

recognition, and Noelle rightfully earned this award. Noelle is planning on continuing her studies at Texas Southern University, and we wish her the best of luck in her future career.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Noelle Walker on receiving the Sports Medicine Scholarship from Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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**HON. DOUG COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I was absent due to being unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yea” on Roll Call No. 516 and “Yea” on Roll Call No. 515.

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IN RECOGNITION OF CHRISTINE BUTTON STRUMSKI ON HER INDUCTION INTO THE LUZERNE COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME

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**HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor members of the Tunkhannock Little League Association and Northeastern Pennsylvania native, Christine Button Strumski. This year, Christine was inducted into the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame at the 35th annual dinner on August 11, 2019 for her distinct achievements in the sport of softball.

Each year, the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame honors those who have brought fame and recognition to the state of Pennsylvania through their outstanding achievements and contributions in athletic endeavors.

Growing up in a time when sports like baseball were male-dominated, Christine became a trail-blazer for the inclusion of women in sports in the 1970s. In the 70s, the National Little League was sued by the National Organization for Women for discrimination based on sex. Christine would go on to help form the first girls’ softball league in Tunkhannock. Dedicated to equality and inclusion, Christine commissioned the board to have a girls’ team from the league participate in the State of Pennsylvania Baseball Tournament. The girls’ league was so new at the time that one team would only have to win six games to become state champions. Despite the small number of competitors and a new league, the competition was fierce. Christine helped her team secure the first state girls’ softball championship against Minersville.

Today, Christine is still actively involved in the Tunkhannock Little League Association. This past year, the girls secured another state championship title. Under her leadership, the team qualified for the Softball World Series in Portland, Oregon where they came in second.

Christine’s dedication to equality and excellence has been an inspiration to all. Her service and willingness to stand and be counted in the uphill battle for equality in sports is admirable.

It is an honor to recognize Christine on her induction into the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame. May her story serve as an inspiration to the next generation of Pennsylvania athletes striving for excellence.

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“400 ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SLAVE ARRIVING IN AMERICA”

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**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE for anchoring this Special Order recognizing the 400th anniversary of the first slave arriving in America.

Four hundred years ago the first slave arrived in America, ships set sail from the west coast of Africa and in the process, began one of mankind’s most inhumane practices: human bondage and slavery.

For two centuries, human beings—full of hopes and fears, dreams and concerns, ambition and anguish—were transported onto ships like chattel, and the lives of many forever changed.

The reverberations from this horrific series of acts—a transatlantic slave trade that touched the shores of a colony that came to be known as America, and later a democratic republic known as the United States of America—are unknown and worthy of exploration.

Approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and colonies that became the United States from 1619 to 1865.

The institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United States from 1789 through 1865.

American Slavery is our country’s original sin and its existence at the birth of our nation is a permanent scar on our country’s founding documents, and on the venerated authors of those documents, and it is a legacy that continued well into the last century.

While it is nearly impossible to determine how the lives touched by slavery could have flourished in the absence of bondage, we have certain datum that permits us to examine how a subset of Americans—African Americans—have been affected by the callousness of involuntary servitude.

We know that in almost every segment of society—education, healthcare, jobs and wealth—the inequities that persist in America are more acutely and disproportionately felt in Black America.

This historic discrimination continues: African-Americans continue to suffer debilitating economic, educational, and health hardships including but not limited to having nearly 1,000,000 black people incarcerated; an unemployment rate more than twice the current white unemployment rate; and an average of less than  $\frac{1}{16}$  of the wealth of white families, a disparity which has worsened, not improved over time.

A closer look at the statistics reveals the stark disparity in these areas.

Black household wealth is less than one fifth of the national average.

The median black household had a net worth of just \$17,600 in 2016. Yet in that same year, the median white household held

\$171,000 in wealth while the national household median was \$97,300.

The black unemployment rate is 6.6 percent more than double the national unemployment rate.

Approximately 31 percent of black children live in poverty, compared to 11 percent of white children. The national average is 18 percent, which suggests that the percentage of black children living in poverty is more than 150 percent of the national average.

In the healthcare domain, the disparities suffered by African Americans is also troubling.

