

an oversight hearing on this issue as soon as possible. We owe it to the American people. Family separation and detention should no longer be a political issue. We need to come together and make sure the President understands that migrant children can no longer be treated as pawns or hostages—as leverage to secure changes to parts of our immigration system that have nothing to do with the plight of these immigrant families. We should reject this President's crude and cynical political strategy. We cannot risk continuing to separate and indefinitely detain migrant families. These practices offend our basic sense of morality and justice, and they are unnecessary to protect our borders.

Yes, we all want border security. Yes, we want to stop drug traffickers and human traffickers from taking advantage of our borders. We want more resources in judges and Border Patrol agents and members of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service. They should have the resources and support they need. We met with many of the dedicated men and women who are serving in those agencies. Violating our basic sense of due process, abrogating due process rights so adjudication is denied and due process is abrogated certainly should be intolerable.

At this juncture, the emergent need that has to be addressed now is reuniting these families. If shaming the administration is what is needed, we should do it, but ultimately the rule of law will be enforced by our courts. They will be regarded in history along with our free press as the bulwark between a potentially tyrannical Presidency and preservation of our fundamental rights. Now is the time to celebrate and protect those basic rights and the rule of law.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING JUDGE GEORGE LEIGHTON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 27 years ago this week, one of the towering giants of American justice announced that he was retiring. Thurgood Marshall was a pillar of America's civil rights revolution, architect of the legal strategy that ended the shameful era of official segregation in this Nation, and the first African-American Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. His name will be forever linked with such civil rights icons as Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and JOHN LEWIS.

But the moral arc of the universe is never bent by just a few hands. We

know that. The foot soldiers for justice in America's civil rights revolution also includes millions of people whose names are not recorded in history books—people like the men and women of Montgomery, AL, who walked to work and church and every other place for more than a year in 1955 and '56 rather than ride on the back of segregated city buses. The moral arc of the universe was bent by thousands of ordinary men and women who risked their livelihoods and sometimes even their lives by daring to try to register to vote in some states in the Deep South before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The city of Chicago was honored to be the adopted home for more than 70 years of a man who bent the moral arc of the universe more than most. George Leighton's name may not be as well known as that of his old friend, Thurgood Marshall, but his contribution to the civil rights movement and to American justice was profound. Judge Leighton died earlier this month at the age of 105. If you think that is remarkable, consider this: He only retired 6 years ago, at the age of 99, still strong and sharp as a tack.

As a pioneering civil rights lawyer, George Leighton took on entrenched racism and injustice in Chicago and far beyond. He fought for fair housing and integrated public schools in Illinois and for voting rights and equal access to jury service in the Deep South, and he won. Several of his legal victories took him all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

George Leighton was also a distinguished law professor and a judge. In 1969, he made history as the first African American ever to sit on the Illinois Appellate Court. Six years later, President Gerald Ford nominated him to serve on the Federal bench as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Illinois. As a fellow judge and admirer and recently, Judge Leighton defined for generations of Chicagoans what it meant to be a lawyer.

He was a man of enormous intelligent, integrity, and courage who dedicate his first to seeing that the law was applied equally to all. He had a heroic imagination. Board and raised in the era of Jim Crow, he had the vision to imaging a more just America and the courage to help bring that America into existence. His work and his sacrifices broke barriers and changed the meaning of equality in this country.

Judge Leighton was eloquent, with a rich baritone voice. He dressed impeccably, elegantly, and stood ramrod straight well into his 90s. He was a champion chess player. Despite all of that, he was a remarkably humble man.

He was born in 1912 in New Bedford, MA, one of seven children of immigrant parents from the Cape Verde Islands off the western coast of Africa. His family's name was Leitao—a Creole name—but a fourth-grade teacher

changed his name to Leighton, reasoning that he would go further in life with a name that sounded more American.

