

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry leaders working together across the country to make sure that we have a fully skilled workforce.

The winning team at the statewide competition will receive full scholarships to the welding program at the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton and could have the opportunity to participate in both national and world welding competitions.

I congratulate these students for their accomplishment, and I look forward to seeing the results from the SkillsUSA competition.

CONGRATULATING MARY SMITH

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mary Smith for her two decades of service to the people of Conway.

Last month, Mayor Bart Castleberry of Conway and the Conway City Council recognized Ms. Smith's 19 years as an alderwoman.

Ms. Smith's compassion, insight, and wisdom were greatly appreciated by those around her. She is a beloved member of the Conway community.

I wish her all the best in her next endeavors, and I thank Mary for her years of service to the city of Conway.

RECOGNIZING THE MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Museum of Discovery for winning the 2022 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for Resilience.

This award, presented by the Association of Science and Technology Centers, recognizes organizations that have overcome significant and specific adversarial impacts on their museums, yet were able to use that hardship to promote their mission and actually grow their potential. This award is touted as the science museum equivalent of an Oscar.

The Little Rock-based Museum of Discovery and their exceptional staff received this award for how they rebounded from a 6-month facility closure due to flooding caused from a burst pipe in the terrible winter storm in February 2021.

The museum used this time to repair and extend their virtual operating capabilities, build on what they had started during the COVID-19 pandemic, and through this tactical shift, they were able to deliver an immersive and deeply educational virtual experience to thousands during this period of repair.

I am proud to honor the Museum of Discovery for their dedication and hard work after a disaster that made them stronger and better for all that they educate in science and technology.

CONGRATULATING PAUL BROWNING

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Paul Browning, the assistant fire chief of the city of Morrilton, Arkansas.

Paul recently announced his retirement after 3 decades of service with the Morrilton department.

Just before his departure, Paul was given the opportunity to present the department's newest captain with his captain's badge. The recipient? His son, Joseph Browning, who had been with the department 15 years.

Paul presented Joseph with his original captain's badge as a token of his promotion.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Joseph on his promotion and congratulate Paul on his retirement. I thank them both for their dedication and service to the community of Morrilton.

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

CONSCIENCE AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise, to quote Maya Angelou, "Bringing the gifts my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave."

I rise today as a proud descendent of enslaved people, a proud descendent of the foundational mothers and fathers of this country. They are foundational because they helped to build the infrastructure that allowed this great country to become the great Nation that it is.

There were many others who contributed to this country, but they by the millions contributed, and their lives were sacrificed such that we might have the great Nation that we have today.

I rise today to talk specifically about a conscience agenda. A conscience agenda is one that I believe can be embraced by all people of good will. A conscience agenda.

I have before you and me some of what would be included in a conscience agenda, and I will give a brief explanation about each. I will set the stage by explaining some of what Dr. King called to our attention with reference to this question of the conscience.

In speaking to a group of clergy and laypeople concerned about the Vietnam war on February 6, 1968, in Washington, D.C., Dr. King concluded his speech with some very powerful language that addresses the role that conscience plays in doing some things and taking certain positions.

Dr. King's final words were: "On some positions cowardice asks the question, is it safe?"

I will add parenthetically here, is it okay for me to do this or will I be harmed in some way physically? Cowardice will ask you, is it safe to do this?

He goes on to say: "Expediency asks the question, is it politic?"

Does it make good political sense to do what I am about to do?

He further indicates: "Vanity asks the question, is it popular?"

If I do this will I have a parade in my honor?

Will there be people who will celebrate what I am about to do or what I am doing?

Dr. King concludes with this: "But conscience asks the question, is it right?"

He goes on to say: "And there comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."

I am not sure that it is safe, politic, or popular to take a position on all of these issues, and I am not sure that it is not safe, nor politic, nor popular, but I do say this: Conscience tells me that I should do this.

There is a moral imperative to bring these issues before the Congress of the United States of America, and I do so because conscience tells me it is the right thing to do.

I believe that as a matter of conscience we should have a Slavery Remembrance Day. I understand that this day is one that ought to be commemorated. Unlike many other days that we celebrate, we must commemorate this day. There can be some celebration of the lives of those who were lost to slavery, but this is a day for commemoration principally.

