

comparison, 2 years ago in August of the prior administration, it was 13,000. So, in 2 years, we have gone from 13,000 to 140,000.

That also means a corresponding increase in the amount of fentanyl crossing the border, and we all know that, right now, we have well over 100,000 illegal drug deaths in America, and of those 100,000, the vast majority contain fentanyl.

I also point out that, right now, the deportations are about one quarter per day as to what they were for people committing crimes 2 years ago.

I want the American people to wake up and demand something serious be done on the border, and I beg the press corps to talk about the new August numbers for people crossing here illegally.

□ 1945

FISCAL YEAR 2023 COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING

(Mr. MRVAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MRVAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my profound support for the work of the House Appropriations Committee and highlight the inclusion of the Fiscal Year 2023 Community Project Funding requests for Indiana's First Congressional District.

I am grateful for the ability to collaborate with local units of government, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education to effectively advocate in a transparent fashion for their eligible projects.

Notably, the House-approved legislation includes funding for vital economic and transportation assets in Northwest Indiana, including the Gary/Chicago International Airport, the Burns Waterway Small Boat Harbor in Portage, and shoreline restoration efforts for Mount Baldy within the Indiana Dunes National Park.

I look forward to continuing to work with all my colleagues to complete our constitutional work to fund government and advance the needs of our districts.

IMMIGRATION HYPOCRISY

(Mr. MEUSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Speaker, over the past 21 months under the Biden administration, border States and cities such as McAllen, Texas and Yuma, Arizona, have seen hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants enter their cities under these reckless border policies.

I, along with 59 Republicans, introduced H.R. 6592, the Immigration Transparency and Notification Act, to provide for transparency of these secret immigration flights conducted by the Biden administration into my hometown and rural towns across America.

Thousands of illegals were flown into areas across the country with no notice or coordination, yet no one flinched; no mainstream media attention; no outrage from the White House.

Now that Chicago, D.C., and Martha's Vineyard have joined the party and been introduced to open border policy, somehow, now this is a national tragedy and unacceptable. This is hypocrisy at its highest.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to begin the discussion that I think we will continue in days to come and even into the new year, and that is to discuss the Congressional Black Caucus' accomplishments in this Congress, the 117th.

By its very nature, the tenure and the breadth and depth of members of the Congressional Black Caucus, I believe that we can be talking for a very long time, and so this will probably be a continuum to tell the American people how we have been helping to ensure that they have a better quality of life.

I am very proud to join with the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, JOYCE BEATTY, who has led us, in the 117th Congress, to be instrumental in the lives of intergenerations, across generational lines, and to ensure that those who are at the beginning of life, and those at the end of life, and those in between raising their families, know that the Congressional Black Caucus is standing with them.

One particularly unique example of that is, of course, the HBCU conference that is going on this week, where HBCUs are coming from all over the country. And it is interesting to be able to associate, not only our colleague, ALMA ADAMS, as the chair of the HBCU Caucus, of which I am a member and many of our colleagues are members, including I see on the floor, Chairman SCOTT.

Under his leadership, the HBCUs have gotten more money—than I believe in the history of many of our tenure here in the United States Congress—working with President Biden. This is the leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus.

So let me quickly begin my comments, and I will look forward to yielding to my friends who are here, includ-

ing my colleague and friend from Louisiana, Mr. TROY CARTER, Congressman CARTER, who is the new vice chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus. And I know that we are looking forward to many days of action on behalf of the children of America and on behalf of children of color and African-American children.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus strongly support the President's goal of passing legislation that will significantly reduce healthcare costs for all Americans.

The Inflation Reduction Act will significantly reduce, and has significantly reduced, prescription drug costs and expanded healthcare coverage for millions of Black Americans, relieving financial strains on individuals and families.

What I think is most important is the work that many of us on the Congressional Black Caucus did, including the work that I advocated with our whip, JIM CLYBURN, and Senator WARNOCK. We were on it for the \$35 cap on insulin, along with our colleagues. It was driven and inspired by members of the Congressional Black Caucus to ensure that insulin, which now is one of the driving forces of creating a better quality of life for our seniors—you can say that the Congressional Black Caucus was intimately involved in that.

We were intimately involved in ensuring that it has a fair response to climate change around the issue of bringing down the cost of energy for our families in America. And of course, that impacts Black families.

This new law will help bring down energy costs for millions of Black Americans, and it includes very strong protections and programs to promote environmental justice.

Of course, we worked extensively on the bipartisan infrastructure law. That was, of course, a very pivotal role for those of us in the Congressional Black Caucus. Black, Hispanic, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native Americans, especially those who reside in urban communities, are more likely to be negatively impacted by pollution. Black people are almost three times more likely to die from asthma-related causes than their White counterparts.

And, of course, the Congressional Black Caucus led in negotiations to assure that this was a balanced bill.

In particular, my constituents have already seen the magnificent results of the once-in-a-generation piece of legislation. Houston METRO was granted a \$21 million grant to buy battery-powered electric buses, and it has helped it move to the next level, next generation of rapid transit, and plans to go to the airports, both Hobby and Bush Intercontinental, in my district, with bipartisan infrastructure dollars.

And as a hurricane-prone community, as many of the Gulf States are, from Louisiana to Texas and Mississippi, the bipartisan infrastructure bill will help us work on those flood-

prone areas and ensure the safety and life of so many.

I am excited about how the Congressional Black Caucus gravitated around the Juneteenth legislation, the first bill in almost 40 years that created a Federal holiday which was signed on June 17, 2021. I am very pleased to be the first Member to introduce legislation to ensure that there was a holiday after 10 years of introducing the resolutions, and the culmination of all of these years, and particularly, the culmination of Opal Lee, who came on a hot day in 2019, and brought us a million petitions—she was in her nineties—to ensure that Juneteenth could become a Federal holiday.

Her work in getting all those petitions, the introduction of the legislation that I was proud to introduce, and ultimately presiding over the floor—all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus were strong proponents of this, and we could not have done it without their leadership and urgency.

Many of you know that Juneteenth represents two more years of slavery for those west of the Mississippi, until General Granger came with Order Number 15 to announce that the slaves were free, because the South had not adhered to the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. So he came to Galveston, Texas, General Granger, announcing the end of the Civil War and the freedom of the last Americans enslaved in the Confederate States.

Since the 1800s, Juneteenth has been an important commemoration to African Americans. Even as Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois reminded us that—Frederick Douglass, in particular—there is no power with struggle. And, of course, W.E.B. Du Bois talked to us about “The Talented Tenth.”

That means that the work of the Congressional Black Caucus is keen, and we are keen to make sure that the work that is done continues to emphasize what is best for them.

Let me also take note of the support of African Americans in helping to assure—and the Congressional Black Caucus, with the leadership of Chairwoman BEATTY, and working with the Judiciary Committee, the chairman of the full committee, NADLER, subcommittee, COHEN and myself, and the members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the Judiciary Committee, we were able to mark up for the first time in history, H.R. 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act.

