

There is a political cost as well. A colleague from South Carolina summed it up in the documentary “Immigration Battle” on PBS Frontline, which I also appeared in. Addressing a group of Republican voters in his district, Congressman MICK MULVANEY said, “At some point, we are going to have to figure out that if you take the entire African American community and write them off, take the entire Hispanic community and write them off, take the entire Libertarian community and write them off, take the entire gay community and write them off, what is left? About 38 percent of the country.” The Congressman concludes by saying, “You cannot win with 38 percent of the country.” You want to know something? He is right.

We know from the environment, from the fight for marriage equality, the fight for civil rights, the fight to modernize our immigration system, that taking no action is precisely the problem.

I think the new Speaker understands this, and someday I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle agree with him and let the majority rule in the people’s House.

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the efforts in Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania’s Fifth Congressional District to reintroduce the American chestnut tree.

Before the 1900s, the American chestnut was the dominant tree in the eastern United States. In fact, in my home State of Pennsylvania, it comprised roughly 25 percent of all hardwoods. Blight struck these trees beginning in 1904, and by 1950, the American chestnut was nearly wiped out of our forests.

Mr. Speaker, efforts over the past several years have focused on reintroducing this hardwood, the American chestnut, by making it more resilient to blight. I am proud to say that re-introduction efforts are taking place at several sites in Pennsylvania’s Fifth Congressional District in Centre County, Clinton County, and Elk County.

This past week, the Pennsylvania State University’s chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation held its annual meeting, highlighting the work of researchers, along with the contributions of volunteers, to the re-introduction of the American chestnut.

As chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, I commend those advocates for their dedication, their research, their efforts to the reintroduction of this species; and I look forward to lending my support for bringing the American chestnut back.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, John Muir, a naturalist, author, and environmental philosopher, once said, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” This couldn’t be truer when it comes to the effect climate change is having on the biodiversity of our planet.

We can’t solve the climate change crisis without realizing how interconnected its impacts truly are. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted, assuming that current trends in burning fossil fuel continue, by the year 2100, the surface of the Earth will warm on an average of 6 degrees Celsius. That kind of potential for rapid and lasting climate warming poses a significant challenge for biodiversity conservation.

It may seem obvious, but the places that plants and animals can exist are limited by factors such as sunlight, precipitation, and temperature. A polar bear can’t exist in Brazil, just as a lion can’t exist in Antarctica. You won’t find palm trees in Greenland, just like you won’t find pine trees in Argentina.

So, as climate changes, the abundance and distribution of plants and animals will also change. Climate change alone is expected to threaten approximately one-quarter, possibly more, of all species on land with extinction by the year 2050. That means climate change will surpass habitat loss as the biggest threat to life on land.

Because of climate change, birds lay eggs earlier in the year, plants bloom earlier, and mammals come out of hibernation sooner. These changes may sound insignificant, but they drastically impact the life cycle of each population and, therefore, any species that rely on it. We are literally altering the timeline of nature.

The need to protect plant and animal species might not be a top priority for some of my colleagues, but I urge them to consider the other impacts. Twelve plant species provide approximately 75 percent of our total food supply. What is not generally appreciated is that these relatively few species depend on hundreds and thousands of other species for their productivity.

Our food supply is not only based on the food we eat, but insects and birds that pollinate crop flowers and feed on crop pests. For example, more than 80 percent of the 264 crops grown in the European Union depend on insect pollinators.

A lack of biodiversity can lead to a decreased ability to produce medicine, as key plants are lost to extinction. And without specific plants, such as grasses and trees that have evolved to resist the spread of wildfires or mitigate the impacts of flooding, we are

losing a key shield in protecting against natural disasters. These are nature’s defenders, and we are losing them.

In my own backyard, these climate changes are expected to impact regional biodiversity in a variety of direct and indirect ways. The Chicago wilderness, which expands across Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan, will likely experience changes in the timing of natural events, such as blooming, migration, and the onset of hibernation. It could also cause a loss of suitable habitat and a disruption of ecological communities due to different responses to climate change.