As a day of commemoration, I believe that we ought to let the world know how much we appreciate those millions of people who were enslaved, many of whom were born into slavery, lived as slaves, and died as slaves. It is time for this country to show some appreciation for them.

For too long we have revered the enslavers and reviled the enslaved. This conscience agenda would have us recognize Slavery Remembrance Day, and August 20 of 1619 is the date that the first enslaved people were brought to this country. It was on that day in Point Comfort that a slave ship, the White Lion, landed. It brought with it some 20-odd, as it is said, enslaved persons. They were introduced to the English-speaking colonies in this country. Twenty human beings were stolen, kidnapped, and brought to our country. They were brought to our country and traded just as you would trade a horse, or you would trade some piece of machinery. They were traded—human beings on August 20, 1619—traded into slavery into this country.

This is the day that we have set aside to recognize as Slavery Remembrance Day because that day set into motion events that haunt us to this day. We ought not forget that date, August 20, 1619.

I am so proud to tell you that this House has already passed a resolution honoring the persons who were enslaved. This House passed a resolution. Some 218 Members of this House voted in support of Slavery Remembrance Day. This was already a part of the annals and the history of the House. It is, therefore, those who look through the vista of time at this time

to understand what happened. I can't explain it all today because I have much to say, but I will tell you that I am proud to tell you, in fact, that the President of the United States of America, the Honorable Joe Biden—a man that I have great respect for; I support him; I have supported him; I support him today; I will support him tomorrow because of what he has done—this President recognized Slavery Remembrance Day with a statement that he issued on August 20 of 2022.

In the many things that he has indicated in this statement I will just focus on a very few words, some seven words that are contained within this statement. He indicated: "Great nations don't hide from their history." He said much more, but it is important for us to accentuate this statement: "Great nations don't hide from their history."

There are too many people in this country to this day who would have us hide from our history, have our history be proclaimed involuntary relocation. That is what is happening in the State of Texas currently, we have a group of folks who want to proclaim slavery, the enslavement of human beings, as involuntary relocation.

We cannot hide from our history. There are people who don't want it taught in schools. They want us to somehow give a rendition of history that reveres those who were the enslavers and revile those who were the enslaved.

For too long this has been the case in this country. It is my desire and my belief that people of conscience that the conscience dictates that there is a moral imperative for us to change this misunderstanding of history. To do this, we obviously need a Slavery Remembrance Day.

In Houston, Texas, on August 20, 2022, we had an event, a Slavery Remembrance Day event. A thousand people showed up for Slavery Remembrance Day, including our mayor Sylvester Turner. Many notable members of the clergy were in attendance. Our city council people were in attendance. State representative Ron Reynolds was there. We had commissioner Rodney Ellis in attendance. Many people of note were there, but there were also people who were not among the elected officials, people who simply wanted to let the world know that they understand the necessity to commemorate Slavery Remembrance Day.

By the way, it is not unusual for us to have these remembrance days. We have a day to remember the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. That is a day we set aside annually, December 7.

We have a day to remember the day that the Twin Towers in New York were attacked, when our Nation was attacked and the Twin Towers came tumbling down.

We have a day set aside to remember the Holocaust, the horrors of the Holocaust, so that we will never allow it to be repeated any place on the planet

Earth. There is no event comparable to the Holocaust just as there is no event comparable to slavery, the enslavement of people that took place in this country.

What we want to do now is expand Slavery Remembrance Day. We want to make sure that in every church, in every house of worship there is an opportunity on August 20 of this year to have a Slavery Remembrance Day ceremony wherein we will explain what happened and proclaim that we must always remember these events that took place.

Slavery Remembrance Day is important, and conscience dictates that we would do such a thing as commemorate the lives that were lost to slavery.

□ 1215

I will say more about those lives as I move forward with our next Conscience Agenda item, which is awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslaved, a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslaved.

I am now using what is called a mnemonic device. It is said that if you repeat things multiple times, people are more likely to remember than not.

So, in the utilization of this mnemonic device, I repeat: We want to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American enslaved.

There are many people who don't understand, and because they don't understand, their visceral reaction is: Why would you award a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslaved?

Well, I have a "Dear Colleague" that my dear colleagues will be receiving. I am going to read it, perhaps not in its entirety, but I will cover some of the important excerpts.