What a powerful experience, first, with two hearings, bringing people from all over, including the author and proponent of the 1619 Project, and leaders and scholars who understood that this is simply restoration and repair, and this must be created as a commission by law, by vote, or executive order.

In addition, glad to have the help of the Congressional Black Caucus on the passage of the Violence Against Women

Act, a reauthorization act that I introduced. And in it were many aspects of work or language for people of color for the first time; training for young men and boys on how to deal with the issue of violence, and also the question of rape and how we should be working on that.

We followed with massive work on education, as I indicated, doing more for primary and secondary education than could ever be imagined, under the leadership of Chairman BOBBY SCOTT.

I will conclude my remarks in order to yield to my friends. I want to be able to say that during the midst of the pandemic, there were several things that the Congressional Black Caucus led on. One, to push testing into our community where there was none; to push vaccines and vaccinations into our community where there were none; and to ensure that we focused on lost learning and our children who did not have access to broadband.

It was our voices that made it loud and clear. Ultimately, broadband access has been put more and more into the bipartisan infrastructure bill. But during the pandemic, it was the voices of the Congressional Black Caucus that insisted that we do better with respect to these children who had no access. The stories were large and looming. They were frightening, and I am glad that our voices continue.

There are many other litanies of issues dealing with climate change, dealing with criminal justice reform. It was because of us that ultimately we introduced the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, one of two bills named after George Floyd.

Because of all the work we did, with KAREN BASS and all the members of the CBC, all the work that we did ultimately resulted in an executive order that we do know, as indicated by executive order, that you will have no more choke holds, no more no-knocks, and more that we hope to put into statutory law. We are excited that the bill did include large aspects of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

With that in mind, I am delighted to be able to yield to—as I talk further about some of these important elements of the work of the Congressional Black Caucus, but I am pleased now to yield to the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee so that he can evidence the Congressional Black Caucus’ 117th Congress accomplishments through the works that he has done on his committee, the Education and Labor Committee.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), chairman of the Education and Labor Committee.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank her for her good work.

Madam Speaker, the people, the American people deserve a government that puts people over politics and protects hardworking families, not billion-

aires and special interests. That is why, throughout the 117th Congress, the House Education and Labor Committee has advanced legislation that meets the needs of students, families, workers, and our economy.

Over the last 2 years, Congressional Democrats and the Biden-Harris administration have made historic progress to rescue the American economy, create good-paying jobs, get students back on track, fight child hunger, and boost access to healthcare.

Just in the Education and Labor Committee, there was a lot that was done. We helped create over 10 million jobs in our economy since January 2021: the most jobs in history for 20 months. We recovered all of the jobs lost during the pandemic. We reduced unemployment to historically low levels.

We saved the pensions of over 1 million workers, and protected thousands of businesses by saving the multiemployer pension fund.

We delivered the largest one-time Federal investment to K-12 education in the United States history. And we delivered that money and distributed it according to the Title I formula where poverty is the main factor, meaning that the districts that need it the most got the most. Those that are traditionally overlooked got more money than they have ever gotten before.

□ 2000

We put money into school lunches so that students didn’t go hungry during that period of time. We made sure that, with that money, the schools could open safely, stay open safely, and make up for lost learning. During that period of time, during the COVID relief bills, we had more money for historically Black colleges and universities than we ever have in history.

Now, we also made sure that the number of Americans without health insurance, because of the actions that we have taken, is now the lowest it has ever been. We have made sure that they can get vaccines, and those vaccines were distributed equitably. That is not always the case.

We made sure that drug prices were down, particularly insulin for seniors, no more than \$35 per month for insulin. A lot of people right now before this bill were paying a lot more than that.

That is just the kind of legislation that came through the Education and Labor Committee. But House Democrats and the Congressional Black Caucus are committed to continuing this historic progress and building back a stronger economy for all Americans. That is why we passed the bipartisan infrastructure law, which not only modernized roads, bridges, and waterways, but will also create millions of good-paying jobs and will deliver broadband to areas that don’t have broadband today. We will invest in neighborhoods that were destroyed by previous transportation plans going right down the middle of African-

American neighborhoods, and we will invest in those neighborhoods to try to make up for that devastation.

Moving forward, we are committed to committee work, advancing policies like the Raise the Wage Act, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act, the Strength in Diversity Act, and the Rebuild America's Schools Act to ensure that every worker, student, and family has the opportunity to succeed.

We have done a lot. We haven't finished.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for her leadership and the opportunity to remind the American public of what we have already accomplished.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. It is clear that there is a new day on the Committee on Education and Labor. That committee, led by Chairman SCOTT, has shown itself to be the people's committee, and I am delighted that his longstanding membership with the Congressional Black Caucus has shown that his work is for all of America. But through the Congressional Black Caucus he has helped and elevated families who have suffered because of racial discrimination and because of economic inequities. He has been focused.

Certainly, I credit him again with the work that has been done on HBCUs. I can assure you, with HBCUs in Texas, everywhere I go, they are taking note of the increased funding that has allowed them to do issues or handle matters with physical infrastructure, scholarship, the new Pell grant executive order, student loan executive order that is allowing for those with Pell grant loans making \$120,000 to get \$20,000 in relief. The Congressional Black Caucus worked extensively to ensure that those people with student loans were not forgotten.

Let me say it again. We work without ceasing to ensure that individuals who were overburdened with student loans, couldn't get down payments for housing and other matters for their quality of life—we were ensuring that we were in the front, if you will, to continue to advocate for student loan reduction.

Let me just say this, as I prepare to yield to my dear friend on the floor here.

As poet Langston Hughes reminds us, in his famous poem "Mother to Son," life in America for African Americans "ain't been no crystal stair."

The goodness of this message is that in spite of it all, African Americans have put on uniforms and fought their battles on behalf of this Nation. African Americans are great lovers of this country, and they are great patriots. African Americans have worked in every level of government. They have, of course, been individuals who have worked, as some will say, at the bottom of the totem pole, meaning every manner of work they have done.

There have been African Americans who were enslaved who helped build the White House and the very building that we are in, never to hold the anger of their station in life but continue to work to insist on a better quality of life for their families.

It is very much important to take note of the bills that we have been able to do as individual Members of Congress.

I am just going to cite H.R. 7566, stops human trafficking in schools, that I introduced; working with an amendment to the Workforce Innovation bill; ensuring HBCU's full access to job skills training; amendment to H.R. 8294, the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill to ensure that HBCUs had specific work—it supports the work of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture by increasing the funding by \$2 million.

Then I will finish more deeply on H.R. 40. That bill is much exhibited, as I have been on the floor before, with this slave and his back and the welts on his back from a whip. This was the life of slavery in America.

