

My bill, the Taylor Force Act, was signed into law by President Trump on March 23, 2018. This law was meant to disincentivize these awful payments, end the senseless war of terror against Israel, and advance the cause of peace by ending the cycle of violence perpetuated by the Palestinian political leadership.

Unfortunately, Palestinian Authority leaders have publicly rejected the terms of the Taylor Force Act. We have seen documented evidence that the “pay for slay” payments are now continuing in 2020, something which Palestinian leadership has brazenly praised without fear of consequences from the United States.

The appropriate next step is to personally sanction the Palestinian officials involved in this incentivizing of terror.

The Palestinian Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs and its Director, Qadri Abu Bakr, must be designated as sponsors of terror, as the administration committed itself to in Executive Order 13224.

President Trump’s Peace to Prosperity plan for ending the Israel-Palestinian conflict specifically addresses the ‘Prisoner and Martyr Payments’ and calls for their immediate termination. This position has received long-standing bipartisan support at home and abroad.

It is time we let the enemies of peace know in no uncertain terms that the United States will not stand idly by and allow the Palestinian Authority to promote and pay for the murder of innocents through pay-for-slay.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEVIN of Michigan). The Chair announces that the Speaker’s announced policy of April 7, 2020, will remain in effect during the pendency of a covered period pursuant to House Resolution 965.

AND STILL I RISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. And still I rise, Mr. Speaker.

It is my honor to stand here in the House of Representatives. It is my honor to be a Member of this Congress, and I am grateful to the many persons who made great sacrifices so that I would have this opportunity.

Today I would like to use this opportunity to make an appeal to my colleagues, to my friends, and to people who are within the sound of my voice. I want to make an appeal to persons to please take the coronavirus seriously. I ask that you take it seriously because it is not a joke. It is not a laughing matter. People are dying. We have had over 150,000 deaths in this country. It is not a laughing matter. We have had over 4 million cases in this country. It is not a hoax. It is real.

I am asking my friends, my colleagues, and those who are within the

sound of my voice, please, let’s do what we can to protect ourselves and others. I beg that we would please wear the face mask. Let us wash our hands. Let us maintain the distancing.

I know that it won’t happen all of the time. We can have a memory lapse. We might just rush out of the house and not have our mask on. But let’s not, with intentionality, leave home without it. Let’s not, with intentionality, mix and mingle with the persons around us without a mask on. Let us, with intentionality, do all that we can to protect ourselves and others.

This virus is not relenting at this time. It is relentless. Hospital ICU beds in many places in hot spots around the country are at capacity.

We see evidence that this virus is going to continue for a while longer. I don’t know how long. I am not sure anybody does. But I do know that we ought not take it lightly, that we ought not allow persons who are within our space, our personal space, if you will, to catch it from us. I don’t want to give it to someone, and I would trust that no one would want to give it to me.

So let’s be sensible. Let’s be responsible. Let’s honor the protocols that we have set here in the House of Representatives. Let’s honor the protocols to social distance.

I know it is difficult. I won’t pretend that I keep the social distancing as properly as I should. I understand. I make mistakes. But I don’t do it intentionally. I am not going to intentionally take off my mask and communicate with persons.

I am not going to try in any way to demonstrate that somehow I am invulnerable, I am invincible, this is a joke, this is a hoax, and that we need not try to protect ourselves from this virus. I am not going to do it, and I am going to ask that others would not do it.

Let’s love each other and protect each other. This is a matter of life and death.

Finally, on this topic of the virus, we have had some persons who contract the virus who are associated with the House. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that I care about them. I pray for them. And I want you to know that I am asking that we all make sure that this doesn’t become a means by which we distance ourselves from other people simply because they have had the virus.

My hope is that persons who contract it will heal and they will be back at work and we will treat them with the same love and respect that we have always treated them, show them that they are welcome back to the House of Representatives. This is something that we can do to show each other how much we appreciate the persons who have survived this virus.

