the time. Members of the Dixiecrats were faithfully devoted to maintaining the segregation of the Jim Crow South, many of

whom stood on this very House floor decades ago, extolling the virtues of an American society that subjugated its black citizens.

In 1962, the flag was raised to the dome of the South Carolina state Capitol after President Kennedy called on Congress to end poll taxes and literacy tests for voting, and the Supreme Court declared segregation in public transportation unconstitutional. The raising of the confederate battle flag flew as a symbol of resistance in South Carolina to two landmark achievements of progress that our country relied on to move forward in its quest for racial equality.

While the confederate battle flag may represent "Southern Heritage" to some, to millions of other Americans it represents an opposition to the racial equality we still fight for today. This flag is a symbol of the painful history that this country has worked hard to overcome; and in order to continue moving forward, it is a symbol that we must finally put behind us.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CLYBURN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE AGGREGATES AND ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2015.

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the aggregates and allocations set forth pursuant to the Fiscal Year 2016 Concurrent Resolution on the Budget Conference Report, S. Con. Res. 11. The revision is for new budget authority and outlays for provisions designated as program integrity initiatives, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(B) and (C) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (BBEDCA), contained in H.R. 3020, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016.

S. Con. Res. 11 set the base discretionary 302(a) allocation to the Committee on Appropriations at \$1,016,582 million, which is the sum of the fiscal year 2016 discretionary spending limits under section 251(c) of BBEDCA. Section 251(b) of BBEDCA allows for adjustments to the discretionary spending limits for certain purposes including overseas contingencies, disaster relief, and program integrity initiatives.

BUDGET AGGREGATES

[On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars]

	Fiscal Year	
	2016	2016–2025
Current Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	3,039,215	1
Outlays	3,091,442	1
Revenues	2,676,733	32,237,371
Adjustment for H.R. 3020, Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, Appropriations Act, 2016		
Budget Authority	1,083	1
Outlays	924	1
Revenues	0	0
Revised Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	3,040,298	1
Outlays	3,092,366	1
Revenues	2,676,733	32,237,371

¹ Not applicable because annual appropriations acts for fiscal years 2017–2025 will not be considered until future sessions of Congress.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(In millions of dollars)

	2016
Base Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,016,582
OT	1,156,644
Global War on Terrorism:	
BA	96,287
OT	48,798
Program Integrity:	
BA	1,484
OT	1,277
Total Discretionary Action:	
BA	1,114,353
OT	1,206,719
Current Law Mandatory:	
BA	960,295
OT	952,912

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1359. An act to allow manufacturers to meet warranty and labeling requirements for consumer products by displaying the terms of warranties on Internet websites, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2620. An act to amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under such Act.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, July 14, 2015, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2135. A letter from the Acting Undersecretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness,

H.R. 3020, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016, contains \$1,484 million in budget authority for program integrity initiatives, which is within the allowable limits for this purpose as established in section 251(b)(2)(B) and (C) of BBEDCA. Accordingly, I am submitting an adjustment to S. Con. Res. 11 for an additional \$1,484 million in budget authority to accommodate program integrity funding contained in H.R. 3020. After making this adjustment, H.R. 3020 is within the fiscal year 2016 discretionary spending limits under section 251(c) of BBEDCA and the 302(a) allocation to the Committee on Appropriations established by S. Con. Res. 11.

These revisions are provided for bills, joint resolutions, and amendments thereto or conference reports thereon, considered by the House subsequent to this filing, as applicable. For fiscal year 2016, aggregate levels of budget authority and outlays and the allocation to the Committee on Appropriations, established by S. Con. Res. 11, are revised. Associated tables are attached.

This revision represents an adjustment for purposes of budgetary enforcement. The revised allocation is to be considered as an allocation included in the budget resolution pursuant to S. Con. Res. 11, as adjusted.

Sincerely,

TOM PRICE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget.

Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John M. Bednarek, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2136. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Noel T. Jones, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2137. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William T. Grisoli, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

2138. A letter from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's interim final rule — Partitions of Eligible Multiemployer Plans (RIN: 1212-AB29) received July 10, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

2139. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Designation of