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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 21, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable NIKEMA WILLIAMS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SLAVERY REMEMBRANCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise. I rise as a person who is proud to live in a country where we celebrate the ideal of liberty and justice for all; government of the people, by the people, for the people.

I rise today with grateful thoughts on my mind and in my heart. I rise with gratitude. I am thankful to those persons, the many, who have signed on to H. Res. 517.

H. Res. 517, Madam Speaker, is a resolution that would allow us to remember slavery, Slavery Remembrance Day.

Slavery Remembrance Day would be a day that we would set aside, not for celebration, but for commemoration, for memorialization, to remember the atrocities that were imposed upon people, human beings, how they were made chattel. Slavery Remembrance Day.

And for those who may not be aware, we have a 9/11 Remembrance Day. We have a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. We have a Holocaust Remembrance Day. But we don't have a Slavery Remembrance Day.

Hence, on August 20 of this year, we will commemorate the first Slavery Remembrance Day, because it was on that day in 1619 that the White Lion landed in this country with some 20 persons who were held in captivity as slaves. Slavery Remembrance Day.

So I am rising today to thank the many persons who have already signed on to the resolution. And I want you to know that we will be sending you something very special, something comparable to this. It will have the resolution cited on one side of the page. Each of your names will be highlighted on the other side of the page. And each of you will have a special place for your name that will be highlighted.

This is historic, and we have to treat it as such. This is something that those who will look back on this time through the vista of time, they will look, and they will conclude that we did not forget, that we made it a point to remember that those who, unfortunately, don't learn the lessons of history sometimes repeat history.

We never want to repeat slavery. Hence, we will have a Slavery Remembrance Day resolution.

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS ALIVE AND WELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, 2 miles down the road from this very Chamber, in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and proclaimed his vision for the future:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a Nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Nearly 60 years later, radical far-left Democrats are doing everything possible to eliminate this dream through the implementation of critical race theory.

Instead of equality, critical race theory frames race, not character, as the focal point of the human construct, implying that one's racial identity defines who they are and who they will ever be.

To these CRT believers, your fate has already been decided by your skin color.

To the average American living outside the swamp bubble, this idea is ludicrous.

Everyday Americans have seen individuals of all races and backgrounds succeed. They know hard work and character are the biggest determinants of success, and the American Dream is alive and well for everyone.

But critical race theory wants to poison our classrooms by pushing an agenda which revolves around race, not character. They want to teach young minds that racism persists even if no individual or institution acts in a racist way or holds any racist beliefs.

This toxic teaching squashes hope, stifles growth, and fuels anger and despair.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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What began as a theory for civil rights lawyers to debate has transformed into harmful messages that ultimately seek to further divide our Nation.

CRT and The 1619 Project have no place in our schools, our workplaces, or our military.

Our Nation's founding principles of equality and freedom are worth fighting for and protecting. While our Nation isn't perfect, we always strive for that more perfect Union. We have made progress in the last 100 years and are still the greatest Nation in the world. This progress would be lost should we allow the divisive, racist rhetoric of critical race theory into our classrooms.

As a mother and a former teacher, I believe our education system is at its best when we inspire our young people to be all they can be and share with them the principles showcased in America's traditional motto, "e pluribus unum," which means, out of many, one. That is the unique greatness of our country, the idea of being a melting pot of people from different countries, races, and backgrounds, but we become one as Americans.

Our schools should never stifle the growth of our children, belittle them based on the color of their skin, or teach them that they themselves or their families are racist regardless of their individual beliefs.

The American Dream is alive and well and should be fanned into flames, not crushed by critical race theory's restrictive and damaging rhetoric. That is the last thing our children need.

Since critical race theory has entered the national discussion, Missourians and parents across the country have expressed strong disdain for teaching our students that this country is inherently racist and that minority groups are unable to succeed within our country's current systems and institutions.

Today, I stand by those parents. I cannot condone an education system that teaches students to be ashamed of our country and to judge each other based on the color of our skin. And I believe neither would Martin Luther King, Jr. Our kids deserve better.

PAYMENT PAUSE FOR STUDENT LOANS SHOULD BE EXTENDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, last January, in one of his first executive orders, President Biden extended the student loan pause on monthly payments through the end of September.