This "Dear Colleague" reads—and this is a part of the style of it, the Congressional Gold Medal, obviously, and it reads: Confederate soldiers—silence is a way of accentuating—Confederate soldiers. Confederate soldiers were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal in 1956. The Congress of the United States of America awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to Confederate soldiers in 1956.

I figure it can be fairly said that Confederate soldiers were persons who fought on the side of many who were fighting to maintain the institution of slavery.

We have revered the Confederate soldiers. We have reviled those who were enslaved. Silence accentuates.

I go on to indicate—I used the personal pronoun "I" because this is my work, but I really am a "we" person. I prefer saying "we" because nothing is done alone.

It goes on to read: What Congress did for Confederate soldiers, it, as a matter of conscience, should do for the enslaved.

What we did for Confederate soldiers as a matter of conscience there is a moral imperative to do for the enslaved.

I am asking Members to support the historic Congressional Gold Medal for

America's economic foundational fathers, mothers, and children, the enslaved.

Note that I said "children." I am not proud that this happened. I love my country, but I speak truth to power, truth about power.

I am a liberated Democrat, unbought, unbossed, unafraid, and willing to stand here and say: I love my country, salute the flag, say the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the national anthem, but I am going to tell the truth about our history.

I want history to also reflect properly that we honored the persons who helped build this country, that we would not honor those who sought to enslave them and dishonored those who were enslaved.

I am asking my colleagues to support the historic Congressional Gold Medal for America's economic foundational fathers, mothers, and children, the enslaved.

There are already persons who have acknowledged that they will be original cosponsors. I call them persons of conscience, persons of goodwill, persons who understand the zeitgeist of the time.

I am going to call their names. There are 19 such persons. By the way, if a name is not called, it doesn't mean that the name won't be an original cosponsor. It just means that these are persons that I have talked to in passing, and they have said they would like to be original cosponsors.

Again, I consider them the persons of conscience who have decided to sponsor as original cosponsors this Congressional Gold Medal to the American enslaved.

Their names are the Honorable MAXINE WATERS, the Honorable BENNIE THOMPSON, the Honorable DANNY K. DAVIS, the Honorable JIM MCGOVERN, the Honorable BRAD SHERMAN, the Honorable BARBARA LEE, the Honorable YVETTE CLARKE, the Honorable HANK JOHNSON, the Honorable GERRY CONNOLLY, the Honorable KWEISI MFUME, the Honorable DAVID CICILLINE, the Honorable PETE AGUILAR, the Honorable TED LIEU, the Honorable ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, the Honorable SYLVIA GARCIA, the Honorable ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, the Honorable ILHAN OMAR, the Honorable AYANNA PRESSLEY, and the Honorable TROY CARTER.

Only the persons that I have talked to and, I might add, I have not talked to a single person who has said: "No, we should not honor the enslaved. No, it is okay to honor the Confederate soldiers but not the enslaved." I have not talked to a single person with that mindset.

Every person, without question, reservation, hesitation, or equivocation, immediately said: "Yes. Yes, sign me up."

The deadline for original cosponsors for this historic legislation will be February 28, 2023. This is the last day of Black History Month.

Now, a little bit more about why this is so important. On July 18, 1956, the

Congress, that would be the House and the Senate, awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to Confederate soldiers.

However, to this day, Congress has never awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to the over 10 million enslaved men, women, and children who toiled for over 240 years—silence accentuates—toiled for over 240 years to build the economic and infrastructural foundation of the wealthiest nation to ever exist on the planet Earth.

These foundational mothers and fathers of our country labored arduously, constructing our cities, roads, bridges, and wells.

They laboriously planted, as well as harvested, the food that fed our Nation. They were the de facto producers of the cash crops that fueled our Nation's foundational wealth.

These enslaved human beings of African ancestors, of African ancestry, toiled as slaves without remuneration or recompense.

Their humble hands were relied upon for the construction of some of our Nation's most renowned edifices and monuments, including the White House, the Capitol Building, and the Washington Monument.

In truth, their sacrificed lives provided the genesis for our Nation's economic preeminence. These sacrificed human beings, men, women, and children, were the greatest contributors to the American foundational economy.