I just read recently of Germany's response to aging holocaust victims, which I applaud, providing millions of dollars to respond to their pain, just recently. In the course of the commission to study slavery and develop reparation proposals, it would give America a moment of healing. We have been hearing this discussion across the Nation and across the world, most recently, of course, in the halls or the places in Great Britain.

But for America to take that stand that the discussion is worthy, that the study is worthy, that the idea of what kind of proposals would come about, what inclusive ways would we deal with the recognition of over two centuries of slavery—unpaid, no insurance, no workers' comp, no days off, from sunup to darkness, beat by the whip, as the slave narratives in 1939 told us. The stories are powerful. Ripped away from our families. Made families, husband and wife and children. Then you would hear the pleas in the slave narratives when they say, "Come home, husband. They are about to sell me and the children in different ways and different places." It happened to slaves all the time.

I was honored and humbled to meet the survivors of the Wall Street massacre. It happened in 1921. Those people were, in actuality, some even former slaves, but mostly descendants of the most recent people who were slaves, the most recent, their ancestors or their mother might have been a slave. But they built a Wall Street, but yet it could not survive because of racism and discrimination.

So to heal our land, the Congressional Black Caucus has worked in many ways to heal our land, and I am grateful for their advocacy for just a fair and simple study and assessment of what we should do to repair what oc-

curred two centuries and continues even today.

The story is long about the inequities of the GI Bill, redlining, discrimination in voting, in the criminal justice system, the basis of wealth, so distinctive between other populations in this country.

So I thank the Congressional Black Caucus for the extensive legislative history that it has had over the 117th Congress.

It really is my privilege, Madam Speaker, to yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER) to speak about the accomplishments of the Congressional Black Caucus, my dear colleague and friend who has shown himself a leader.

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, a huge thank you to our incredible leader, my neighbor, my friend, my colleague, my leader, the honorable Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, who has the pulse of our country firmly in her grip.

I have watched this woman go from country to country fighting for justice and what is right and what is pure. We can't thank her enough in recognition of the great work she does.

She stands at this rostrum, and she talks about the atrocities in our country while she continues to fight for atrocities in other countries. I applaud her. I thank her for her incredible leadership. It has been a pleasure to work with her, and America has been a better place because of her.

For decades, the CBC has fought for justice, truth, and equality. From within the halls of government that once permitted our ancestors to be enslaved, Congress after Congress, the CBC is at the center of many negotiations and conversations to better the lives of the American people.

The 117th Congress was an exceptional example of CBC's leadership. The CBC led the fight for a national infrastructure investment, so that instead of bridges on the brink and toxic sludge, Americans will have resilient infrastructure and clean, safe, reliable drinking water.

Today, the CBC leads the fight to reduce child poverty. Through policies like the expanded child tax credit and SNAP, we know that instead of setting kids up to struggle, we are setting them up to succeed.

Through policies like the bipartisan Safer Communities Act, we can improve public safety and help prevent terrible, hate-driven crimes like we saw in Buffalo, Uvalde, or any city in the U.S.A. It seems to happen far, far too often.

In Louisiana, because of the actions of the CBC and great leaders in this body, we have been able to have kids not have to sit outside of a McDonald's to use the internet. Since Katrina, since the hurricanes that have wrecked our community, since COVID that has wrecked our world, we know that things like broadband are no longer a luxury but a necessity.

Yet, in many impoverished communities in my district, people would not have access. Many rural areas would not have access to the internet for telehealth, for education, for business purposes, for everyday life, for shopping. These things would not exist. But I am proud today, because of the efforts of this body and because of the CBC, we are able to deliver and bring those things home to the people of Louisiana and America.

We know that because of the infrastructure bill that is now signed into law, Louisiana is seeing dollars flowing that they have never seen before. Bridges that have been on the brink of disaster are being repaired. The opportunity for us to have transportation between New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, and beyond is now a reality.

The ability to invest money in areas in my State that have been plagued with chemical poisoning, have been plagued with disease, because of the placement of these facilities that have historically settled themselves in communities of Black and Brown. No longer will our communities be the path of least resistance. No longer will people have to literally die for their jobs.

We can have coexistence, but coexistence begins with everyone recognizing that the single most important commodity that anyone has is its people. Making sure that we have safe environments and clean environments where our children can be educated, where families can live, where families can earn a good living and enjoy clean air, that is what we fight for at the CBC every day.

Louisiana will be the beneficiaries of such efforts. We will continue to fight to make sure that this caucus and this body understands and no longer looks away and says, "business as usual." No longer can we afford to watch children go without. As my dear colleague and chairman of the Education and Labor Committee said moments ago, more money has been invested in HBCUs under this 117th Congress than ever in the history of our country.

More money has been put into infrastructure, since the very creation of the Interstate Highway System, under this Congress, and this CBC has played a pivotal role in making these things happen.

But it doesn't stop here. We must continue to fight. We must continue to go out and make sure that we tell our story: That we are here, we are working, and we will not let anyone turn the clock back on the efforts that we have fought so valiantly for.

I am so proud to serve with giants in the CBC, people that have worked tirelessly for decades to make a difference in our community.

There is a lot of work yet to be done. With the leadership of Chair BEATTY, Whip CLYBURN, and many others, the CBC will continue to secure major wins for the American people, because they deserve it.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to fight. Failure is not an option.

Madam Speaker, as a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and the Budget, as well as the Congressional Black Caucus, I am proud to stand beside my sisters and brothers to explore the achievements of the Congressional Black Caucus throughout the 117th Congress.

I would like to thank Congresswoman BEATTY, the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, for organizing this Special Order today. I would also like to thank Speaker PELOSI for her outstanding leadership throughout this Congress.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus have been at the forefront of every major legislative achievement this 117th Congress. These achievements have pushed for an increase in equity for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and people from all backgrounds in the United States.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus strongly supported the President's goal of passing legislation that will significantly reduce healthcare costs for all Americans and address the very real climate crisis we are all facing.

The Inflation Reduction Act will significantly reduce prescription drug costs and expand health insurance coverage for millions of Black Americans, relieving financial strains on individuals and families.

Among adults 65 and older, Black Medicare beneficiaries are 1.5 times more likely than their white counterparts to have trouble affording medications. They are also 2 times as likely to not fill needed prescriptions due to high drug costs.

5.8 million Medicare beneficiaries are African American, which amounts to 10 percent of all beneficiaries.

Altogether, 5-to-7 million Medicare beneficiaries will see their prescription drug costs go down because of the provision allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug costs.

3.3 million Medicare beneficiaries will have their insulin costs capped at \$35 a month.

Seniors will also have their yearly prescription drug costs capped at \$2,000.

The Inflation Reduction Act will enable free or low-cost health insurance to remain available, allowing over half a million more Black Americans to have health insurance coverage next year, compared to what the situation would be without the IRA.

The Inflation Reduction Act is also the most aggressive legislation on climate change and clean energy in American history.

