

Power Electric Cooperative after 42 years of providing energy to communities from San Diego to south central Missouri.

Mr. Fulks has been an outspoken leader for reliable and affordable sources of energy for the people of the Fourth District. Serving on the NRECA Transmission Task Force, the Southwest Power Pool Engineering & Operations Committee, the Executive Committee of the Southeastern Electric Reliability Council, and several other councils and committees, Mr. Fulks has been pivotal in enacting programs that are cost-effective and innovative, which have greatly benefited members and co-op employees.

Under Mr. Fulks' leadership, Sho-Me Power has continued the legacy of progressively meeting the growing needs of Missourians and in providing wholesale power to nine distribution cooperatives. Increasing his impact on the region, he has helped start and operate Sho-Me Technologies, which makes available an extensive network of fiber-optic communications to members, many of whom are without other forms of Internet access.

Thank you, once again, Gary, for your devotion and work for the benefit of the Fourth District. You are an example of the leadership that this Nation needs. I anticipate hearing of your new chapter in life and know it will benefit not only Missouri, but our Nation.

EXECUTIVE WAIVES NEW VISA WAIVER RESTRICTIONS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the Constitution is clear: Congress shall make the law, the judiciary interprets the law, and the executive enforces the law.

The President, however, seems to think he can make and interpret the law.

Last year, Congress passed the Visa Waiver Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act. It requires foreign nationals from certain countries to obtain a visa before they come to the United States. Now the administration has decided to waive this new requirement. The President plans to allow dual citizens and people who have traveled to places like Syria, the Sudan, Iraq, and Iran to waltz back into the United States without a visa.

The Department of Homeland Security estimates that 5,000 Westerners have made the journey to Iraq and Syria to fight with militant groups like ISIS. Allowing this new executive edict will only weaken U.S. national security.

The Founders implemented the separation of powers to protect the people from an all-powerful—omnipotent—government. The administration's executive overreach violates the Con-

stitution and puts Americans and our security at risk.

And that is just the way it is.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: THE FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, the city of Flint, Michigan, has been hit by a crisis of massive proportion. Its impact on the long-term health and future success of its residents remains unclear.

The fact I find most disturbing is that it is a completely manmade crisis. It grew out of the same kind of stubborn faith in austerity measures that has handicapped our ability to govern for years. It grew out of a failure to protect the Flint River from environmental damage. It grew out of both a failure to invest in Flint's crumbling infrastructure and in the willful disregard for the people of that city, a city in which more than 40 percent of the residents live below the poverty line and in which the majority of families are African American.

My colleagues and I are here on the floor this evening to urge every Member of this body to understand one thing: If we fail to acknowledge the issues that led to the Flint water crisis, we will see similar and equally devastating events in more and more cities across the country.

We need to recognize that tunnel vision for deficit reduction creates more problems than it solves. The emergency manager appointed by Governor Snyder instituted a plan to run Flint like a business in order to bring it back from the brink of death. In the process, he sought out the least expensive options for basic needs, like water. In doing so, he decided to pull from the corrosive and contaminated Flint River without ensuring the treatment protocol necessary to ensure the water was clean. We now know that, although the Flint River is in poor shape, a little additional spending could have prevented this crisis. Instead, Flint went the bare bones route, leaving a generation of residents to suffer the permanent consequences.

Madam Speaker, Congress has, once more, been so focused on reducing the deficit that we have lost sight of our

responsibility to govern. Only a few months ago did we finally abandon the absurd policy of sequestration, which has hampered the functioning of countless programs over the past several years. The benefits of austerity and small government are questionable at best. Flint has proven that, and we would all be wise to remember it.

Unfortunately, that is not the only lesson that we can take away from this crisis. This Congress has made undermining environmental and energy regulations one of its core missions. In the first 100 days of the 114th Congress, it voted on more environmental and energy issues than on any other topic, and not a single one was aimed at protecting resources, like the Flint River, from the kind of contamination that allowed its water to corrode lead pipes.

□ 1715

If reducing the deficit has been the first priority for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, allowing corporations and big businesses to take whatever liberties with our environment they choose has to be a close second.

Under the majority of this House, our babies would choke on smog before we limit the amount of pollution a single smokestack can spew out. Our streams and rivers would poison even the fish swimming in them before we would set restrictions on where these companies can dump their chemical byproducts. Our forests and farmlands would turn barren before we would question the long-term impact of fracking.

It took years to turn the Flint River into the downright dangerous water source that has caused so many problems. But for other rivers, lakes, or streams, there may still be time to repair or prevent the damage that we have done. Flint should move us to strengthen, not weaken, our environmental protections.

Madam Speaker, there is one more lesson to learn here, and it is perhaps the most important. The infrastructure in Flint, like in so many other cities, is outdated, and no one at the local, State or Federal level seems willing or capable of making the necessary investments.

Today in our Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing, one of the topics of concern was that, even if individual homes had replaced their old lead pipes, the city's pipes would still have caused a major problem. Madam Speaker, that is a matter of infrastructure at the most basic level.