This order allowed all direct student loans issued by the Federal Government through the U.S. Department of Education, again, to have a grace period during the recession that we are still experiencing. Even with a good job

growth last month, 800,000 jobs added to the economy, a 5.6 percent unemployment rate, and having people starting to again recover, the need for that pause was blindingly obvious.

A couple weeks ago, myself and Congresswoman AYANNA PRESSLEY wrote to President Biden and the Secretary of Education calling on the President to extend that pause again. We are about 60 days away from all these student loans snapping back with very high interest rates, and again, at a time when the economy is still recovering.

Madam Speaker, this is exactly what the Small Business Administration did for disaster loans issued during COVID when they extended the grace period allowed of 1 year, when those loans were issued during COVID, to have that grace period extended into 2022. That was a smart, wise move recognizing that this is the wrong time to add debt burden on individuals and businesses as the U.S. economy starts to recover.

Again, we understand that at some point we are going to have to have a return to student loan debt payments, but, again, there are additional reasons why this pause makes sense.

Two of the largest debt servicers, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, which services a large number of student loan debts, announced a couple of weeks ago they are withdrawing from the program, which means that borrowers are going to be shifted to new servicers, as well as the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation.

So again, the dislocation and the change that is happening with student loan servicers are additional reasons why the President and Secretary Cardona should agree to our request.

Moving forward, it is time for Congress to act to fix some of the problems within the student loan space.

Congressman DUSTY JOHNSON and I, on a bipartisan basis, back in January, introduced the Recognizing Military Service in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Act. A companion bill in the Senate was introduced by Senator RUBIO and Senator HASSAN.

Again, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program was created back in 2007 basically to allow teachers, nurses, people serving in the military, cops—who will, again, make 10 years of payments on their student loans while holding down public service jobs—to be eligible for discharge of their student loan debt.

The last administration butchered this program. People who, again, for 10 years abided by the rules were refused and denied student loan discharge, including people serving in the military.

Our bill will untangle that bottleneck, will recognize that people who are on Active Duty overseas, away from their families, who again, were allowed a grace period in terms of monthly payments, those months will be credited towards public service loan forgiveness. It has been endorsed by

every veteran service organization from VFW to the Iraq and Afghan War Veterans, and again, is a smart bipartisan bill which will help a population of people who perform the highest form of public service; namely, wearing the uniform of this country.

We should also, as Congress, change the law to allow people to refinance down the interest rate on their student loan debt. When these loans snap back, we are looking at 6 percent, 7 percent, 8 percent interest on legacy student loan debt.

The rest of the economy with a zero percent benchmark at the Federal Reserve is refinancing debt on homes, on consumer loans, on auto debt, but student loan borrowers are trapped unless Congress acts.

H.R. 3024 allows the Department of Education to refinance down the interest rates on student loan debt so that people, again, in a very low-interest rate environment—and the chairman of the Federal Reserve announced the other day he is going to keep the benchmark at zero through 2021. Student loan borrowers should get the benefit of those low interest rates just like every other middle class family that refines their home or their consumer debt.

So, extend the pause. Let's fix the problems in the meantime. Congress can act.

The millennials, the young people of this country deserve our help, both to act with the tools that we have, and also, calling on the administration to provide an additional grace period just like we did for small businesses.

HONORING DOUG WRIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Ms. MACE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a law enforcement officer from Summerville, South Carolina, who spent his career ensuring the safety of South Carolina residents and our neighborhoods.

Doug Wright began his career in 1997 by joining the Summerville Police Department. He has since dedicated over 20 years of his career to protecting our community, and I can think of no better thing to do today than to recognize the good work that our law enforcement does every single day in our communities and keeping us safe.

Through his career, Doug has worked diligently as a patrol team watch commander, uniform patrol division commander, and supervisor of the K-9 unit. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention Doug's 6 years as a Marine reservist.

In April, Chief Wright was promoted to chief of police for Summerville after serving as deputy. The vote by town council members was unanimous. This is a glowing endorsement of the work that Doug has done in his career for Summerville over the last 20 years.