This new law will help bring down energy costs for millions of Black Americans, and it includes very strong protections and programs to promote Environmental Justice.

The average American family is estimated to see an annual \$1,025 in energy savings, as the Inflation Reduction Act tackles one of the largest drivers of inflation—oil and gas prices—by lowering fuel and electricity costs and improving energy efficiency.

This bill will prevent thousands of premature deaths by improving the air we breathe, with communities most burdened by pollution enjoying disproportionate health benefits.

The Inflation Reduction Act alone will help get America 80 percent of the way to achieving its share of greenhouse gas reductions, and the majority of the way toward President

Biden's goal of cutting carbon pollution in half this decade.

The members of the Congressional Black Caucus were also leaders in the passage of the Presidents Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The once-in-a-generation investment into our nation's infrastructure addresses the disparate impacts of pollution on communities of color.

Black, Hispanic, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native Americans—especially those who reside in urban communities—are more likely to be negatively impacted by pollution. Black people are almost three times more likely to die from asthma related causes than their white counterparts.

My constituents have already seen the magnificent results of this once-in-a-generation piece of legislation.

Houston METRO was granted a \$21 million grant to buy battery electric buses and charging infrastructure to replace aging diesel buses that have exceeded their useful life.

The electric buses will improve air quality and health—for riders and residents in Houston's historically disadvantaged communities by eliminating nearly 18,000 tons of greenhouse gases over the next 20 years.

The passage of the law also allowed me to work closely with Secretary Buttigieg to secure \$40 million dollars in funding for Bush Intercontinental Airport. IAH's terminal redevelopment program is the largest project in the airport's 53-year-history.

I am very pleased and proud that the CBC's priorities for the 117th Congress included some of my legislation, including the creation of the new Juneteenth federal holiday.

On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, establishing June 19th as an annual national holiday.

Since I had placed the creation of a Juneteenth federal holiday on the national agenda—introducing H.R. 7232, on June 18, 2020 and reintroducing the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act in the 117th Congress—witnessing it become law was a true honor and an exhilarating occasion.

It was the culmination of years—even decades—of efforts to have the nation formally recognize the importance of Juneteenth and inculcate it into the pantheon of landmark national occasions with profound significance for the country and all Americans.

That day at the White House, I celebrated the joyful, yet tearful signing ceremony joined by my congressional colleagues, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, representatives of the numerous organizations who toiled in the vineyards for so long, and the first African American Vice-President.

It spoke volumes that the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act had overwhelming bipartisan support, passing by unanimous consent in the Senate and a 415 to 14 vote in the House the next day.

Although I had introduced resolutions recognizing Juneteenth since 2013, establishing Juneteenth as a national holiday was a quantum leap further. Enacting the holiday into law was much more than commemorating the historic events associated with Juneteenth.

Making Juneteenth a national holiday asserts that the historic occasion is a fundamental part of American history. It elevates Juneteenth into the consciousness of all Americans. It reinforces the point that Black history is American history.

National recognition of Juneteenth creates a channel for teaching and learning the truth about slavery which preceded it and both Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era that followed it. Amid this era of misinformation, having the national imprimatur on Juneteenth will launch discussions and awareness of the Black experience in America that will add to multi-ethnic cohesion and mutual respect.

Since the 1800s, Juneteenth has been as important to African Americans as July 4th is to all Americans. Consider also that, at the end of the Revolutionary War, while patriots were celebrating the end of colonialism and subjugation, 450,000 African-Americans were trapped in chattel slavery: our country's original sin. Black Americans were considered and treated as property, not as people.

Juneteenth is special because, on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger, the Commanding Officer of the District of Texas, rode into Galveston, Texas, announcing the end of the Civil War and the freedom of the last Americans enslaved in the Confederate states.

The announcement of freedom belatedly freed 250,000 slaves in Texas months after the end of the Civil War and two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation, signed by President Abraham Lincoln, went into effect.

Texas's newly freed men and women reacted first with shock and then with jubilation when General Granger read these words of General Order No. 3:

"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection therefore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer."

Until then, slave owners withheld freedom by not informing those whom they enslaved and who enabled their wealth. It was necessary for the Union Army to take control of an area and announce freedom for it to take effect. Because of Galveston's remote location, it was not until June 19, 1865, that the Union Army arrived.

General Granger's reading of General Order No. 3 ended chattel slavery, the institutionalized system of perpetual servitude that held generations of Africans in bondage in the our country for 248 years.

No longer would human beings be forced into a legalized system of unending, lifelong slavery that was known for gruesome murders, dehumanizing rapes, and tortuous beatings and floggings with leather whips tipped with metal to rip flesh from bone. No longer would the atrocities of slavery be permitted by federal laws.

Juneteenth was first celebrated in 1866 under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau and was often called "Jubilee Day". As freed men and women left Galveston to begin their lives anew in other states, the retelling of their Juneteenth memories led to annual celebrations in many other states.

Recognizing the importance of this date, former slaves coined the word "Juneteenth" to mark the joyous occasion.

Yet, in some cases, white officials outwardly resisted the holiday, barring the use of public property for the festivities. So, church grounds were used for the festivities, and, as freed men and women achieved upward economic

mobility, some communities purchased land for Juneteenth celebrations.

One of the earliest documented land purchases in the name of Juneteenth was organized by Rev. Jack Yates. This fundraising effort yielded \$1,000 and the purchase of Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas.

In the town of Mexia, Texas, the local Juneteenth organization purchased Booker T. Washington Park, which became the Juneteenth celebration site in 1898.

Along with parades, prayer readings, performances and cookouts among finely attired attendees, Juneteenth community-centric activities informed Black Americans about voting, promoted education, and showcased the achievements of African Americans and the community.

Perhaps because the holiday carried the message of empowerment, Juneteenth activities were sometimes interrupted and halted by white landowners demanding that their laborers return to work.

Juneteenth continued to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and their descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston to celebrate June 19th.

Juneteenth remains the oldest known celebration of slavery's demise, commemorating freedom while acknowledging the sacrifices and contributions made by courageous African Americans towards, in more recent years, making our great nation the more conscious and accepting country that it has become.

Juneteenth was, and is, a living symbol of freedom for people who were denied hope of being free.

It serves as a reminder that, as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Freedom is never free," and as African American labor leader A. Phillip Randolph often said, "Freedom is never given. It is won."

Truer words were never spoken.

We should all recognize the power and truth of those guideposts. Juneteenth calls upon us to pause to remember the enormous price paid by all Americans in our country's quest to realize its promise.

Juneteenth honors the end of the 400 years of suffering that African Americans endured under slavery and celebrates the legacy of perseverance that has become the hallmark of the African American experience in the struggle for equality.

As the poet Langston Hughes reminds us in his famous poem, "Mother to Son," that life in America for African Americans "ain't been no crystal stair."