He and his siblings worked with his parents in cranberry bogs and picked strawberries and blueberries from March until late November every year. His early education was hit-or-miss, since education had to fit in around the demands of farm work. He had reached only the seventh grade by age 17, when he left home to work on an oil tanker sailing from Fall River, MA, to Aruba, off the northern coast of South America. That job ended when the ship's crew mutinied.

George Leighton returned to New Bedford, working in restaurant kitchens and playing percussion in a dance band.

Always a voracious reader, he borrowed books wherever he could and took classes through the Works Project Administration. In 1936, he tied for first place in a local essay contest. With his \$200 prize money, he talked Howard University into admitting him on a conditional basis, without a high school diploma. He made the dean's list that first semester and every semester and graduated from Howard 2 years later, Phi Beta Kappa.

It was during his Howard years that he met Virginia Quivers, the woman who would become his wife and the love of his life.

After Howard, George Leighton attended Harvard Law School on scholarship—one of the few African Americans of his generation to attend that prestigious school—working odd jobs to support himself.

His law studies were interrupted after 1 year by World War II. For 3 years, he served as an officer in the U.S. Army's fabled 93rd Infantry Division, an all-Black division, in places such as Guadalcanal.

He returned to Harvard after the war's end and graduated a year later.

He moved to Chicago to start his legal career. He had never been to Chicago before, but he knew two things about the city: It was a cauldron of racial tension, and Chicago voters had just elected the only African-American Member of Congress. There was important work to do in Chicago, and there was a glimmer of hope that change was possible.

The Chicago that greeted George Leighton was a hard place. Even with a Harvard law degree, George Leighton couldn't rent office space or dine in many of the restaurants or stay at a hotel in the Loop. He was not allowed to join the segregated Chicago Bar Association or the American Bar Association.

For 18 years, he practiced law with other African American attorneys, from an office in the shadow of Comiskey Park on Chicago's South Side. When his clients couldn't afford to pay him, which was not uncommon, he worked for free.

He built a national reputation for criminal and civil rights cases and several times won cases before the U.S.

Supreme Court. He helped integrate the Chicago Housing Authority and the public schools of Harrisburg, IL. In the South, he successfully challenged an amendment to the Alabama State constitution that used a “constitutional knowledge” test to deny African Americans the right to vote. He also helped to end the exclusion of African Americans from jury duty in Mississippi.

In 1951, 5 years after arriving in Chicago, George Leighton was indicted by a Cook County grand jury. His “crime”? Telling his clients, an African-American family, that they had a legal right to rent an apartment in the then all-White Chicago suburb of Cicero. Enraged neighbors rioted, nearly burning the apartment building nearly to the ground.

The county grand jury indicted George Leighton on charges of conspiracy to incite riot and lower property values. Judge Leighton was represented by his friend, Thurgood Marshall, and the indictment was quickly dismissed.

Not long after that, with the support of Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, George Leighton was elected as a Cook County judge. He was later elevated to the State appellate court, the first African American to sit on that bench.

He served as a Federal judge from 1976 until 1989. He would have preferred to stay on the bench, but his beloved wife, Virginia, had suffered several strokes some time before. Judge Leighton’s insistence to provide her with round-the-clock medical care had depleted the family’s savings, and he needed to make more money.

He returned to private law practice, joining the Chicago firm of Neal & Leroy. His new partner, Langdon Neal, was the son of Judge Leighton’s old friend. Judge Leighton could have joined any law firm in Chicago, but he chose once again to go with a small, minority-owned firm. That was important to him.

Langdon Neal tells the story about walking into the office early one morning to find the lights already on. He looked into Judge Leighton’s office, saw him sprawled out on the floor, and feared the worst. Before his law partner could say a word, Judge Leighton pushed himself up and did 10 more push-ups. He was taking a rest during his morning exercises.

At 77, he still had a lot of fight still in him. For the next 22 years, he would practice law, looking and sounding like a man decades younger. At 97, his hearing, vision, and cholesterol were all still perfect, and he was only 3 pounds heavier than when he was released from Active military duty.