In my home State of New Jersey, we spent more than a decade leading the way in the battle against lead poisoning. But with the onset of Governor Christie's administration, all these advances have also come to an abrupt halt there.

There are now 11 cities with levels of lead higher than what has been reported in Flint right in my State of New Jersey. This contamination from lead comes from paint instead of water.

Nonetheless, it is a reflection of the reduction and diminution of services and resources to make our environment safe for our communities. Two of these cities are right in my district.

Still, Governor Christie's administration has ignored the problem and thoroughly failed our children by choosing not to fund our State's lead abatement fund.

Here at the Federal level we can take this even further. Our failure to invest in transportation and energy infrastructure is building up to a crisis of a different kind, a time when our roads, our bridges, and our power grids begin to fail.

Madam Speaker, there are so many lessons we need to learn from Flint. I have a number of colleagues who are here with me this evening who have raised their voices in support of the people of Flint and who I know agree with me that this must be a watershed moment.

We need to change course to prevent this from happening again and ensure the future of our Nation.

Before I turn this over, I want to take a moment to add that there are a number of organizations, coalitions, and other associations that consistently are dedicated to protecting our natural resources. They defend the Clean Water Act, and they fight for the Clean Air Act. I hope to see more of them fighting for Flint in the near future.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), who not only represents the district in which there is Flint, but he is a resident born and raised in the city of Flint, Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for conducting this Special Order and raising attention to this situation. Particularly on behalf of the people that I represent, the 100,000 people in my hometown of Flint, as difficult as this time has been, they do get some strength from the fact that Members of Congress from all across the country and, frankly, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have expressed their concern.

It is my sincere hope that the concern expressed for the people of Flint will not just come in the form of sympathy, but will actually move us to take action.

Let me just take a moment to tell you about my hometown. This is a city that was the birthplace of General Motors in 1908. This is a city that actually helped build the labor movement.

In 1936 and 1937, the workers in the factories occupied those factories until, on February 11, they got that first UAW contract that actually helped build the middle class.

The reason I mention that is that it is a city that has great pride in the contribution that it has made over the decades to the incredible productive capacity of our society.

With that pride as a backdrop, the last few decades have been really tough

because we have seen the loss of manufacturing jobs. We have seen big changes in our economy. The community has become smaller. It has gone from 200,000 people to about 100,000 now.

We have lost an enormous amount of the manufacturing base that we once had, and it was really the engine of our economy. Of course, the effect of all that is to challenge the community and its very existence.

The city itself has struggled to keep its budgets balanced to provide essential services. Then a few years ago a decision was made at the State level to reduce and, in fact, eliminate State support for cities.

That kind of support was necessary for the city to provide the essential role that it plays in a regional economy. As a result of that decision, the city was in significant financial stress, really on the verge of bankruptcy.

The State of Michigan's solution, rather than provide support—additional funding, economic development, workforce development, better schools—that is not the solution. Those are the things that would make a difference.

Instead, the State of Michigan appoints an emergency manager that suspends the authority of the city council and the mayor, as if this city that is struggling as a result of disinvestment only needs new management.

Worse yet, the charge to these emergency managers—and we have them in Michigan and lots of different communities and school districts—is to get in there and get the budget balanced. The tool they have is a budget scalpel. There are no additional resources, just a knife to cut the budget.

In the case of Flint, one of the places they chose to cut was the essential service of drinking water, temporarily shifting, as a result of an emergency manager's decision, to the Flint River.

Now, folks don't need to be mad at the river. It is just the river. Actually, it is quite beautiful now since it is no longer used as an open sewer. Some of it has been restored, but it is still river water. It is 19 times more corrosive than the Great Lakes water that we have drawn from decades as our water source.

In a rush to save money, the decision was made to use this river. In an almost inexplicable decision to save a few hundred dollars—really, I think it is estimated at about \$100 a day—they didn't treat the water with orthophosphate to control corrosion of the pipes.

That is what led to the pipes leaching lead into the water system, into the households, into the bodies of human beings, and into 9,000 children under the age of 6 who are the real victims of this.

It is not good for adults. There is no acceptable level of lead in the human body. It is a neurotoxin. But for children it is especially dangerous because it affects brain development in a way that is permanent.

So what we need now, since this was done to Flint by the failure of the emergency manager to think about something other than dollars and cents, and the failure of the State, despite repeated warnings, including warnings from the EPA, that they should be applying corrosion control and that this is going to have consequences, they treated it like it was a public relations problem for them, not a public health problem for 100,000 people. So the damage has been done.

We have two questions to ask ourselves. One is: How do we make sure this never happens again? Getting rid of the emergency manager law would be a big step in the right direction, making sure that not only do we have adequate regulations regarding clean water, but the agencies charged with them have adequate authority and resources to enforce. That would go a long way to prevent this from happening again.

Legislation that myself and my colleagues from Michigan are introducing would ensure that, when the EPA is aware of a problem like this, they would have to make it public. That would go a long way.

The other question is: How do we make it right for the people in Flint, especially for the children? The State did this. It was their decision. Virtually everybody back home has no doubt about that question.