The Jim Crow era in America was marked by violence and terrorism against African Americans as our ancestors sought to activate the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Juneteenth celebrations declined in the 1920s and 1930s partly due to the Great Depression's severe economic difficulties, but mainly because of the resurgence of heinous hate crimes perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan to derail African Americans from advancing in society politically and economically.

Despite the New Deal's progress and post-WWII economic policies, discrimination and the lingering impact of slavery largely excluded African Americans from the creation of the modern middle class.

However, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and its legal framework for

equality, led to a resurrection of Juneteenth celebrations that celebrated the achievements of Black Americans, reinforcing our community's sense of identity and pride.

Juneteenth became an opportunity for us to showcase our successes and our contributions to society, while providing the government with a mirror into demographic disparities and a demand to recommit itself to serving all Americans.

Amid this renewed spirit of identity, pride, and equality, Texas state representative Al Edwards introduced a bill, H.R. 1016, to make Juneteenth a state holiday. The bill became law, and on January 1, 1980, Juneteenth officially became a Texas state holiday, making Texas the first state to officially recognize this celebration of emancipation.

Representative Edwards actively sought to spread the observance of Juneteenth across America. In the two decades after Texas acted, only a few other states did so. But in the past twenty years, a wave of states followed Texas's lead. By 2021, 49 states and the District of Columbia had commemorated or recognized Juneteenth.

Nonagenarian activist Opal Lee, affectionately known as the "Grandmother of Juneteenth," also deserves much credit for the federal holiday. Lee pressed for the holiday for years, and in 2016 at age 89, walked from her home in Fort Worth to Washington, DC, to deliver a petition and raise attention to the holiday's importance.

Today, after decades of rallies, petitions, editorials, and legislation calling for Juneteenth to be a national holiday, we celebrate the 2nd Juneteenth National Independence Day.

The transformative significance of Juneteenth since the first celebration in 1866 is a remarkable tale in American history.

Though it is now recognized at the national level, it does not erase our nation's racist history in straying from its original promise that "all men (actually, people) are created equal."

Every Juneteenth, I return to Frederick Douglass' speech best known as "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

The answer to this question is Juneteenth. In 2022, we can affirm that June 19, 1865, signifies the start of the American Promise that must be fulfilled and made real for all Americans, including the descendants of slaves.

To say 1776 marks the beginning of our free nation begs the question, "What does freedom mean if we are not all free?"

Juneteenth remains a pivotal moment, signifying the starting point in the emergence from racial oppression that was endured by generations with perseverance, resilience, and determination.

This vision is shared by millions of Americans who have held fast to the promise of freedom in our nation while fighting for basic human rights. We know that the struggle which began in 1619 did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

The fight did not end two years later in 1865, nor 100 years after that with the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts.

The fight for our freedom continues as a common thread in the fabric of this country. But we also recognize the lack of freedom that persists for many, as well as the injustices, abuse, and discrimination that continue in today's America.

The true power of Juneteenth lies both in the commemoration of the past and the possibilities of the future.

When VAWA first became law in 1994, it represented a historic shift in the federal government's role in combating violent crimes committed against women.

Due to the importance of the legislation and resulting success, VAWA was reauthorized on an overwhelming bipartisan basis in 2000, 2005, and 2013.

Recognizing the importance of the law and knowing that the law was set to expire at the end of the year, I introduced the "Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018" in September of 2018.

The reauthorization strengthened and enhanced the vital services provided under the law to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Despite our best efforts, the bill was not brought to the floor, and VAWA was allowed to expire at the end of 2018.

I continued to work, along with other members, victims, survivors, experts, and advocates, to ensure not only that VAWA would be reauthorized but that we enhanced the law and made it better, more effective, and more responsive to the needs of those seeking to heal after suffering trauma.

Therefore, I introduced the bill, HR 1620, the "Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2021".

This version of the reauthorization represented countless hours of discussions to ensure that we refined and improved upon the earlier iteration of the bill.

H.R. 1620 passed in the House and served as foundation for the bill that was introduced in the Senate and was eventually included in H.R. 2471, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022" (the Omnibus) and signed by the President.

Thankfully, after many hard-fought battles, we were finally able to get the VAWA Reauthorization across the finish line this year.

Many of the provisions I included in my bills in 2018 and 2021 carried over to the Senate version of VAWA as well as the Omnibus, such as:

The reauthorization of vital grant programs like the Services Training Offices Prosecutors, or STOP grants, administered by the Department of Justice, which allows the use of STOP grants to develop the most effective law enforcement tools and protocols for preventing domestic violence homicides and requires state, territorial, local, and tribal governments to certify that they have established and implemented such programs to be eligible for grants.

Creating Hope through Outreach Options, Services, and Education, or the CHOOSE program, which clarifies that funding under the CHOOSE program for children and youth is being provided for the core areas of VAWA—domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking—and that services that target youth should also incorporate youth in underserved communities and sex trafficking and bullying as elements when part of a comprehensive youth violence response program.

The preservation of funding for sexual assault services programs, transitional housing grants for victims, grants to states territories, and Indian tribes in rural communities, and grants to support families in the justice system with a history of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Just today, the House passed my bipartisan bill, H.R. 7566, the "No Trafficking Zones Act." The bill would ensure that schools across the country, including institutions of higher education, are safe spaces for learning and academic exploration—free from the menace of sex trafficking.

As predators often prey on communities of color, this bill is a strong measure to fight against sex trafficking that often targets young African Americans and other people of color.

H.R. 7566 would establish a sentencing enhancement of up to five years in several instances:

First, in the case of any person who commits the offense of sex trafficking within a primary or secondary school zone or on or within 1,000 feet of the premises of a school-sponsored activity or premises owned by an institution of higher education;

Second, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and enticement of a minor enrolled in a primary or secondary school or a person enrolled in an institution of higher education—to travel in interstate or foreign commerce and engage in criminal sexual activity—while the minor is in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place or while the person is on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises owned by the institution of higher education;

And, third, for any person who commits the offense of coercion and enticement of a minor using the mail or facilities of interstate or foreign commerce—such as text and instant messaging or social media platforms—while the minor who is enrolled in school or an institution of higher education, is in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, premises where a school-sponsored activity is taking place or premises owned by an the institution of higher education.

Human trafficking is one of the greatest threats to human rights in the United States. In 2020, 11,193 instances of potential human trafficking were reported to the United States National Human Trafficking Hotline with at least 70 percent of those instances involving sex trafficking, while an estimated 25 percent of all human trafficking victims in the country are in my home state of Texas at any given time—many of whom are minors.

At least 5,359 of trafficking victims and survivors identified through the hotline in 2019 were under the age of 18, and in 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received more than 17,200 reports of suspected child sex trafficking.

Many of these young victims of sex trafficking are students in school systems, colleges, trade schools, and universities across the country.

A 2018 survey reported that in Texas—where No Trafficking Zone legislation passed with bipartisan support earlier this year—55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors were trafficked while at school or school activities and 60 percent of trafficked adults said they were first groomed and solicited for trafficking while on school campuses.