These impacts are not limited to our land, plants, and animals. Changes in biodiversity will have significant impacts on our waterways as well. In the Great Lakes, native plant and animal species will differ wildly in their responses to changing stream temperature and hydrology. Wetland plant communities are continually adapting to changing water levels. However, the extreme changes we see as a result of climate changes, such as droughts and flooding, create more unstable environments for species.

Protecting our biodiversity does more than save plants and animals. It protects agriculture, medicine, and the overall safety of our communities.

From the beginning of time, nature has fed us, cured us and protected us. Now it is our turn. If we let one piece fail, we are putting the entire system at risk. We need to protect plant and animal species from an ever-changing climate if we want to secure a healthy and prosperous future for our children.

I urge my colleagues to stop ignoring the science and support Federal legislation that acts on climate change and addresses these grave biological threats.

PERSONAL FAITH

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, today as I stand on this great floor, a place that we call the people’s House, I look across and there is a plaque of Moses, the great law-giver. While he may not be staring me in the eye, he stares at every Speaker, who stands where you stand today, directly in the eye. Right above you, there is our national motto that is even above the flag of the United States that says, “In God we trust.”

I come here this morning because in the State of Washington in Bremerton School District, they take a different interpretation of that motto. You see, they believe there that you can trust in God as long as you don’t trust too much; that you can be grateful to that God as long as you are not too grateful.

Last week, they put on administrative leave a young football coach, Coach Joe Kennedy, not because he molested a child, not because he wasn’t

a winning football coach, not even because he didn't have good service—because everyone agreed he had exemplary service for the last 8 years—but the reason was simply because he dared to offer a personal, private prayer at the conclusion of a football game thanking God for protecting his players and the players on the other football team.

Now, the Bremerton School District is very noble because they say Coach Kennedy can exercise his faith even while on duty as long as no one else can see it.

Mr. Speaker, as the Bremerton School District cites cases, they do like so many anti-faith groups do. They cite the cases, but it is just that those cases don't apply to the facts in this particular situation at all.

This coach is not asking to pray with students at a mandatory pregame meeting. He is asking for his freedom to quietly and personally offer prayer and thanks for his team and the safety of his players after the game is over and the players are heading to greet their families and friends in the stands.

As a Member of Congress, my faith is not some kind of coat that I take off when I walk into the Capitol Building to perform my legislative duties. And as a coach, Coach Kennedy's faith is not something he sheds when he walks onto the field.

The Constitution doesn't require you to be sequestered to a private room out of sight and earshot to offer a prayer. It protects the right of an individual to visibly express his or her faith, just like it protects the right of a Muslim teacher to wear her head scarf or a Jewish teacher to wear his yarmulke.

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Mr. Speaker, that is why I rise today, because I hope all across this country Americans will stand with Coach Kennedy, as we do today, and, in so doing, send a message to the Bremerton School District in the State of Washington that when they trample on even one young football coach's religious liberties and religious freedom, they trample on the religious freedom and the religious liberty of all of us.

HONORING JOHN CUSHING ESTY, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and reflect on the life of a great man, John Cushing Esty, Jr., an education leader, a reformer, a man of intellect, wit, and joy, a devoted family man, and my beloved father-in-law of 31 years.

John Cushing Esty was the oldest of four boys. He was a ham radio operator and built radios. He learned languages, was a gifted student, a lover of education and words, and he lived a life devoted to excellence in education. He was committed to educational oppor-

tunity, although he attended some of the most elite private schools in the country. But as a leader of those schools, he pushed them into the modern era.

In the Air Force, during the Korean War era, he taught flight nurses—hundreds at a time—not, as he said, exactly tough duty.

As a young dean at Amherst College, I learned about his commitment to equal opportunity for all students from none other than my physician in the 1990s, a man named Marshall Holley, an African American scholarship student in the 1950s, one of three students in his class at Amherst College. He got in trouble for having told off a professor, a professor who he believed to be racist. He risked losing his scholarship when he received a failing grade.