There is an effort right now to try to obfuscate responsibility. That is really because, in my view—and this is only my opinion—by accepting responsibility for what happened means that there is the responsibility to make it right. I just fear that the State of Michigan is trying to avoid that kind of responsibility.

To make it right, we need to spend some money on infrastructure, take up those lead service lines that have been so damaged by this corrosive water and replace them with something that will not deliver lead into the water system and to improve the infrastructure so that it is more sustainable.

Most importantly and finally, to make it right in Flint, we have to make sure the kids, who are the real victims of this, are given every opportunity that we can give them to overcome something that their government did to them.

That means giving them opportunities like every child having access to Early Head Start, every child being enrolled in Head Start, every child having enrichment opportunities, every child being given all the help they can, all the support they can, for proper nutrition, every child having a small class size so that teacher-student contact is real and not packed in a classroom of 35 or 40 kids, summer youth activity, summer employment.

All of the things that we would do as parents for one of our own children struggling to overcome a developmental hurdle is what the State of Michigan owes to the 9,000 children of

Flint under the age of 6 that have been subjected to high levels of lead. That is the moral obligation of the State of Michigan.

I just hope—and I know my colleagues stand with me—that, if the State is unwilling to step up and do the right thing, we recognize that these children, these citizens, the people I represent, just like the people we all represent, are not just residents of a State, but they are citizens of the United States, just like when a storm hits, when we have a chance and the capacity to do something to ease that suffering, to provide opportunity to overcome a manmade disaster, that we are willing to stand up and do that.

I can't tell you how much I thank my colleagues for taking some time this week—particularly my colleagues from Michigan, but the folks from all over the country, have been helpful. This is a real crisis, and it deserves a response equal to the gravity of the crisis.

On behalf of the people I represent, thank you so much.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, we are particularly grateful for both Representative KILDEE and Representative LAWRENCE for having elevated this discussion to the point that we are giving it serious consideration.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), a cosponsor of this Special Order hour.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, I stand before you today a true Michigan girl, born and raised in the city of Detroit, having traveled and been in public service for over 25 years in multiple capacities.

Today I had the opportunity, after calling for a hearing to Chairman CHAFFETZ, to call a hearing about this Flint water situation.

I want to tell you, being in Congress and knowing that there are two aisles, two philosophies, two groups—the Republicans and the Democrats—that I was so impressed that the chairman responded and granted my request for a hearing.

He understood how important and how volatile the situation is. We struggled a little bit with who would be able to be witnesses, but we had the hearing.

I wanted to tell you that this is something that is not a partisan issue. The message I want to get out today is that this issue where children and families are affected because of the lack of government doing their job is unacceptable. It is unacceptable in these United States of America.

□ 1730

I can tell you, Americans ask for three basic things whoever you are, wherever you live, and that is that we have safe food to consume, clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink because we need all those things to merely live.

We trust our government to protect those things and to ensure that our

consumption will not harm us. Clearly, we failed. We failed as a government. This isn't about wearing your R or D. This is about the government of these United States restoring the trust.

I want you to imagine a mother holding her child and, doing what a mother does with an infant, is feeding that child. She may mix formula and use water to mix the formula. Then she gives the baby the bottle. She holds that baby, and that is just such a special bonding moment. Or she may breastfeed. When you are breastfeeding, they tell you to drink a lot of water.

In each of those scenarios, she was poisoning her child, poisoning her child for over 7 months before someone stood up and said: Stop using the water. There are mothers all over this country who are holding their babies closer and praying, I hope this never happens to me.

I feel it is the role of government, Democrats and Republicans, coming together to say never again in these United States of America. We need to find out why this happened, when it happened, and when you knew about it, what did you do about it at all levels of government—Federal and State—and there is enough blame to go around.

It doesn't do those families in Flint any good if we just point fingers. We have to find out and have a full investigation so that we can find out what we need to fix, so that we can stand before the citizens of this great country and say: As your government, we are starting to rebuild the trust, and we are going to fix this.

I want to be on the record that I feel those who made the decisions, from the emergency manager and the Governor, and those who were in a position to make decisions should be providing statements and should be a witness to tell us what happened, why it happened, when did they know, what responsibility lies where.

We have already identified so many areas that legislation will be coming forward. I hope they will be bipartisan. First of all, we need legislation to find out when we find lead in water on a State level, who has the primary role of protecting the water in that State? Where is the power of EPA? We must make it very clear, the notification of the public once lead is identified in water.

We are hearing statements that are all over about why that didn't happen. What we need to do is legislate that so it doesn't happen again, make it very clear and enforce it. We need to increase the enforcement and testing of our water so that we will not have excuses in the future.

The last thing I want to say is: This is an election year, and as those of us who serve in Congress go around and ask people to trust us, to give us their vote, we should also be able to say, in these United States of America we have a history where we didn't always get it right in America. In America our

history will teach us, there are times where one side or the other didn't quite get it right, but our democracy and the voice of the people rose to a level that demanded action happen.

Today, with this hearing and with us having this opportunity to put this on the record, we are demanding that action be taken, that our government stand up and do what it is supposed to do. We need to fund the correctional actions that we need to do for the children who have been affected. We need to ensure that we are going to fix the pipes, and this is a bigger discussion, and that is infrastructure.