Members of this body know all too well that children are sexually exploited in many ways. Some young people are trafficked by their schoolmates or people they once considered friends.

While traffickers seek out young people who have noticeable vulnerabilities—including problems at school, conflicts at home, or even

the need to fill in a tuition gap caused by the loss of a scholarship—no child or young person is truly safe from the schemes of charismatic traffickers bent on exploiting and destroying young lives.

With the proliferation of social media and the myriad ways in which we communicate with one another, traffickers have put these same means of communication to their own use—to find, target, lure, groom, victimize, and exert control over their victims. While buyers are using technology to find and purchase sex anonymously.

Traffickers have infiltrated every known form of communication—especially the sites, messaging apps, and social media platforms our children use most frequently—leaving young people more vulnerable to manipulation.

Access to the internet, cell phones, and smartphones makes it easier for traffickers and buyers to communicate with children and youth—even when they are at school, in class, or attending school-sponsored activities.

As a result, trafficking has reached the halls, lunchrooms, gyms, dormitories, and classrooms of schools, colleges, and universities in every corner of this nation.

These staggering facts and statistics led me to introduce this bipartisan legislation which the House passed today to protect young Americans from predators.

Last week, the House passed H.R. 8326, the Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act. By reforming the operations of the Census Bureau, this bill—which includes my amendment—would ensure that racial and ethnic equity in the decennial count will be a priority in future Census counts.

My amendment would enhance the bill's operational impact by specifying that the deputy director appoint an official with responsibility to optimize racial and ethnic equity in the Census count. To ensure that equity be a priority, this official would report directly to the director and deputy director.

In light of the decennial count's extremely consequential impact in terms of funding allocation formulas, political district apportionment, and other uses, it is imperative that the Census Bureau elevate racial and ethnic equity to a top priority in its counting strategies and procedures.

My amendment directs the equity official to engage and collaborate with organizations that have influence with racial and ethnic groups, develop strategies and tactics to maximize participation of these populations, and rectify the undercount that has been typical of recent Census counts, especially among immigrants and homeless people.

The status of the efforts to optimize racial and ethnic equity will also be included in the Census Bureau's biannual reports to Congress, to ensure accountability and bolster the likelihood of progress.

Optimization of racial and ethnic equity in the Census count requires designation of a high-ranking official with direct responsibility for achieving this goal and reports directly to the Census leadership.

My amendment establishes that role, makes racial and ethnic equity in the decennial count a priority, specifies key strategies that must be applied, and ensures that Congress receives regular reports about the progress toward the goal.

H.R. 8326 is an excellent bill with vital reforms that uses this opportunity to advance

equity in the Census count. My amendment creates a framework for achieving this objective.

In May of this year, the House passed HR 7309, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022.

This bill would ensure that more institutions will be able to provide education and job training services; a wider range of curricula will be available that enables learners to become job-ready; and more Americans will be equipped with skills that will jump-start long-term careers.

It would extend the reach of job skills training and employment preparation to all corners of the country and all segments of society. It does so by creating vital national programs and instituting accountability systems that will monitor program operations and success.

One of my two amendments to this bill would ensure that this legislation helps all Americans, specifically communities of color that historically did not benefit equally from workforce development and job skills training programs.

My amendment ensures that HBCUs and other minority-serving educational institutions are eligible and encouraged to apply for maximal benefits under the bill's programs.

My amendment clarifies that, beyond equality, the job training and workforce development programs at HBCUs and minority-serving institutions should be given priority in order to promote equity for students whose ancestors were denied that right. It can be the impetus for a fresh start.

By including and prioritizing HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions, the institutionalized barriers which impeded generational prosperity will be eroded, even if only incrementally and over time. By leveling the playing field, the imbalance of generational wealth will also be rectified.

Diversity and inclusion must always be a priority particularly in future high-growth industries that are essential to our nation's long-term economic growth, success, and job creation strategy.

The Transportation, Housing & Urban Development, Agriculture Appropriations Act passed the House in July of this year with many amendments that I offered.

One of my amendments to this bill specifically benefits HBCUs. It supports the work of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) by increasing its funding by \$2,000,000 for use in agriculture research programs at 1890s Institutions, which are land grant colleges at 28 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as well as Hispanic-serving institutions, and other educational institutions that benefit underrepresented communities.

This amendment promotes NIFA's work at HBCUs with agricultural experiment stations, cooperative forestry, and other innovations to improve our nation's food production through agricultural research, economic analysis, extension, and higher education.

One of ways NIFA achieves its mission is by providing research grants to education institutions, which include 1890s institutions created by the Morrill Act of 1890.

Today, land-grant colleges and universities can be found in 18 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The list includes:

Alabama A&M University

Alcorn State University

Delaware State University

Florida A&M University

Fort Valley State University

Kentucky State University

Langston University

Lincoln University

North Carolina A&T State University

Prairie View A&M University in Texas

South Carolina State University

Southern University System

Tennessee State University

Tuskegee University

University of Arkansas Pine Bluff

University of Maryland Eastern Shore

University of the District of Columbia*

University of the Virgin Islands

Virginia State University

West Virginia State University

HBCUs annually enroll 40 percent of all African American students in 4-year colleges and universities. HBCUs are prominent among research institutions in fields such as:

animal sciences

sustainable agriculture and agriculture economics

toxicology and waste management

conservation and environmental management

business and industrial development

biomedical science

food and nutrition

plant and social sciences

international development

Agricultural research programs at HBCUs help people living in densely populated areas learn ways to eliminate food deserts, increase public education about farming, bolster appreciation for our nation's farmers, and provide new avenues to careers for graduates with degrees in agriculture who seek to enter cutting-edge agricultural research.

This amendment promotes NIFA's work with HBCUs on agricultural experiment stations, cooperative forestry, and other innovations to improve our nation's food production through agricultural research, economic analysis, extension, and higher education.

The funds provided by my amendment supports research and education for helping urban and suburban communities maximize their green space by turning it into productive farming resources to support access to affordable foods.

Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the country, wreaking its most bitter toll on communities of color.

Early in the pandemic, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control found that Black Americans were infected with COVID-19 at a rate nearly one and a half times higher than that of whites, were hospitalized at a rate nearly four times higher, and were three times as likely to die from the disease.

On February 8, 2021, I introduced H.R. 936, the "COVID-19 Delivery Act," which strengthens FEMA's role in vaccine distribution.

Specifically, this legislation: (1) authorized FEMA as the National Coordinator of vaccine transport and delivery; (2) supported the safe and effective supply chain transport, delivery, and site use of vaccines; (3) implemented the Center for Disease Control and prevention COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations.

To date I have opened 96 COVID-19 testing sites and 88 vaccination sites in some of the most underserved communities in my district and Houston as a whole.

As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1652 the "VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act, I helped lead the passage of the bill in the House and on June 22, 2021, President Biden signed the bill into law.