Yet, their contributions are almost universally forgotten, underrecognized, ignored, overlooked, and/or undervalued.

For these and countless other justifications, I am beseeching Congress as a matter of conscience—silence accentuates—I am beseeching Congress as a matter of conscience to award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the human beings who are the foundational fathers, mothers, and children that toiled as slaves without recompense or recognition for their unparalleled contributions to the infrastructural and economic development of the Nation that we enjoy today. We are all the beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

Awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to groups of individuals, for those who may not know, is not unprecedented as the Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to the Confederate soldiers that I mentioned earlier, but also to the Tuskegee Airmen, both *antemortem* and *postmortem*, I might add, to the Navajo Code Talkers, and *postmortem* to the servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

It is my belief that the men, women, and children who suffered a great crime against humanity—silence accentuates—who suffered a great crime against humanity, toiling unremunerated as slaves, many for their entire work lives, are deserving of a Congressional Gold Medal. They are deserving to the same extent as those who soldiered to preserve slavery.

The zeitgeist of our time impels the introduction of this historic legislation, and I want Members to know that if they wish to be recognized as a courageous person of conscience who is an original cosponsor, that they would please contact my office.

In the words of Maya Angelou, “Bringing the gifts my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave.” I would hope that others will join me in bringing forth this historic legislation.

Now, dear friends, I call to your attention another piece of legislation. It is a resolution that would remove the name of Richard Russell from the Russell Senate Office Building.

Richard Russell was a self-proclaimed white supremacist, a self-proclaimed white supremacist. He helped to author the Southern Manifesto. He fought against legislation that would accord punishment for those who were lynched. He was a self-proclaimed white supremacist.

His name ought not be on a building that is paid for with tax dollars. I am as adamant about this as I would be about a building having the name of someone associated with the Third Reich.

I would never tolerate that. I would take the stand I am taking here and now to get that person's name off of that building. No person associated with the Third Reich should have his or her name on a building paid for with taxpayer dollars in a country that professes liberty and justice for all.

Richard Russell's name needs to be removed, and his statue, which happens to be in a rotunda devoted to him, his statue has to be removed from the building.

His name off the building, his statue removed from the building—he is a self-proclaimed white supremacist.

I understand that this is more than some people can handle. I understand. As a matter of fact, it hurts me to even say it.

If I could live my life and do otherwise, I would, but my conscience won't allow me to do it. My conscience dictates that I must do this.

□ 1230

This is a part of the conscience agenda. His name should be removed.

Now, there are those who would say, whose name do you want? That is a fair question; here is a fair response: The fair response is, remove his name, let it revert to the name that it had prior to his name being placed on the building, then select the name of your choice.

We can remove his name. We can separate the removal of his name from the renaming of the building. The name that was on the building before it became the Richard Russell Office Building was the Old Senate Office Building. Let it revert back to the Old Senate Office Building, then select a name.

I have not pronounced at any point in time that I have a name. I have no name to offer. I offer justice to people

who find that this name is offensive, and it is offensive.

I don't go into the Russell Office Building. That is my means of protesting, what I see as something that is insulting. My guess is that it is insulting to a good many other people. A good many don't know the history that I know. Perhaps that is the reason they don't take the positions that I take.

I take this position as a matter of conscience. Richard Russell's name should be removed from the Senate office building paid for and maintained with tax dollars.

The next item on the conscience agenda is the enactment of legislation that we will be filing, styled with some variation possibly, the Securities and Exchange Attonement Act.

As the chair of the Subcommittee for Oversight and Investigations of the Financial Services full committee, we held hearings. We had the largest banks come in and we posed a question: Do you think that your institution has done enough to atone for its predecessor institutions or institution having been involved with slavery?

Let me explain. Many of our very large banks—I won't go into the names today. I am prepared to, but I won't—many of our largest banking institutions had predecessor institutions, meaning banks that at some point they are acquired, that literally engaged in the slave trade.

One bank—more than one, actually. One just came to mind—actually took slaves as collateral just as you would take a car, a piece of furniture. Human beings, collateral.

Then when the person that placed them in the contract as collateral defaulted, then they were possessed. Just as you would go out and claim a horse that was collateral, they took possession of the slaves.