I hope that every person who contracts it will survive it. I don’t want to see anybody lose life or become chronically injured in some way because of this virus. It ought not be that way,

and my hope is that we won’t allow it to happen in the sense that people will contract it and we will find ourselves distancing ourselves from them.

As I am about to leave now, I want to mention one additional item that is important. I am still concerned about invidious discrimination, and I am concerned that we are reaching a plateau now as it relates to the movement that had as a part of its genesis the death of George Floyd.

I am concerned that I don’t see the movement continuing with the amount of momentum that it richly and justly deserves. I am concerned that we are slowly getting back to bigotry as usual, we are slowly getting back to a point where we will do more talking about bigotry and discrimination than acting on the elimination of bigotry and discrimination.

It really is a major issue in the country, and we should not allow ourselves to slip back into making it more about what we think ought to happen than doing what we can do to prevent this sort of discrimination from continuing to happen.

So I am concerned, and because I am concerned, when we return, I hope to take some measures, some steps, if you will, to help us to remember that it doesn’t just go away because we don’t have a front-page issue. The front-page issues heighten our awareness, but it is still there after it is no longer on the front page, this invidious discrimination, this homophobia, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, all of the various phobias that harm people—that other people produce to harm people, I might add. So I am concerned, and I refuse to allow this issue to simply become another incident and we get back to bigotry as usual.

At some point, we do need a department of reconciliation in this country so that people can depend on our government doing all that it can to eliminate discrimination and hate in the country.

At some point, we need to have this department functioning at the highest level, with a secretary who reports to the President of the United States and that is funded properly so that we don’t find ourselves siloing each circumstance that involves invidious discrimination and dealing with each one individually as opposed to dealing with all of this collectively.

We have come a long way in this country, no question about it, but we dearly and truly have a long way that we have to go. What better way to get there than to say to the world that we are drawing this line, a bright line, and that we are going to have a department that is dedicated to the elimination of segregation to the extent that it exists—and it does exist in some places in our country—but also to eliminate this invidious discrimination wherever it exists in our country and against whomever it is perpetrated.

Is it systemic? Yes, it is systemic.

Just recently, a very prominent person in our country, the Attorney General, had some problem acknowledging that systemic racism exists. It does. I have no problems acknowledging it, nor should anyone else, because the empirical evidence is there to support the fact that it exists.

So my hope is that we won't get back to bigotry as usual, and when we come back from this opportunity to work in our districts that we will take up issues associated with racism and invidious discrimination here in the Congress of the United States of America.

This is where people expect us to act. And if we act, we can lead the Nation as opposed to reacting to what the Nation is doing. It is time for us to take a lead and get rid of this scourge on our society.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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HONORING BUSINESSES AMID COVID-19

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the many individuals, businesses, and manufacturers in the First Congressional District of Kentucky who have dedicated their time and efforts to helping our country fight COVID-19.

Just months ago, there was a concern that America would face a drastic shortage of the medical supplies needed to fight the coronavirus. And while we may not be completely out of the woods, the efforts of so many caring citizens have been instrumental in providing needed supplies.

I am proud to say that many of the citizens and companies who have assisted in this fight call south central and western Kentucky home. Garment factories, like Stitches Apparel from my home county in Gamaliel, Kentucky, WPT Nonwovens in Ohio County, Jomel Seams Reasonable in Cumberland and Russell Counties, and American Shield Apparel in Metcalfe County stepped up to manufacture face masks and gowns for frontline healthcare workers all across America. This is in addition to the countless citizens who have turned their kitchen tables into manufacturing centers for the face masks we have all become very familiar with.

I am even more proud to say that some of our Nation's heroes from Fort Campbell military base have gone into Boston and New York to provide medical support when those areas were in desperate need of help. Like others, their contributions to our Nation will not be forgotten.

Corn from Kentucky farmers has even been used to fight the spread with

facilities like Commonwealth Agri-Energy in Christian County providing base ethanol for distilleries to provide hand sanitizer.