This Congress cannot continue to kick the can down the road when it comes to infrastructure. This issue is about, yes, we did not treat the water, but these lead pipes in older communities are an issue across this country. We are going to have to stand up as a government, address it, fund it, and get about the work of fixing our infrastructure.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I would like to thank the Congresswoman. Another very strong and strident voice on behalf of all the citizens in the State of Michigan, and particularly with regard to the issue confronting our victims, the citizens as well as the city officials in Flint, Michigan, is our Congresswoman DINGELL from Michigan.

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for helping to organize this as well as the leadership of Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE and Congressman DAN KILDEE, who is fighting for the people of his district.

Madam Speaker, the first responsibility of government is to keep the American people safe, and it is clear that the government at every level failed the people of Flint. Clean and safe drinking water is a basic human right. Now we need to focus on the people of Flint first, the men and women and children, and what is happening there.

The most immediate need which we are still struggling with is what they need. People have been donating bottled water, but in Flint, mothers don't know what is safe and what is not safe because they are still getting conflicting information as to whether the water is safe to bathe in. They have rashes that no one can talk about. We have a Governor who says if he had grandchildren, it would be safe, and an attorney general who is saying if he had children in Flint, he wouldn't let them bathe. They don't even know what is safe.

We need to make sure that we are taking care of people, that they have access and clean water. These families have no transportation. They have set up water sites at five firehouses, and yet we don't think about it because we are so lucky. These people don't have transportation. Many of them have no way to get there. They are allowed one case of water a day. Now, think about that. If you are trying to bathe your

children and you don't know if tap water is safe or if the filter is there. Think about if you are cooking spaghetti, a very common meal, you need bottled water to just cook the spaghetti. So we really need to think about the people of Flint and what it means to their daily life.

Secondly, we need to determine what it is they need long term, figure out the resources they need and all work together to get them. As my colleagues have so eloquently said—Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. LAWRENCE—who is accountable? Hold people accountable and make sure this never happens again in America.

But having said that, there are 153,000 water systems in this country. Very bad decisions were made that made a community totally toxic. As my colleague Mr. KILDEE said, not only do we have to fix the infrastructure, but we have almost 10,000 children who are going to need Head Start, they are going to need access for resources for probably a lifetime, for decades for health care, et cetera. How are we going to ensure that they have it? But how are we going to make sure that we are addressing this problem across the country and making sure it never happens again? We need to make sure that our government at every level never fails another community again.

The bringing of this tonight, the talking that all of us are doing, may we all work together to fix this man-made crisis and make sure we keep America safe for every other community.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you very much, Congresswoman. I now yield to the distinguished lady from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, as a citizen and representative of the State of New York, I want to express my concern to all my colleagues from Michigan that in New York we care very deeply about this issue.

I want to thank certainly Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for her leadership in allowing me to speak tonight. I rise today, Madam Speaker, as the only microbiologist in Congress to discuss the current health disaster in Flint. It is not only a public health disaster but is also a violation of our social contract.

The magnitude of the public health crisis in Flint first became apparent nearly a year ago, when lead levels of 397 parts per billion were first detected in the city's drinking water, 26 times the limit that the EPA uses to trigger action. In fact, last summer, a group of researchers found lead levels high enough to meet the EPA's definition of toxic waste. No wonder that the filters that have been given to the people of Flint have been rendered useless.

The truth is, the only safe level of lead in water is zero. Sadly, children are particularly susceptible to the damaging effects of lead poisoning. The proportion of infants and children with above-average levels of lead in their blood in Flint has nearly doubled since

this crisis. This toxic metal robs their brains of gray matter in the regions that enable people to pay attention, to regulate emotions, and control impulses. For the rest of their lives, these children will likely suffer from neurodevelopmental damage, reduced intelligence, behavioral changes, anemia, hypertension, renal impairment, and other lifelong effects of lead poisoning, including a higher risk of incarceration.

What is worse, these children have been poisoned as a result of deliberate decisions and systematic failures by the State of Michigan. Make no mistake about it, all of us who serve in this House and in yonder hall, as they serve in the Senate, have a responsibility for these children because our oath requires that we will protect everyone from enemies both foreign and domestic. We have no right, and I think it borders on criminal that we would allow this kind of thing to happen to children who are also in our care. The failures of the Michigan State government are inexcusable, and doing this to our smallest citizens is criminal.

Need I remind us that the democratically elected city council was superseded by a State-appointed emergency manager—I don't know what the emergency was, but he certainly created one—who made these dreadful decisions that brought us to this process and to this democratic process that was undermined and the hundreds who live with the consequences of it.

Those in Congress who have blocked investments in our Nation's infrastructure need to take another look at the consequences of their inactions. Instead of investing in roads, bridges, and pipes, we spent trillions of dollars on bombs, on decimating other countries, on war and wounding about 60,000 young Americans. While this failure impacts all Americans, it disproportionately harms the low-income areas, communities of color, doubling down on the already wide racial, health, and economic disparities across the country.