They made money by trading in slavery and in slaves in this fashion. They need to atone. There were insurance companies that insured slaves just as you would insure a horse or cattle, insured human beings for the benefit of the masters. So that if something happened to the human beings, the master would be compensated.

Conscience dictates that there be atonement for this. The world has been set in motion such that you cannot create such egregious offenses and just walk away, then later say, well, I had nothing to do with that, why should I have to be a part of the atonement process?

Because we are the beneficiaries of slavery. We are. The President, whom I happen to agree with, indicated that great nations don't hide from their history; but I would also add, great nations do the responsible thing as it relates to their history, which is to acknowledge it and then atone for transgressions. That is what great nations do. This is a great Nation. There should be some atonement.

So we will have this introduced, this legislation, and colleagues will be

given the opportunity to be original cosponsors, as well as cosponsors. It is not asking too much for us to investigate and find out which of these mega-institutions engaged in the utilization of human beings as collateral and insured them as they would cattle. We should investigate, and they should atone.

Because of all of these things making it perspicuously clear that we need some sort of reconciliation, we will be introducing a resolution, legislation in the form of a resolution for a department of reconciliation.

We have a Department of Labor to deal with labor issues, a Department of Commerce to deal with issues associated with commerce and business. We have a Department of Defense to deal with issues related to war and peace. We ought to have, as a matter of conscience, a department of reconciliation with a secretary of reconciliation just as we have a Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Defense, with a budget just as we have a budget for the Secretary of Labor to further the aims of the Department, there ought to be a budget for the secretary of reconciliation to further the aims of the department of reconciliation.

It is time for us to take a systematic approach to dealing with the question of reconciliation in this country. A department of reconciliation would have undersecretaries of reconciliation, just as we have undersecretaries of commerce and undersecretaries of labor.

It ought to have a budget that is comparable to its mission. I have not set the budget, but I do believe that if we index it to the Department of Defense and make it some percentage of that budget, we are likely to have it funded on an annual basis. So I am of the opinion that we should index it, tie it to the budget for the Department of Defense so that we will always have the money necessary.

These things, I would hope, would happen in the 118th Congress. I don't know that they will, to be very candid. But I do know this: My record will show that as a person of conscience, I brought them to the attention of Congress and that Congress had every opportunity to embrace what I believe to be questions of conscience that have to be dealt with at some point.

This is a methodology, a means, if you will, by which we can address some of the egregious circumstances emanating from the arrival of some 20-odd persons of African ancestry in the English-speaking colonies on August 20, 1619. That has to be addressed. We still have issues that can be logically traced back to the arrival of some 20-odd persons, who were of African ancestry, on August 20, 1619.

Let me walk you through a bit of history. Yes, we ended a war that was a part of bringing slavery to an end, and we passed the 13th Amendment. The war and the 13th Amendment brought slavery to an end, except then there

was something called the Black codes. These codes allowed persons to be arrested for not having a job.

If you had been a slave and you are now free, they didn't have the kind of systems that we have in place now for persons who are unemployed. You would be picked up and arrested. Then you could be placed into what is known now, and then, as a convict leasing program, which was simply another way of saying slavery. People were placed into this convict leasing program, and many of them never left. They were placed into this program for petty offenses.

In Houston, just outside of Houston, we have a common grave with 95 bodies, 95 skeletons, the evidence of 95 people, who were in a convict leasing program all buried in a common grave. So sad. It hurts the heart. I understand why people don't want to hear it, because I don't want to say it. Convict leasing is slavery by another name.

Moving forward in history, we then had lawful segregation. I lived through lawful segregation. I know what it is like to drink colored water. I know what it is like to go through a door that had "coloreds" on it, go through the back door to get my food.

I just celebrated recently, last several months, on September 1, my 25th birthday for the third time. I lived through segregation. I know the horrors of it. I know what it is like to be separated from others. I know what it is like to sit at the back of the bus. I know what it is like to understand that you have a separate line when you go into the food store, a line for whites and a line for coloreds. I know what it is like to be next in line and have every person who happened to be of Anglo ancestry to come ahead of you until every person is served and then you take your opportunity to be served.