VOCA grants are the primary source of federal funding for thousands of victim service providers around the country, including programs serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking, and drunk driving.

This critical piece of legislation supports vital victim service programs by preventing future cuts to already diminished federal victim service grants.

H.R. 1652 requires the Department of Justice DOJ to deposit all monetary penalties, including from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements, into the Crime Victims Fund. This simple fix prevents future funding cuts that jeopardize programs' ability to serve their communities.

Although the Congressional Black Caucus has had many legendary achievements this Congress, our work is far from done. We will continue to fight for equality and justice by pushing legislation that will better the lives of African Americans, and indeed all Americans around the nation.

Now more than ever, the facts and circumstances facing our nation demonstrate the importance of H.R. 40, which I introduced, and the necessity of placing our nation on the path to reparative justice, as well as providing accountability for injuries inflicted.

H.R. 40 establishes a national commission to examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies.

H.R. 40 was first introduced by Congressman John Conyers in 1989. Though many thought it a lost cause, Conyers believed that a day would come when our nation would need to account for the brutal abuse of African Americans during slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the enduring structural racism endemic to our society.

With the rise and normalization of white supremacy during the Trump administration, the discussion of H.R. 40 and the concept of restorative justice gained urgency, garnered attention from mainstream media, and illustrated the need for a national reckoning.

Eradication of structural institutionalized racism requires it. Full empowerment, enfranchisement, and inclusion require it. Genuine equality and equity to overcome injustices require it.

A vital step is an official acknowledgment that Black history IS American history and the Juneteenth holiday has achieved that.

Another key step for reconciliation is the development of a factual, historical record that illuminates the truth about the African American experience amid slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, legalized violence, exclusion, and inequality.

The factual, truthful record will expose the fallacies of revisionism and misinformation which, in recent years, have become the favorite tools of those with racist motives and agendas. Vilification of the collegiate study of critical race theory is a typical example.

The role of federal, state, and local governments at each stage in the nefarious chapters of history must be revealed and recognized.

The next step must be a national apology for governmental actions that legalized oppression, violence, inequality, and exclusion

from the means toward socioeconomic mobility and generational wealth.

Reconciliation requires an apology—an acknowledgment of government collusion in past ignominious eras—for three reasons: to provide accountability for past wrongs, to heal the national soul, and to confer official validation of the plights of its victims. Without an apology, there can be no closure; there can be no justice for our ancestors who suffered hideous torment.

With those steps addressed, the focus turns to what can be done to right the wrong. Reparations in various forms are needed to instill equity and create a level playing field for African Americans who are still disadvantaged by the aftershocks of previous eras.

The commission created by H.R. 40 would start by identifying (1) the role of federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery; (2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants; and (3) lingering negative effects of slavery that impact today's African-Americans and society.

The goal of the historical investigations that H.R. 40 mandates 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 "more perfect union" by helping the truly disadvantaged.

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

Reparations can have wide-ranging positive effects, for example, a recent peer-reviewed study from Harvard Medical School suggests that reparations for African Americans that narrowed the wealth gap could have cut COVID-19 transmission and infection rates both among Blacks and the population at large.

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.

Though the Civil Rights Movement challenged many of the most racist practices and structures that subjugated the African American community, it was not followed by a commitment to truth and reconciliation.

For that reason, the legacy of racial inequality has persisted, leaving the nation vulnerable to a range of problems that continue to generate division, racial disparities, and injustice.

By passing H.R. 40, Congress can start a movement toward the national reckoning that 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.

In his famous Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln spoke of the profound moral debt owed for "all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil." He asserted that the Civil War was the judgment of the Lord, which was "true and righteous altogether."

That debt remains to be paid, which is why African Americans always peacefully peti-

tioned the government for the redress of grievances.

As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said at the 1963 March on Washington:

"In a sense, we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.

"This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

"It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.' But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So, we have come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

Official slavery ended with the Civil War and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment.

But unofficial slavery continued by: (a) newly instituted share-crop farming; (b) a criminal justice system that pressed convicts into work that was once done by slaves; and (c) labor policies that dictated income for work done based upon skin color.

This, of course, was reinforced by the systematic disenfranchisement of black Americans, the "discrete and insular minority" excluded from "those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect" them, to quote Chief Justice Hughes' famous Footnote 4 in *United States v. Carolene Products Company*, 304 U.S. 144 (1938).

These are just some of the many reasons that the history of the U.S. is intertwined with the history of enslaved Africans in the Americas.

But to reach redemption and reconciliation, we must have the complete truth and lay our history bare. It is the light that sheds the way to the more perfect union all Americans desire.

The Commission that would be created and empowered by H.R. 40 is a vital first step in the effort to attain truth and reconciliation about the Original Sin of American Slavery that is necessary to light the way to the beloved community we all seek.

We witnessed nightly peaceful civil disobedience in the streets of America in solidarity with countless victims of injustice and cruelty. Young African American men and women no longer with us in body but forever with us in memory.

We demanded justice and equity that starts with policing reform yet extends far beyond. It's not just about police conduct toward us. It starts with the predisposition of police about us, before interaction occurs. Police biases, implicit and explicit, can forecast a propensity for violence toward us and the denial of our civil rights.

In addition to criminal justice reform, we demanded the full eradication of structural and systemic institutionalized racism. Since then, confederate statues were removed, newly developed factual curriculum has begun to educate all students about the actual truth of

Black history, and millions of Americans learned about the Juneteenth holiday.

Once again, I would like to thank Chairwoman BEATTY for giving me and my CBC colleagues the opportunity to shine a light on all our accomplishments this Congress.

I am so proud to be a part of such a dedicated and hardworking group of people. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you on legislation that will make America a more equal and just place.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD an ABC News article entitled: "Congress passes legislation to make Juneteenth a federal holiday."

[From ABC News, June 16, 2021]

CONGRESS PASSES LEGISLATION TO MAKE
JUNETEENTH A FEDERAL HOLIDAY

(By Libby Cathey)

For the first time in nearly 40 years, Congress has moved to establish a new national holiday, this time for Juneteenth, and just in time for Saturday's 156th anniversary of the day that marks the last African American slaves being freed in Texas in the wake of the Civil War.

The House voted Wednesday night to pass the legislation. It heads next to President Joe Biden's desk for a signature. When Biden signs it, as he's expected to at 3:30 p.m. ET Thursday, according to the White House, Juneteenth will officially become a federal holiday—the first since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was signed into law in 1983.

Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, a fierce advocate for the Black community who sponsored the legislation in the House, proudly announced from the podium the "bill is passed" before bringing the gavel down.

One Republican, Rep. Matt Rosendale of Montana, said in a charged statement ahead of the evening vote that he opposed the legislation that was "an effort by the Left to create a day out of whole cloth to celebrate identity politics." Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, a lead sponsor of the Senate bill, called the statement "kooky" in a tweet.