Now, Flint is only the latest example of this disturbing reality. I fear that it is a bellwether for the rest of the Nation. Just under foot nationwide are century-old water pipes in almost every city, certainly in the New England States, that may be the very next to fail. We have got to take the steps to reverse the failed choices that brought Flint to the brink, but also to ensure that what happened in Flint does not happen in other communities across the country. Again, that is our responsibility.

I thank Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for her timely concern over the issue and for yielding to me.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentlewoman very much for not only her eloquent words but the fact that she can speak from her scientific background, being a microbiologist. Absolutely there is science in this issue.

Now I yield to the co-chair of the Progressive Caucus, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

□ 1745

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, this is the Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. I am so honored that BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN leads our Caucus in this regard. It couldn't be more important tonight than to have an excellent leader guiding us in this discussion because, in my opinion, the Flint water crisis is one of the most stunning failures of the philosophy that you ought to run a government entity like a business that I have ever seen.

Tonight the Flint water crisis that is in front of us is not a tsunami, it is not a tornado, and it is not a flood. It is decisions by people who have inflicted massive harm and damage on children and the community at large.

When we say children, the damage to the children is absolutely incontrovertible, but what about our seniors? What about our people in the prime of their lives who cannot use the water in the city that they expect to use it in?

I submit to you that this problem is the responsibility of Governor Snyder, who believes in running government like a business. The former leader of Gateway Computers promised outcomes and deliverables during his campaign, but he wasn't selling computers. You are supposed to be giving public services to the people. It is very different. Apparently, the deliverables that he wanted to deliver, delivered awful, horrible outcomes for the people of Flint.

Before the Flint crisis, Mr. Snyder spent \$1.8 billion in tax cuts for corporations, leaving very little for small, struggling cities like Flint. Of course, it is all based on the philosophy that if you don't regulate rich people and big companies and you give them all the tax breaks they ever want, then they are going to invest it all in the plant and equipment and wages and make it better off. What a stunning failure. It is a lie, an untruth, and a demonstrably false claim.

To save money, the Governor has been appointing political cronies as financial managers to mostly Black, mostly poor municipalities around the State. When I say that folks in Flint are mostly Black, I want to say this. They are not all Black. There is a shared harm on White communities and Latino communities as well. I don't want people across America to think: "Well, I am not Black, so it is not really my problem." No, it is your problem, if you are living in Flint and drinking water, no matter what your skin color or ethnic background is.

In Flint, the emergency manager suggested switching the city's drinking water supply to the Flint River to save the city about \$5 million. Thank you. It will cost billions to correct the damage that this perverted philosophy of money before people has resulted in. The conservative mantra says that cutting spending and shrinking government is the way to go. Well, he sure did

that, and now we have this crisis on our doorstep.

The government and businesses do not have the same bottom line, they should not have the same bottom line, and we should treat businesses like businesses and public services and government like that. They should not confuse one for the other.

We have a crisis of democracy in Flint. Under the guise of fiscal responsibility—which we all know only applies to low-income people and never the well-to-do and the well-heeled—they are never asked to be fiscally responsible. For example, in Florida, the poor have to be fiscally responsible. They even have to be drug tested to get welfare. We give farm subsidies away—that is welfare, too—and nobody is asked to do anything. It is ridiculous. It is a double standard.

Under the guise of fiscal responsibility, Governor Snyder used the State's emergency manager law to remove local power and appoint his own personal emergency managers to run the city of Flint and numerous other committees in Michigan, including my own hometown where I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan.

I am a proud Representative of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and its suburbs today, but I was born in Detroit. I can never—nor would I want to—disconnect my connection to this crisis. This is my crisis. This is the State where I was born and where my two older brothers and my parents and nieces and nephews live right now. My brother, Reverend Brian Ellison of Church of the New Covenant Baptist, was born in Flint.

Of the 25 times that emergency financial managers have been appointed in Michigan since 1990, Rick Snyder has appointed 15 of them. In doing so, he has denied these communities their right to representative democracy. This kind of idea that when your town is in trouble, democracy and the voice of the people cannot be part of the solution, is offensive to anybody who cares about democracy. Instead, it turns over control to an outside dictator who reports only to the Governor, not anyone in the community.

I want to talk about Flint by the numbers just for a moment:

8,657 is the number of children under the age of 16 exposed to lead poisoning—it may be more now;

\$5 million is the amount of money that Flint's emergency manager was trying to save by switching the water supply to the Flint River;

\$1.5 billion is estimated as what it would cost to now replace Flint's corroded water pipes;

\$100 is the amount of money per day it would have cost to treat Flint's water with an anticorrosive agent;

10 is the number of Flint residents who have died from a Legionnaires' outbreak in Flint that experts suspect could be linked to waterborne illnesses;

Zero is the number of corroded pipes removed from Flint since the Governor decided to appoint this emergency manager.

Now, as I close, I just want to say that there is another group of people who I just want to bring to light today, and that is a group of people in our society who live among us who clean hotel rooms, work on farms, and who really work superhard. These are people who may not have documentation to live in the United States.

One of the stories that we have yet to really put a lot of light on is the fact that undocumented people are being, according to reports, turned away from services. You need an ID to get the water. There are cases where undocumented people have not been able to get the services that they need.