I also honor a young lady from my hometown who went above and beyond. Carrie Beth Cropper, a native Monroe Countian and a registered nurse, volunteered to go to New York City at the height of the outbreak to care for those in need. Her willingness to put her fellow Americans first to help fight back against the virus speaks volumes about her character.

All of our nurses, hospitals, and other frontline workers have been heroic in working under extremely challenging conditions. Their country has never needed them more, and they have certainly met the moment.

Unfortunately, our country continues to suffer from the outbreak of this virus. But in many ways, the pandemic has brought out the best of America: Neighbor helping neighbor and communities coming together to support one another.

ORESTUS FLOWERS 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Orestus Flowers of the First Congressional District of Kentucky, who is turning 100 years old on September 7th.

Mr. Flowers was born in Bow, Kentucky, which is in Cumberland County, and continues to reside in the First Congressional District. Mr. Flowers served in the Army for 3½ years and was stationed in the Philippines from 1942 to 1945. I stand with all Americans to congratulate him on years of bravery and sacrifice to preserve our safety and freedoms.

On February 1, 1946, Mr. Flowers married Geraldine, and together they have three daughters. A true entrepreneur, he was responsible for bringing Houchens Markets to Burkesville in 1952 and served as manager for 32 years. Upon retiring from Houchens, he worked at Norris and New Funeral Home for the next 25 years.

I join with everyone in Burkesville and throughout the Commonwealth who has had the privilege of knowing him and to celebrate his fearless spirit. I am honored to represent Mr. Flowers and wish him a very happy 100th birthday.

WANDA BLACKWELL RETIREMENT

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Wanda Blackwell on her retirement from the Webster County Senior Center, where she has served as director for the last 4 years. She is beloved by the seniors she cares for and their families because her devotion to serving others is evident in every effort she undertakes.

Just a year ago, Webster County opened a new senior center that has already enriched the lives of so many and is evidence of the devotion Wanda and her team have for their fellow citizens. Whether she was serving or delivering meals, decorating and improving the center, or raising funds to expand their offerings and programming, she did it

all with a smile on her face. Wanda lives by the saying, "grow where God planted you," and has been a shining example of giving back to the local community.

I join with Wanda's family, friends, and all those she has served throughout her time at the center to thank her for her outstanding efforts to better the lives of others, and I wish her many happy years of retirement.

LAW AND ORDER IN AMERICA

Mr. COMER. In recent weeks, American cities have been plagued by irresponsible, reckless violence and rioting. The violence in cities from Portland to Chicago has been out of control, requiring a Federal response to quell what has turned into full-on mob violence.

This behavior has severe consequences for American life. Businesses destroyed, chaos and disruption, and unacceptable levels of violence.

And what has the Democratic response been to violent outbreaks? Turning a blind eye to vandalism and destruction, along with a fresh round of calls to defund the police.

At a time of rising violence, businesses being vandalized, and the lives of everyday citizens being disrupted, prominent Democratic politicians have sought to reduce the presence of American law enforcement.

In calling efforts to defund the police a local decision, Speaker PELOSI has given a green light to mayors who have eagerly implemented that reckless movement. Thankfully, Federal law enforcement has stepped in to help out in cities where weak-kneed, incompetent mayors have failed to protect their citizens.

Even though Federal agents have been shamelessly treated as enemies by far-left mayors, Federal reinforcements were necessary in the face of local failures.

I am 100 percent in favor of peaceful assembly and protest. It is an American tradition for our citizens to speak out and to use our sacred First Amendment rights for good. And when there is legitimate police misconduct, like what we saw in Minneapolis, non-violent protest is absolutely justified.

However, the violence in our streets has been anything but peaceful. And when protestors start vandalizing and destroying property, including Federal courthouses, a line is crossed. We must have law and order and respect for the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my Democratic colleagues will join me in calling for just that. Stop pushing to defund the police. Stop condoning mob violence. Support peaceful protest, not out-of-control rioting. We can and we must have free expression in this country, but we also must have law and order when protest turns into rioting and threatens the safety of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).