

rather than making a mockery of—this bill invests in emergency appropriations for global coronavirus preparedness, response, and relief efforts. Because if we do not address the global pandemic, it will continue to come back to us.

In addition, this bill supports global reproductive health and family planning programs; and promotes equality for LGBTI people and people with disabilities. In particular, it contains my increase-decrease amendment to draw attention to the State Department's shameful attempt to turn back time and strip women and LGBTQI individuals of their civil and human rights.

Members of the House and Senate have now sent five letters to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressing our strong, continued concern regarding the work of the Department of State's Commission on Unalienable Rights ("the Commission"), but we have received no reply. It is simply inexcusable that the Department of State would not respond in any way to our repeated oversight attempts, in particular as the Commission has proven time and time again that it could undermine our nation's ability to lead on critical human rights issues, including with respect to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and protections for millions of people globally in the LGBTQI community.

As a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee I am particularly disturbed that the Secretary has chosen to create the Commission rather than honor the advice of the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, which is vested with the authority to advise the Department on U.S. foreign policy related to human rights. I believe that the Department's strategic priorities should be guided by the Assistant Secretary, Congressionally mandated reporting on human rights, and well established and lasting human rights standards, rather than the Commission. By signaling, through the Commission's mandate and membership, a desire to place religious freedom above all other rights, the State Department is undermining commitments the United States has made abroad. Indeed, the Commission's actions create a risk that the United States will breach those legally binding obligations that do not align with the Commission's view of human rights. Further, the Commission's work could undermine priorities that the United States has encouraged other nations to adopt.

The Trump Administration has shown, time and time again, that it is unwilling to rein in the behavior of despots and dictators. We must not allow the Commission to give them permission to run roughshod over the human rights of even more people around the world.

The United States should be on the front lines of protecting human rights at home and abroad, including those guaranteeing SRHR and protections for millions of people globally in the LGBTQI community. Looking to "natural law" as a method of undermining long established human rights protections for minority groups and elevating religious freedom over other rights is both illegal and immoral.

The Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies division provides funding for important agricultural research. It is critical for Congress to support research and educational programs to ensure the United States remains a global leader in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of

Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) and their Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) provide investments and grants in key areas of transformative research and development. This year's bill provides an additional \$10 million above the enacted level for USDA-NIFA and AFRI, which will provide educational institutions with grants to continue work in key areas of transformative agricultural and food research. We must ensure that these institutions have the funding needed to continue their vital work and demonstrate our commitment to addressing agricultural challenges.

This year's Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies division will include a number of key priorities which will provide significant benefit to my home state. This bill increases funding for the Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) by \$200 million from the 2020 Fiscal Year. An increase for ONPS funding will allow for continued development and maintenance of the Blackstone Valley National Historic Park, which commemorates and preserves the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.

The bill also provides an increase for the Southern New England Estuaries Geographic Program. This critical program engages with stakeholders in my home state, and throughout Southern New England, to preserve our region's estuaries, which provide significant and economic benefit. It also helps to preserve fragile ecosystems and wildlife habitats, and helps to manage the impacts of human activity along our coastline.

I also strongly support this bill's commitment to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The increased funding for NEA and NEH will boost Rhode Island's arts economy, and support our renowned community of artists.

I was also very glad to see this year's Interior and Environment appropriation will continue to restrict the issuing of new oil and gas leases in the Outer Continental Shelf. Rhode Island's ocean economy generates more than \$2 billion annually, and supports more than 41,000 jobs in industries such as commercial fishing, tourism, and other recreational activities. Expansion of oil and gas drilling off the coast Rhode Island, and throughout New England, would devastate our local ocean economy, destroy critical marine habitats, and continue to exacerbate the effects of climate change.

Finally, in this year's Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies division, the committee took significant steps to strengthen suicide prevention programs for our nation's veterans. In particular, this bill provides \$313 million for Suicide Prevention Outreach programs. It will also ensure that \$115 million for the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), a dedicated toll-free hotline for veterans experiencing mental health crises and thoughts of suicide, is available in FY21. This amounts to a \$4 million increase for the VCL from the 2020 level. It is estimated that each day 20 American veterans take their own life. We owe it to the brave men and women who have served our nation in uniform to ensure that they have the best mental health care and available services for them when they return home.

I thank you for the opportunity to express my support for H.R. 7608, and I urge passage by the entire House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7608, a bill to provide Fiscal Year 2021 funding for the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Veterans Affairs, among others. This package includes critical programs that help address important priorities such as helping our most vulnerable escape hunger and our veterans to receive the care and benefits they have earned.