I just want to say that Flint's undocumented migrants hesitated to request help during the water crisis. On this floor and in other legislatures around this country, conservative legislators are talking about the aliens and all this kind of stuff as if these people are from another planet, but my God, you deny them water? Come on. The fact of the matter is that this is a humanitarian crisis. It deserves the full attention of our government.

The Progressive Caucus will offer an entry in our budget addressing this crisis and coming at it with the money. Yes, we think the health and safety of the children and the people of Flint are more important than somebody's tax cut. We do believe that to be true, and we are going to be standing firm for that.

We also urge all of our Members in this body to say wait a minute. Anytime public policy says the only thing that matters is cutting taxes and we don't really care about public services, you are going to get a crisis like this.

Now that we have seen what this abhorrent philosophy will bring, I think we can all say we need to slow down and ask ourselves the question: Isn't it worth a moment to spend time to deliver quality public services to all of the people of this country? Isn't it time to let government do what it is supposed to do, to protect the people?

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank Mr. ELLISON, and I appreciate him taking the time to be here.

I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for her leadership in coordinating this Special Order, and thank you to the Michigan Representatives who have been working so hard to try to respond to this tragedy.

Madam Speaker, there will be a lot of investigations designed to find out what happened, whose fault it was, whether or not any crimes were committed, and how to prevent this from happening in the future, but there is one thing we know, and that is that children have been poisoned by lead exposure.

As the ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, we have begun the process to determine how to appropriately respond,

because we know that lead poisoning creates severe challenges to the public school system.

Children are entitled to an equal educational opportunity. That goes back to the *Brown v. Board of Education* case where the Court found that it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if denied the opportunity of an education. That opportunity is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

The local, State, and Federal governments have all failed our children, allowing them to be poisoned by lead exposure. We owe it to our children to mitigate, to the extent possible, the adverse effects of lead poisoning so they can achieve an equal educational opportunity.

Research already shows that the adverse effects of lead exposure are great due to decreased academic attainment, increased need for special education, higher likelihood of behavioral challenges, and it can result in a significant loss in earnings and tax revenues, additional burdens to the criminal justice system, and great stress on our hospital systems.

The opportunity for a strong start to a successful life will be stunted for Flint's children if they are not given the necessary resources including early interventions and access to high-quality early learning programs such as Head Start to help them overcome the lifelong effects of exposure to lead.

We have an obligation to provide these resources—and provide them as soon as possible—while they can be most effective. Current funding, however, only allows 20 percent of Flint children who are eligible for Head Start to actually attend.

The children who are able to participate in Head Start can receive early screening services for developmental disabilities. Families can receive counseling and assistance in accessing services. Head Start can provide the Flint families affected by the disaster with early intervention services that they desperately need. But in order to do so, all families eligible for Head Start—not just the 20 percent presently participating—need to be able to access Head Start. We need to come up with the money to make that possible.

But make no mistake; we should not expect the fix to this crisis to be easy or cheap. The impact of lead exposure on young children is long-lasting, and our response must have a long-term approach. We must use all of the tools available to us, starting with prenatal care and screenings for pregnant moms, early intervention to identify special education needs, title I funding from ESEA, after-school programs, and even investments in college access efforts.

Our children's futures have been compromised by bad government decisions, but we know how to mitigate that damage. The response has to be

more than just the infrastructure improvements and repairs to finally provide clean water. We need a comprehensive response. Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce will be working to formulate the appropriate response to the educational challenges. Other committees will work to the responses within their jurisdictions. But one thing is certain: it is imperative that these resources be provided now, without delay.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Madam Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, I thank Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN for her leadership, and I stand with my colleagues from the Michigan delegation and our colleagues throughout this House in our outrage over what has occurred and the pursuit of justice for the people of Flint.

As a New Yorker, I say to myself: There, but for the grace of God, go I. We, too, in New York City faced a lead crisis when callous landlords did nothing to abate lead paint in their older housing stock. A crisis that impacted untold numbers of young New Yorkers remains with us to this very day. But then, that was the private sector. Who will speak for the marginalized and disenfranchised that depended on the State leadership of the Governor, Mr. Snyder, and his team to keep them safe from harm?

The decision of the State of Michigan to change the source of water for the sake of saving money showed an utter disregard for the well-being of the people of Flint. It is a national disgrace. It is a national tragedy. This callous disregard for the poor and the vulnerable leaves us all culpable for what has happened in our Nation.

□ 1800

The timeline of events is especially unnerving. The source of Flint's water was changed in April of 2014. For nearly 1 year, complaints about the water quality were ignored by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

It took the EPA one series of tests to determine that the water was unusable, just one series of tests. And we know, as a result of that, that this water was definitely unsafe for human consumption.

The result is babies, children, nursing mothers, the elderly, some with compromised immune systems and health, were poisoned by their own government.

Access to clean water and clean air are fundamental human rights. The State of Michigan has failed the people of Flint. Its State leadership has demonstrated a contempt and marginalization of the humanity of her people.

Who will speak for the marginalized and disenfranchised of the callous disregard for the poor and the most vulnerable?