As a Cook County judge in 1965, Judge Leighton acquitted two Latino men accused of beating and slashing a Chicago police officer. Judge Leighton believed that the officers who testified against the men were lying, and he told them so.

The decision touched off a public furor and angry calls to remove Judge

Leighton from the bench. A Chicago Tribune reporter asked the judge if he feared for his safety. No, Judge Leighton quipped, “I’m making careful plans to die of old age in office.”

Six years ago this month, June 2012, the Cook County courthouse where Judge Leighton acquitted those men, the courthouse where he first made his name as a civil rights lawyer in the 1940s and ’50s and where he began his career as a judge, was renamed in his honor. “26th and Cal” is now the Judge George N. Leighton Criminal Court Building. It is one of many tributes in his honor.

In 2005, the main post office in his boyhood home of New Bedford, MA, was renamed in his honor. In 2008, the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission established the Honorable George N. Leighton Justice Award. Judge Leighton accepted these and other honors with grace, humility, and a bit of puzzlement. He was always genuinely surprised that people found his life worth celebrating in such ways.

There was only one honor that Judge Leighton wanted for himself at the end of his life. His final wish was to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Judge Leighton died in New Bedford on June 6, the 74th anniversary of D-Day. In a reflection of Judge Leighton’s distinguished military service, his place in American history, and the esteem in which he was held by so many, Arlington National Cemetery has approved his burial in those hallowed grounds.

Sometime in the not-too-distant future, Judge George Leighton, the son of immigrants who bent the moral arc of history, will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. He will rest there in honor among such other American heroes as his old friend, Thurgood Marshall, General Benjamin O. Davis, the commander of the Tuskegee Airmen and the first African-American general in the U.S. Air Force, and other members of the Army’s 93rd Infantry Division, with whom Judge Leighton fought with in World War II. It is a fitting final tribute to a great man who fought so long and in so many ways to preserve and defend freedom and liberty for all.

I am honored to have known him, and Loretta and I want to offer our condolences to his family, especially to his daughters, Virginia and Barbara, and their husbands, to Judge Leighton’s five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, and to his friends and colleagues.

ENERGY AND WATER, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILL AND THE AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION BILL

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss votes on final passage of H.R. 5895 and the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2.

I was not in Washington on Monday because I was visiting Senator JOHN MCCAIN at his ranch in Arizona.

The Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2019, H.R. 5895, is the result of a commendable bipartisan negotiation process led by Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member LEAHY of the Appropriations Committee. The bill includes strong funding for ongoing work on Bureau of Reclamation rural water projects like the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System that will benefit approximately 300,000 people in the southwest Minnesota, southeast South Dakota, and northwest Iowa regions. The bill also includes legislation I led with Senator TILLIS to create a center of excellence within the Department of Veterans Affairs to address the health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits. Had I been in Washington, I would have voted in favor of its passage.

The Agriculture and Nutrition Act, H.R. 2, passed the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee by a vote of 20 to 1. The bill will provide critical investments in communities in Minnesota and will provide much-needed certainty for our farmers and ranchers. The bill includes provisions I championed to continue investments in renewable energy programs, create an animal disease and disaster program, and provide support for our dairy farmers. Had I been in Washington, I would have voted in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the bill.

Thank you.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a statement from the National Sheriff’s Association about border security and immigration reform be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL SHERIFF’S ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT ON BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Government Affairs Committee of the National Sheriffs’ Association recommends to the Board that Sheriffs stand together to affirm that securing of the borders of the United States and reform of the Immigration System are the top legislative issues for the Association.

Sheriffs pledge that they will commit their influence and some financial resources of the Association to affecting a resolution to these issues.

The National Sheriffs’ Association recognizes and supports results-based solutions that address or solve the multitude of challenges that ineffective border security has caused our nation and our communities.

Further, the Committee recommends that the Association vigorously supports any legislation that includes:

Support for following the Rule of Law for the legal immigration process;

Makes the Nation’s borders secure through use of physical barriers, technology and increased manpower of the Customs & Border Patrol and ICE;