Over 20 percent of African Americans do not have health insurance, compared to a national average between 8.8 percent and 9.1 percent.

One in four African American women are uninsured.

Compared to the national average, African American adults are 20 percent more likely to suffer from asthma and three times more likely to die from it.

Black adults are 72 percent more likely to suffer from diabetes than average.

Black women are four times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes, such as embolisms, and pregnancy-related hypertension, than any other racial group.

In our nation, among children aged 19–35 months, black children were vaccinated at rates lower than white children: 68 percent versus 78 percent, respectively.

Education has often been called the key to unlocking social mobility.

African American students are less likely than white students to have access to college-ready courses.

In fact, in 2011–12, only 57 percent of black students had access to a full range of math and science courses necessary for college readiness, compared to with 81 percent of Asian American students and 71 percent of white students.

Black students spend less time in the classroom due to discipline, which further hinders their access to a quality education.

Black students are nearly two times as likely to be suspended without educational services as white students.

Black students are also 3.8 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white students.

In addition, black children represent 19 percent of the nation’s pre-school population, yet 47 percent of those receiving more than one out-of-school suspension.

School districts with the most students of color, on average, receive 15 percent less per student in state and local funding than the whitest districts.

And, of course, we cannot consider the disparities between black and white in America without considering the intersection of African Americans and the Criminal Justice system.

There are more Black men in bondage today who are incarcerated or under correctional control, than there were black men who were enslaved in the 1800s.

The United States locks up African American males at a rate 5.8 times higher than the most openly racist country in the world ever did:

South Africa under apartheid (1993), African American males: 851 per 100,000

United States (2006), African American males: 4,789 per 100,000

Incarceration is not an equal opportunity punishment. For example, incarceration rates in the United States by race were:

African Americans: 2,468 per 100,000

Latinos: 1,038 per 100,000

Whites: 409 per 100,000

African American offenders receive sentences that are 10 percent longer than white offenders for the same crimes and are 21 percent more likely to receive mandatory-minimum sentences than white defendants according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Looking at males aged 25–29 and by race, you can see what is going on even clearer:

For White males ages 25–29: 1,685 per 100,000.

For Latino males ages 25–29: 3,912 per 100,000.

For African American males ages 25–29: 11,695 per 100,000. (That's 11.7 percent of Black men in their late 20s.)

Overall, one in 50 murders is ruled justified—but when the killer is white and the victim is a black man, the figure climbs to one in six.

A handgun homicide is nine times more likely to be found justified—when the killer is white and the victim is a black man.

Handgun killings with a white shooter and a black male victim exhibit an even more dramatic bias: one in four is found justified.

But then again, we knew these inequities existed because for many Black Americans, these disparities are just a part of daily life.

This is why, in 1989, my predecessor as the most senior African American on this September Judiciary Committee, the honorable John Conyers, a past Chairman of this Committee introduced H.R. 40, legislation that would establish a commission to study and develop proposals attendant to reparations.

Though many thought it a lost cause, John Conyers believed that a day would come when our nation would need to account for the brutal mistreatment of African-Americans during chattel slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the enduring structural racism endemic to our society.

I would like to take this moment to personally thank the estimable John Conyers for his work on this legislation for the last thirty years.

With the rise and normalization of white supremacist expression during the Trump administration, the discussion of H.R. 40 and the concept of restorative justice have gained more urgency, garnering the attention of mainstream commentator, and illustrating the need for a national reckoning.

H.R. 40 is intended to create the framework for a national discussion on the enduring impact of slavery and its complex legacy to begin that necessary process of atonement.

The designation of this legislation as H.R. 40 is intended to memorialize the promise made by General William T. Sherman, in his 1865 Special Field Order No. 15, to redistribute 400,000 acres of formerly Confederate owned coastal land in South Carolina and Florida, subdivided into 40 acre plots.

Since its introduction, H.R. 40 has acted to spur some governmental acknowledgement of the sin of slavery, but most often the response has taken the form of an apology.

However, even the well intentioned commitments to examine the historical and modern day implications of slavery by the Clinton administration fell short of the mark and failed to inspire substantive public discourse.