Well, tonight and every night across this Nation Americans are standing up to say that this cannot be tolerated, that justice is due, that we have to speak out for the vulnerable communities, often minority and impoverished, that are victims of environmental injustice.

We must stand firm in our resolve to see that the people of Flint are dealt with in a humane manner, that their lives are enhanced by a quick remedy to what they are currently experiencing.

The malaise, the laid-back way in which people—in particular, the Governor and his administration—are dealing with this crisis leaves all of us uneasy.

You have heard from my colleagues this evening about the impact of lead on the brains of developing children. You have heard about how lead impacts the health of those with compromised immune systems.

We are also hearing about other contagions within the waters of the Flint River maybe even being tied to Legionnaires' disease. We will continue to see health crises emerge as more and more is discovered about actually what is in the Flint River.

We have also been told that the level of lead within this water is so over the top that the filtration systems that have been given to the people are no longer capable of providing them with a safe source of water.

So it is now up to Governor Snyder to do right by his own people, to stand up and to do what is right by the people of Flint, Michigan. The effects of what has taken place in Flint will be effects that will be felt and experienced by the people of Flint, Michigan, now and into the years to come.

It is our sincere hope that the Governor and his team will do right by the people of Flint, Michigan, and, by extension, the people of the United States by moving swiftly to apply the resources of Michigan to the mitigation of this problem as well as to make sure that every life, every soul, that has been impacted by the poisonous water that they have consumed will be taken care of today and for the rest of their lives.

So I thank BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN for her leadership this evening. I thank all of my colleagues for standing up, for speaking out, for being consistent, in demanding that this Governor do right by his people, that he come out with a plan immediately to direct the resources needed to fix this problem, and to address the illness that is ultimately going to be a part of the lives of a significant portion of this population for the rest of their lives. It is the right thing to do.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you very much to the Congresswoman.

Madam Speaker, could you tell me how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 7 minutes remaining.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Very quickly, I would like to acknowledge

the fact that Congressman JOHN CONYERS of the 13th District of Michigan was here and has left a statement, which I will submit, with regard to this issue and the fact that he visited Flint, Michigan, just the other day.

I also want to just state two things very briefly, number one, something that Congresswoman CLARKE spoke to, which is that these are permanent concerns that we have. This impairment that has taken place as a result of exposure to lead is something that these young people will carry the rest of their lives.

It is not just what we are going to do about trying to educate them now. It is how we are going to address this as they move through adulthood and how that impacts their ability to take care of their lives and to have careers, to be responsible.

So I do hope that the Governor does, indeed, do the investigations and the work that he needs to do in order to address these issues immediately. I hope the Federal Government does the kind of investigation of everybody included in this situation, including the Governor, to see just why this had to happen in the first place.

Finally, I yield to the eloquent and vivacious and ever-ready Congresswoman from the great State of Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, may I have the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 5 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman for her generosity, and let me, first of all, thank her for leading the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

I understand she is due a recognition, of which I celebrate, that she will have shortly. But let me thank her for her astuteness about state government.

You come from state government. You understand oversight. You understand the responsibilities. You are the right person to lead this particular Special Order.

Madam Speaker, it is important today to say that I fully support the proposed supportive services that have been accounted or recounted by Congressman KILDEE, Congresswoman LAWRENCE, and Congressman SCOTT, who is the ranking member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. We must embrace and surround those children.

I must say it again. I said it earlier. For those of us who remember Jim Jones, who left California and gave a poisonous concoction to children in a foreign country, we have a Jim Jones in Michigan giving a poisonous concoction to the children of Flint, Michigan.

So we are obviously upset about this, and we want the services to be provided for children, who are innocent.

But, at the same time, wearing a hat that deals with the law and law and order, I must make the argument that there has to be a criminal investigation.

Let me applaud the Department of Justice because I sent a letter January 14, 2016, to ask the Department of Justice to immediately investigate the actions of State officials in Michigan. They are actively engaged. The FBI is actively engaged, and their work is not for naught.

Let me give you an example, Madam Speaker, very quickly. The Governor was asked to release his e-mails. Part of what he released was this black, redacted pages of information.

He released some other materials that I think are telling. Here we are: "We need Treasury to work with Dan in Flint on a clear side by side comparison of the health benefits and costs of GLWA [Great Lakes Water Authority] vs. a more optimized Flint system."

But here's the real key: "Also, we need to look at what financing mechanisms are available to Flint to pay for any higher cost actions."

Madam Speaker, the Governor of the State of Michigan is sitting on \$1 billion. Yet, he is asking a city that is near bankruptcy, controlled by an emergency manager under a State law that was rejected by the people of Michigan, to find out how they can pay for better water. They have no money to pay for better water.

But let me tell you what they did. Instead of helping Flint pay for better water, helping them have a plan for anticorrosion, they paid an emergency manager under a law that was rejected by the voters of Michigan.

This individual led the Detroit's Public Schools as an emergency manager. I am told that that was literally brought to collapse. He was paid \$180,000. Well, he didn't do that well enough that they wanted to give him \$221,000.