Our country has been hit by an economic freight train and many families have been reeling for months and will continue to do so if the federal government does not step up in the fight against this deadly virus. Food insecurity was a challenge before COVID-19 but it has only gotten worse as tens of millions of Americans have lost their jobs. We have seen long lines at food banks and pantries.

The bill before us ensures that SNAP can continue to help struggling Americans. It blocks ongoing attempts by the Trump Administration to force more people to lose food aid. It supports the WIC program to ensure that we help some of our most vulnerable pregnant women, infants and children.

It also increases funding for grants to help increase access to school breakfast, a priority for me. Unfortunately, too many kids begin the school day without a healthy breakfast and participation in school breakfast lags well behind school lunch. Studies repeatedly show that students who consume nutritious breakfasts have better health outcomes, and better educational outcomes. These dollars will help support innovative and proven interventions that can help increase participation.

I appreciate Chairman BISHOP's leadership in helping to make sure that more families can keep food on the table.

Likewise, I appreciate Chairwoman MCCOLLUM's continued efforts to protect our environment and the Great Lakes. I am pleased that the committee provides a \$15 million increase for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which has been an unmitigated success in working to help our communities address some of the biggest challenges facing these valuable waters.

This bill also increases funding to help protect water quality. I thank the Chairwoman as well as Congresswoman LORI TRAHAN who worked with me to help push for greater funding to help address combined sewer overflows, which endanger both our waters and the public's health. A great number of CSO's are in the Midwest and Northeast and communities need all the support they can to help make the investments to reduce this threat to our waterways. The bill's investment of \$57 million in regular appropriations and \$400 million in emergency funding will go a long way in helping address this problem.

The bill also includes funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, which are the main federal programs supporting investments in critical water infrastructure. Our communities are struggling to

deal with aging infrastructure and the funds in this bill are sorely needed.

And I also appreciate Chairwoman MCCOLLUM's leadership in protecting and strengthening programs that help Native communities. For example, the bill would provide \$6.5 billion for the Indian Health Service, including \$66 million for Urban Indian Health.

And the State-Foreign Operations bill rejects a variety of harmful cuts proposed by the President that would further damage our diplomacy and development efforts. The bill also includes language to permanently repeal the global gag rule, rejects efforts to defend the UNFPA, invests in global health, education, and environment programs, including to address climate change.

It is critical that we invest in our international affairs budget and I applaud chairwoman LOWEY for her steadfast leadership again in helping to protect these key programs. Sadly, this is her last appropriations cycle. While I wish her the best of luck in her retirement, she will be sorely missed.

Lastly, the MilCon-Va bill makes needed investments in health care for our veterans, supports increases for homelessness assistance grants, and to process and pay benefit claims.

This is a good package and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

REMOVAL OF CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS IN NEW ORLEANS

HON. ANTHONY G. BROWN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 2020

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following speech, "Truth: Remarks on the Removal of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans" delivered by Mitch Landrieu at Gallier Hall in New Orleans, LA on May 19, 2017.

Thank you for coming.

The soul of our beloved City is deeply rooted in a history that has evolved over thousands of years; rooted in a diverse people who have been here together every step of the way—for both good and for ill.

It is a history that holds in its heart the stories of Native Americans—the Choctaw, Houma Nation, the Chitimacha.

Of Hernando de Soto, Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, the Acadians, the Islenos, the enslaved people from Senegambia, Free People of Color, the Haitians, the Germans, both the empires of France and Spain. The Italians, the Irish, the Cubans, the south and central Americans, the Vietnamese and so many more.

You see—New Orleans is truly a city of many nations/a melting pot/a bubbling cauldron of many cultures.

There is no other place quite like it in the world that so eloquently exemplifies the uniquely American motto: *e pluribus unum*—out of many we are one.

But there are also other truths about our city that we must confront.

New Orleans was America's largest slave market: a port where hundreds of thousands of souls were brought, sold and shipped up the Mississippi River to lives of forced labor of misery of rape, of torture.

America was the place where nearly 4,000 of our fellow citizens were lynched, 540 alone in Louisiana; where the courts enshrined 'separate but equal'; where Freedom riders coming to New Orleans were beaten to a bloody pulp.

So when people say to me that the monuments in question are history, well what I just described is real history as well, and it is the searing truth. And it immediately begs the questions; why there are no slave ship monuments, no prominent markers on public land to remember the lynchings or the slave blocks; nothing to remember this long chapter of our lives; the pain, the sacrifice, the shame . . . all of it happening on the soil of New Orleans.