Since my reintroduction of H.R. 40 at the beginning of this Congress, both the legislation and concept of reparations have become the focus of national debate.

For many, it is apparent that the success of the Obama administration has unleashed a backlash of racism and intolerance that is an echo of America's dark past which has yet to be exorcised from the national consciousness.

Commentators have turned to H.R. 40 as a response to formally begin the process of analyzing, confronting and atoning for these dark chapters of American history.

Even conservative voices, like that of New York Times columnist David Brooks, are starting to give the reparations cause the hearing it deserves, observing that "Reparations are a drastic policy and hard to execute, but the very act of talking and designing them heals a wound and opens a new story."

Similarly, a majority of the Democratic presidential contenders have turned to H.R. 40 as a tool for reconciliation, with 17 cosponsoring or claiming they would sign the bill into law if elected.

Though critics have argued that the idea of reparations is unworkable politically or financially, their focus on money misses the point of the H.R. 40 commission's mandate.

The goal of these historical investigations is to bring American society to a new reckoning with how our past affects the current conditions of African-Americans and to make America a better place by helping the truly disadvantaged.

Consequently, the reparations movement does not focus on payments to individuals, but to remedies that can be created in as many forms necessary to equitably address the many kinds of injuries sustained from chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges.

To merely focus on finance is an empty gesture and betrays a lack of understanding of the depth of the unaddressed moral issues that continue to haunt this nation.

While it might be convenient to assume that we can address the current divisive racial and political climate in our nation through race neutral means, experience shows that we have not escaped our history.

By passing H.R. 40, Congress can start a movement toward the national reckoning we need to bridge racial divides.

Reparations are ultimately about respect and reconciliation—and the hope that one day, all Americans can walk together toward a more just future.

We owe it to those who were ripped from their homes those many years ago an ocean away; we owe it to the millions of Americans—yes they were Americans—who were born into bondage, knew a life of servitude, and died anonymous deaths, as prisoners of this system.

We owe it to the millions of descendants of these slaves, for they are the heirs to a society of inequities and indignities that naturally filled the vacuum after slavery was formally abolished 154 years ago.

And let me end as I began, noting that this year is the 400th commemoration of the 1619 arrival of the first captive Africans in English North America, at Point Comfort, Virginia.

Let us proceed with the cause of this morning with a full heart, with the knowledge that this work will take time and trust.

Let us also do with the spirit of reconciliation and understanding that this bill represents.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to help address the harm that slavery has had on our nation by supporting H.R. 40.

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COACH FRANKLIN POST-GAME INTERVIEW

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**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Penn State Quarterback Michael Shuster, who was highlighted by Head Coach James Franklin in a post-game interview.

A reporter asked, "Coach, you mentioned the reaction when Nick Eury scored the touchdown. Can you talk about the quarterback that engineered the final drive and what you said to him and set up for him?"

Coach Franklin responded by saying, "He's another guy. Michael Shuster has been phenomenal. I'm not sure if this is the right decision or not, but he has started leaning into coaching. He already got a job offer in the real world. He just does a great job for us. He's like having another coach. He takes a lot of pride in it. He's been a fantastic student, a fantastic teammate. I'm a huge Shuster fan. He brings a lot of value to our organization."

Congratulations to Michael Shuster on a great drive in week one of the Penn State football season.

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CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. THELMA ROMBERGER

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**HON. SCOTT PERRY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, today I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Thelma Romberger, a resident of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who is celebrating 100 years young on Thursday, December 12, 2019.

Mrs. Romberger was born in her grandmother's farmhouse in rural Carlisle and has since claimed Southcentral Pennsylvania as her lifelong home. She married her husband of 53 years, World War II Veteran Chester E. Romberger, in May of 1941. Throughout her life, Mrs. Romberger owned and operated both a grocery store and a mobile home park; she also mowed her own grass with a push lawn mower well into her eighties.

She previously enjoyed camping and is now both an avid salt and pepper shaker collector and Checkers player.

I join Thelma's friends and family in extending my best and warmest wishes to her on this special day, and in celebrating her life and contributions to our great Commonwealth and Country.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Tenth Congressional District, I extend God's blessings and my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Thelma Romberger on her 100th Birthday.