Other House Republicans who voted no on the legislation include Reps. Thomas Massie, Scott DesJarlais, Mo Brooks, Andy Biggs, Tom Tiffany, Doug LaMalfa, Tom McClintock, Mike Rogers, Andrew Clyde, Ralph Norman, Chip Roy, Paul Gosar and Ronny Jackson of Texas.

The House vote came after the Senate—in a surprise move Tuesday—passed the measure by unanimous consent following a single Republican senator dropping his opposition.

Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, who opposed the legislation last year, said in a statement that he would no longer raise his objections on the floor, though, as of last week, the bill already had the support of 60 cosponsors to overcome a filibuster.

"Although I strongly support celebrating Emancipation, I objected to the cost and lack of debate," Johnson said, referring to his previous stance. "While it still seems strange that having taxpayers provide federal employees paid time off is now required to celebrate the end of slavery, it is clear that there is no appetite in Congress to further discuss the matter."

Biden will be accompanied for the signing by Vice President Kamala Harris, who was one of the Democrats to introduce the legislation in the Senate last year alongside Cornyn.

Steve Williams, the president of the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, thanked lawmakers in a press conference on Capitol Hill earlier for, he said, "put(ing) that exclamation mark on the fabulous work."

"The Juneteenth nation is ecstatic," he said.

What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth—also known as Freedom Day, Liberation Day and Emancipation Day—marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, to ensure that African Americans still enslaved were freed following both the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and end of the Civil War.

The advance by Union Army Gen. Gordon Granger came 30 months and 19 days after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, which had declared, "all persons held as slaves within any States, or designated part of the State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."

But with the seven Confederate states operating under their own president, slaves in the South weren't exactly free to go. It would take another two months after Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House in April 1865 that troops would arrive in Galveston to free the final 250,000 people enslaved there. Most left the area despite a message from Union troops that they could stay and work for their owners as employees.

A few months later, in December 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified and abolished slavery.

Where is it celebrated?

Like most holidays, Juneteenth is recognized in gatherings across the country, predominantly in the Black community. With the help of social media to spread awareness on a holiday not always taught in school, it has become more mainstream in recent years.

Celebrations can include reflections, parades, food and drink, music—and even advocacy.

For instance, in 2016, Opal Lee of Texas, a now 94-year-old activist, walked from her home in Fort Worth to the nation's capital in an effort to get Juneteenth named a national holiday.

It was in 1979 that Texas became the first state to officially establish Juneteenth as an official holiday. Now, 49 states and the district separately recognize the day, with South Dakota as the only outlier, despite legislative attempts earlier this year.

What's next?

The legislation has passed just in time for the holiday Saturday. Biden is scheduled to sign the bill into law Thursday afternoon.

Despite the bipartisan victory, advocates said they are still far from repairing the wounds from American slavery.

Some point to HR 40, which specifically calls for the creation of a commission to study "and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes."

A version has been introduced in every legislative session since 1989, but passed out of a House committee for the first time this year.

"We're giving America the opportunity for redemption, for repair, for restoration, for also understanding the new America, which is so multicultural," said lead sponsor, Jack-son Lee, in April after it passed.

That legislation is still awaiting a full House vote and is expected to face an uphill battle in the Senate.

Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey, another lead Democrat to sponsor the legislation making Juneteenth a federal holiday also

highlighted in a tweet Wednesday that even with its passage, Republicans still attack critical race theory which would allow students to study the roots of events, such as Juneteenth, in school.

"Even today, as conservatives try to erase history with their attacks on critical race theory and understanding the impacts of systemic racism, we stand here acknowledging the truth. We will make #Juneteenth a federal holiday," Markey said in the tweet.

Speaking at a press conference earlier Wednesday in front of the Capitol, a group of lawmakers including Jackson Lee and other Democrats supportive of the Juneteenth legislation said there is still work to be done.

"Of course today is not enough, there's so much more work left to be done, but this is an important day because it is a piece of pavement on that path towards justice," said Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn. "This is not a moment for complacency, this is a moment to rededicate ourselves to that work."

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2015

FISCAL CRISIS FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER), my good friend, to raise an important issue that my constituents, my friend from Pennsylvania and his constituents, and, frankly, constituents all over this country care about, and that is the state of the fiscal crisis facing our country right now.

This is really not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue. All hardworking American taxpayers of all political persuasions should be concerned about the state of the fiscal mess that we face in our country: a \$31 trillion national debt that is literally burying our children and our grandchildren in a mountain of debt. This is mortgaging our future, and we need to get our fiscal house in order.

The American taxpayer works hard for their income, and they deserve a government that lives within its means. That is why I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with my colleague Mr. SMUCKER, who will later highlight this issue of fiscal recklessness and the need to tighten our belts and to live within our means so that we do not continue to put this burden on our children and our grandchildren. We need to stop the spending spree and live within our means.

Just to highlight how serious this problem is, Madam Speaker, it is not a lack of tax revenue. The issue is not that we don't tax the American people enough from Washington, D.C. The issue is that we are overspending.

In fact, this year, the Federal Government has raised more revenue from taxes than in any period in history, and it is actually over a trillion dollars when you consider inflation, a trillion

dollars more in tax revenue in inflation-adjusted terms.

The problem with our debt and deficit is not that we are taxing the American people too little. The problem is that we are living beyond our means, spending well beyond our means, and it is not only threatening the future fiscal solvency of our country. This overspending, this addiction to deficit spending, has delivered a historic 40-year high inflation crisis. It has created excess demand. When combined with the constraints that this administration has put on energy production, it is a classic supply-demand mismatch, overspending creating excess demand, combined with constraining energy, a war on domestic energy production constraining the supply. That supply-demand mismatch has pushed up prices.

What is the result of that, Madam Speaker? It means the Federal Reserve must engage in a precipitous quantitative tightening process. It must raise interest rates fast. It must engage in tightening monetary policy. What does that mean? Higher interest rates. And higher interest rates mean higher debt service costs. We have to pay higher interest on the national debt, which compounds the problem.

The solution, Madam Speaker, for the fiscal policy policymakers, those of us in the Congress and the White House and the executive branch, is to start living within our means. Then and only then can we get our inflation crisis under control and the Federal Reserve can start lowering interest rates once again.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his leadership in advocating for fiscal sanity in Washington and the restoration of fiscal responsibility. We need to exercise fiscal discipline and get this ship turned around.

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

AMERICA MUST RESTORE FISCAL SANITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Kentucky, who truly is an expert on fiscal policy and truly understands the situation that we are in, in our country.

We just simply cannot afford to continue down this path and expect that there will not be consequences: consequences for us and, if not for us, certainly for future generations. At the least, we are mortgaging the future of our kids and our grandkids, and it is completely irresponsible.

We just came back, all of us, to our districts. I can tell you, I spent most of the weekend out talking to people across the district, and they are very