You were last in line simply by being in line. It didn't matter whether you got there first. I know what it is like. I know what it is like to go to schools with hand-me-down books, pages torn out. I know what it is like to be bused to schools some 20 miles to another school such that you would not be allowed into the same classroom with children who were of a different hue. I know what it is like. I suffered it.

But I am also very proud that we are beyond that. I am walking you through this history because there is a point to be made. The Civil War, ending of segregation, ending of convict leasing, the one thing that they didn't end was white supremacy.

□ 1245

The Civil War and the 13th Amendment did not end white supremacy, and that is what we have been fighting.

By the way, not all persons who are what we call White, who are Anglos, are participating intentionally in something that we would call white supremacy. That is not the case. It is not.

There is empirical evidence to support the notion that if you are a person

of color and have superior credit and seek a loan, you are likely to get less money and a higher interest rate than a person who is not of color who doesn't have superior credit. The empirical evidence is there. Testing has been done.

By the way, there are many people who fight allowing us to do this testing. There are people who don't want the empirical evidence to surface. They give all kinds of reasons for why we ought not do that.

We ought to do that because that is a means by which we can ascertain how far we have truly come and understand that sometimes it is the color of skin, not the character within, that determines the worth of women and men. The color of skin still does.

Try getting a loan as a person of color. Personal experience: Finished law school, and four of us applied for a loan. The loan officer cooperated with us. We cooperated with him. We received a loan to open a business, paid every payment on time, and paid the loan off early.

We went back to get another loan. A different loan officer declined to let us have a second loan. When we judiciously explained we received the first loan; we are asking for less money; we paid the first loan off; we paid it off early; and we were never late with a payment, his response to us: You shouldn't have gotten the first loan.

I have lived it. I don't have to talk about what others have said, what they have told me. This was a loan officer telling four lawyers who repaid a loan, paid on time, and repaid the loan early, that they shouldn't have gotten that loan.

One can but only imagine, if you are not me, what that was like as a lawyer to be told that you didn't qualify for what you qualified for and you repaid.

The point is this, dear brothers and sisters—whether you like it or not, I consider you my brothers and sisters. I do. I do because Dr. King was right. There really is but one race, and that is the human race. I concur with him when he said that all persons are created equal, from a bass black to a treble white.

I believe he was right when he said that:

Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim
Skin may differ, but affection
Dwells in Black and White the same.
Were I so tall as to reach the pole
Or to grasp the ocean at a span,
I must be measured by my soul
The mind is the standard of the man.

And woman, I might add.

I believe in my country. I have faith in the words in the Declaration of Independence: persons created equal, endowed by the creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I have faith. I have faith in the Pledge of Allegiance, liberty and justice for all.

Don't class me with those people who hate the country. I am not a country

hater. I am a country lover, just as I love members of my family that I have to tell the truth about and let them know when they have made mistakes, just as you have done similar things with people you love.

You can love a country and still want to make sure that it lives up to its promise. This is about living up to the promise, the Conscience Agenda.

Remember now, those who do this, I know that some, to quote Dr. King, will ask and respond to cowardice which asks the question: Is it safe?

Cowardice asks the question, is it safe?

Expediency asks the question, is it politic?

Vanity asks the question, is it popular?

But conscience asks the question, is it right?

I believe this is not only the right thing to do but the Conscience Agenda is the righteous thing to do. Because I believe it, I shall pursue it.

I believe that there are persons in this Congress who will join us in the Conscience Agenda, who will understand that there may be times when you have to do that which is neither safe nor politic nor popular. To quote Dr. King, you do it because conscience says it is right.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to start out with some housekeeping.

A lot has been said over the last few days about the huge number of IRS employees that are intended to be added by the Biden administration, and I just want to clarify some numbers.

There are new employees who are going to replace retired employees, but there are still 25,000 new employees who are going to be added to the Internal Revenue Service.

I should point out that, over time, you would expect—and this apparently surprises some people—you would expect the number of IRS employees to drop.

I used to do taxes. I haven't done those for over 25 years now. Even at that time, as things became more computerized, if you got interest income or dividend income or capital gain income, the IRS would match up those numbers with what appeared on your tax return.

If you got from U.S. Bank \$1,000, and you didn't put it on your return, you could expect a letter in the mail: Where is the \$1,000? Please give us another \$300 in taxes.