Let me say this. The emergency manager payment for the city of Flint—let me correct that—was \$180,000. When he did it for Detroit's Public Schools, that came to near collapse. It was \$221,000.

From my perspective, there is much here that warrants a criminal investigation.

Let me add to the point. On April 25, 2014, the city switches its water supply. Let me be very clear. The city leaders—I served on city council—had no authority because the emergency manager was in place.

Did the emergency manager have an anticorrosion plan? No.

Did they test the water when they opted to go cheap and save \$5 million and go into the Flint River? No.

The city switches its water supply, because of money, from a Detroit system that works. The switch was made as a cost-saving measure for the struggling majority-Black city of Flint.

Soon after, residents began to complain about the water's color, taste, odor, and to report rashes and concerns about bacteria.

In August and September 2014, city officials suggested that they boil the water, the complete wrong thing to do.

They did not have a plan for anticorrosion. They did not follow the

Federal law that indicated that you had to put phosphate, an anticorrosive element, into the water. So it continued to deteriorate and deteriorate.

Guess what, Madam Speaker, and my colleagues. The emergency manager was never a scientist. It was not someone who said: Let me test the water before I order citizens to drink the water.

That sounds to me like there is culpability and criminal culpability because lives have been endangered. And so I am looking forward to the attorney general of Michigan coming in, just as the Governor should, and looking forward to a thorough investigation, Madam Speaker, that will find some relief.

My final point, Madam Speaker, is to say that the Governor is culpable. The Governor right now needs to go into his rainy day fund and provide the full funding requested by Mr. KILDEE and all others to fix the Flint water system.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my neighbors in Flint, Michigan, who are facing one of the greatest disasters in American history. We cannot erase their pain. But I know that I stand with my colleagues in saying we will do everything in our power to help them recover and help make sure it never happens again.

The sort of regulatory neglect that has brought Flint to its knees has a well-known disparate impact on urban, low-income, and minority communities. Residents who cannot afford to move to suburbs and wealthier neighborhoods, or who do not want to leave their longtime communities, are treated as second-class citizens. Here in Michigan, the twofold combination of negligent environmental protection and underinvestment in infrastructure is forcing those in underserved communities to pay with their health and lives.

We see this in places like Detroit, where 8% of children have elevated blood levels—16 times the national average according to the Centers for Disease Control. We see it in places like Flint, where an unelected emergency manager switched the city's water to an unsafe, untreated source, which has exposed tens of thousands of residents to toxic lead levels.

Exposure to lead—a potent neurotoxin—carries lifelong consequences. Flint parents must now raise children who face lifelong developmental and behavioral challenges, cover economic costs their city cannot afford, and confront mounting medical bills that cannot undo the harm they have suffered. Our thoughts and prayers are with them. But they need more than that—they need action.

It has become an all too common tale that whenever an urban or low-income community's water or air quality is in question, risks to the health and safety of its residents are ignored. This must stop. Underserved communities generally face so-called "acceptable" risks that no other community or suburb would ever accept—or be asked to accept. This must stop. In Flint, the decision was made by someone they never voted for and approved by someone who did not care that it might lead to toxic exposure for city's residents. This must stop.

The time when apologies and resignations would suffice has passed. The disregard for the health and safety of our neighbors in Flint will mean massive, heartbreaking consequences for those affected and their city. Anything less than a transformative, lasting shift in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Michigan's other regulatory bodies—from panderers to guardians—simply adds insult to injury. We are not dealing with isolated events of negligence. There is a pattern and practice of disregard for the quality of our air and water that has become intolerable, and we will not settle for mere assurances to do better.

Unfortunately, it appears those responsible for Flint are more focused on surviving the scandal than fixing the problem. Governor Snyder has said he is sorry but he's only offering half measures: free water that they cannot drink anyway, a fraction of what is needed to fix Flint's plumbing, and resources that cannot possibly overcome the health impacts of lead exposure. It appears the only time he thinks Michigan, the City of Flint, and the federal government should work together is when it is time to apportion blame, or when it is time to do everything he says on his terms.

But we know how that story ends. It is time for those of us in Congress who care about a safe environment more than the business environment to act. That means directing federal resources to help Flint recover and rebuild, figuring out exactly what went wrong, and ensuring that this never happens again.

Fixing this problem starts with providing government services that will actually help these people heal. Especially the children so they can succeed in life—which means a proper education, comprehensive healthcare, and access to everything a child in a wealthy community would have if they were similarly exposed. It means repairing the infrastructure, so that they can have clean water again.

Preventing this from happening in the future starts with strengthening—not cutting—our enforcement capacity. It means eliminating emergency management programs that cut government regardless of the cost and strip citizens of their democratic rights. It means stopping with the idea that a small government is a good government, and it means stopping efforts to undermine our government by cutting its budgets to the bone.

CONGRATULATING ABIT MASSEY FOR RECEIVING THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Abit Massey on receiving the prestigious University of Georgia President's Award in recognition of his extraordinary service to UGA and the State of Georgia.

Abit is an institution in Georgia. He has served as the head of the Georgia Department of Commerce, the UGA Alumni Association, and on the board of the Georgia Research Foundation,