So for those self-appointed defenders of history and the monuments, they are eerily silent on what amounts to this historical malfeasance, a lie by omission.

There is a difference between remembrance of history and reverence of it. For America and New Orleans, it has been a long, winding road, marked by great tragedy and great triumph. But we cannot be afraid of our truth.

As President George W. Bush said at the dedication ceremony for the National Museum of African American History & Culture, "A great nation does not hide its history. It faces its flaws and corrects them."

So today I want to speak about why we chose to remove these four monuments to the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, but also how and why this process can move us towards healing and understanding of each other.

So, let's start with the facts.

The historic record, is clear, the Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and P.G.T. Beauregard statues were not erected just to honor these men, but as part of the movement which became known as The Cult of the Lost Cause.

This 'cult' had one goal—through monuments and through other means—to rewrite history to hide the truth, which is that the Confederacy was on the wrong side of humanity.

First erected over 166 years after the founding of our city and 19 years after the end of the Civil War, the monuments that we took down were meant to rebrand the history of our city and the ideals of a defeated Confederacy.

It is self-evident that these men did not fight for the United States of America, they fought against it. They may have been warriors, but in this cause they were not patriots.

These statues are not just stone and metal. They are not just innocent remembrances of a benign history.

These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for.

After the Civil War, these statues were a part of that terrorism as much as a burning cross on someone's lawn; they were erected purposefully to send a strong message to all who walked in their shadows about who was still in charge in this city.

Should you have further doubt about the true goals of the Confederacy, in the very weeks before the war broke out, the Vice President of the Confederacy/Alexander Stephens/made it clear that the Confederate cause was about maintaining slavery and white supremacy.

He said in his now famous 'corner-stone speech' that the Confederacy's "cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth."

Now, with these shocking words still ringing in your ears . . .

I want to try to gently peel from your hands the grip on a false narrative of our history that I think weakens us. And make straight a wrong turn we made many years

ago—so we can more closely connect with integrity to the founding principles of our nation and forge a clearer and straighter path toward a better city and a more perfect union.

Last year, President Barack Obama echoed these sentiments about the need to contextualize and remember all our history.

He recalled a piece of stone, a slave auction block engraved with a marker commemorating a single moment in 1830 when Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay stood and spoke from it.

President Obama said, "Consider what this artifact tells us about history . . . on a stone where day after day for years, men and women . . . bound and bought and sold and bid like cattle on a stone worn down by the tragedy of over a thousand bare feet. For a long time the only thing we considered important, the singular thing we once chose to commemorate as history with a plaque were the unmemorable speeches of two powerful men."

A piece of stone—one stone.

Both stories were history.

One story told.

One story forgotten or maybe even purposefully ignored.

As clear as it is for me today . . . for a long time, even though I grew up in one of New Orleans' most diverse neighborhoods, even with my family's long proud history of fighting for civil rights . . . I must have passed by those monuments a million times without giving them a second thought.

So I am not judging anybody, I am not judging people. We all take our own journey on race. I just hope people listen like I did when my dear friend Wynton Marsalis helped me see the truth.

He asked me to think about all the people who have left New Orleans because of our exclusionary attitudes.

Another friend asked me to consider these four monuments from the perspective of an African American mother or father trying to explain to their fifth grade daughter who Robert E. Lee is and why he stands atop of our beautiful city.

Can you do it?

Can you look into that young girl's eyes and convince her that Robert E. Lee is there to encourage her? Do you think she will feel inspired and hopeful by that story?

Do these monuments help her see a future with limitless potential? Have you ever thought that if her potential is limited, yours and mine are too?

We all know the answer to these very simple questions.

When you look into this child's eyes is the moment when the searing truth comes into focus for us. This is the moment when we know what is right and what we must do.

We can't walk away from this truth.

And I knew that taking down the monuments was going to be tough, but you elected me to do the right thing, not the easy thing and this is what that looks like. So relocating these Confederate monuments is not about taking something away from someone else. This is not about politics, this is not about blame or retaliation.

This is not a naïve quest to solve all our problems at once.

This is however about showing the whole world that we as a city and as a people are able to acknowledge, understand, reconcile and most importantly, choose a better future for ourselves making straight what has been crooked and making right what was wrong.

Otherwise, we will continue to pay a price with discord, with division and yes with Violence.

To literally put the Confederacy on a pedestal in our most prominent places of honor is an inaccurate recitation of our full past, it