He was sent to see my father-in-law. My father-in-law, as a young dean, said: You know, Marshall, you weren't wrong to tell him off. He was wrong to treat you that way, but you were unwise to tell him off before you got your final grade. I will fix your grade, but you have to be wiser in the future.

As headmaster of the Taft School in my district, Watertown, Connecticut, in the 1960s—a tumultuous time—John Esty led as an education leader, but he also led in the cause of what at the time was quaintly called coeducation. Much over the objection of many alumni, some of the present students and faculty, he pushed for coeducation, and successfully so. He did it because he knew that educational opportunity and excellence could only happen when opportunities were provided for young women as well as young men.

As a trustee of Amherst College, his alma mater, he successfully fought for that institution to become coeducational over the objection of, among others, his own father.

As a reformer, as the head of the National Association of Independent Schools, he helped create a program called A Better Chance. That took his commitment to equal opportunity for young men and women of disadvantaged backgrounds to lead to a national effort in scholarship programs around this country.

One of those examples of A Better Chance scholar is Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, who credits his time as A Better Chance scholar at Milton Academy having transformed his life from the south side of Chicago to become one of this country's leaders. Similar scholarships also were adopted in other schools around the country, including one Punahoa School in Hawaii, whose scholarship student Barack Obama graduated in 1979.

My father-in-law devoted his life to excellence in education, but he lived the life as well. Not only did he care about excellent education in private schools, but he fought for it in public schools. He served on the elected board of education in his town of Concord, Massachusetts, and all four of his sons went to public schools.

He was a man of merriment and wit and joy. He loved learning. We first met in 1978 and bonded over an argument over the correct pronunciation of a word. In classic John Esty style, he went to the dictionary that was in the dining room, and we looked up the word. I happened to be right. I don't remember the word. He doesn't, either. But I pronounced it correctly, and he knew that we had bonded for life.

He loved children, especially his grandchildren. He told them amazing stories often, getting them so worked up they wouldn't go to bed, but they loved his story, especially Jimmy Bond, the young James Bond stories, which would have them in delights.

John, you will be loved and missed by Katherine Esty, your wife of 60 years, and all four of your sons: my husband, Dan; my brother-in-law, Paul, and his wife, Vanda; my brother-in-law, Ben, and his wife, Raquel; my brother-in-law, Jed, and his wife, Andrea; the many grandchildren: Sarah, Thomas, Jonathan, Marc, Julie, Victor, Jonah, Maya, Aliya, and Asher.

You shared your love of life, of music, of stories, of education, and of making a difference with all of us. You lived a full 87 years, a committed servant of this great country, a believer in educational opportunity, and a gift for joy. You will be greatly missed. Thank you, and Godspeed, John Esty.

PEACE OFFICERS ARE A CUT ABOVE THE REST

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently a Hollywood filmmaker joined protesters and marched in an antipolice rally in New York City.

He referred to peace officers as murderers. His hateful rhetoric called for violence against law enforcement, saying: "I have to call a murderer a murderer, and I have to call a murderer a murderer," adding that he is on the side of the ones who confront and are confronted by police. His comments encourage mischief and crimes against peace officers.

For the haters to justify lawlessness in response to perceived lawless acts by the police is idiotic. Bad cops, like bad citizens, should face a judge in a court of law. However, communities cannot be burned, looted, or destroyed by cop haters because some police officer allegedly committed a crime. Nor can crimes against police be encouraged, tolerated, or justified because some other officer is accused of doing something improper. Otherwise, there is mob rule.

The filmmaker, whose occupation is dedicated to the fake, the false, and to fiction, made comments 1 week after New York City lost one of its finest. Officer Randolph Holder was gunned down—really, he was assassinated by a ruthless outlaw—and he was recently buried. The filmmaker's self-righteous