You do not need more employees to do that sort of thing. Again, when you talk about 25,000 more employees than the past, for a State the size of Wisconsin, that is really a small army of 500 new employees.

Sometimes, it is easier to bring down to the State level because we deal with

such big numbers. Whether you are talking about Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, or Washington State, they all can expect about 500 new employees. While there may be some people cheating, an increase of that size is just inappropriate.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. GROTHMAN. Let's look one more time at the new numbers that were released over Christmas break as far as the immigration situation in this country.

We have a new all-time record for the number of people coming here in November, over 200,000, 210,000 people. These numbers were released, by the way, late on a Friday, Friday as always, so the mainstream press, which already does a bad job of covering this issue, does not bring them up.

A lot of the focus has been on title 42. While that didn't go into effect, it didn't stop there from becoming an all-time high.

When I talk about 210,000 in November 2022, a year before that, we were at 131,000 for November. The year before that, before President Biden took office, we were around 20,000. We have gone from 20,000 to 210,000.

I am somebody who believes in intact families. Just as scary is the callousness of the Biden administration to the degree to which the open border situation tears apart families. In November, there were over 9,000 unaccompanied minors released to sponsors apart from their parents. A year ago, instead of 9,000 people being broken away from their parents, we had about 10,000, again, the Biden administration. A year before that, the final year of another administration was 1,200. There were months in which we had under 200 unaccompanied minors enter the country. We are now over 9,000.

Please, I wish we remembered that when we have our open borders policy, we are causing so many children to be raised apart from their parents.

I also want to point out the number of got-aways, which is a particularly dangerous subgroup of people coming here illegally.

So that you folks understand, there are two big groups of people coming here illegally.

There are people who ask for asylum. They don't deserve it, but they ask for asylum and turn themselves in to the Border Patrol. At least we get to do a little medical checkup on them. We are allowed to get a little bit of information on them. If we have the right name, which we may or may not, we can do a little bit of criminal background check on whether they have committed crimes in the United States or Canada.

There is another group of people called got-aways that race across the border and take advantage of the fact that, right now, so many Border Patrol agents are just doing paperwork. We have, as far as I can see, the all-time high, 73,000 got-aways in November 2022.

So that you understand, if you are somebody who is sneaking fentanyl across the border, if you are somebody who has a criminal record, how would you come here? Would you turn yourself in to the Border Patrol? Not likely. You would rather sneak across the border.

The fact that that subset is increasing even greater than the people who turn themselves in to the Border Patrol should scare every American to death.

It is time for President Biden to do a little bit more than a perfunctory stop at the border. He has to look at 2 years ago, in November 2020, when that 210,000 figure was under 20,000. It can be done once; it can be done again.

The American people and the press corps in America ought to hold him accountable and ask him to explain why we used to—as a matter of fact, earlier in 2020, we were under 10,000 people a month—why we used to be able to hold these numbers under 10,000 a month and now we are over 200,000, and why we used to be able to keep the unaccompanied minors under 1,000 and now they are over 9,000.

When I talk about unaccompanied minors, I am not including minors that were rented by other people because they felt it would be easier to get here with a family. The Border Patrol knows that is happening, as well. Maybe you rent little Johnny to somebody who says we want to be a family. That is another thing that is not even showing in these numbers. We don't know how often it happens. We just know that it happens.

I realize that Black Lives Matter has been hostile to the traditional nuclear family. I realize that is an important group for a lot of Members on the other side of the aisle, but I will tell you, I don't like it at all when I see over 9,000 unaccompanied minors coming into this country.

□ 1300

I want to point out another number that doesn't appear on here, and I wish we would keep track of it, and that is the degree to which we separate the family. Maybe one parent comes here with the kids but not two parents.

In America, our family court system—if people get divorced, we try to keep both parents around the area for the children. It breaks the heart of Border Patrol that they see no effort being done at the border.

In other words, if one parent shows up with the kids, maybe dad, maybe mom is left home in Guatemala, El Salvador, or wherever, we don't care. It really bothers the Border Patrol because, of course, when it comes to American children, we love them enough that we try to keep both parents involved. But when it comes to the policy at the border, we don't care.

I am also told, by the way, that this policy bothers governments of the countries that these people came from because they themselves have family