

States Senator, you need to be elected to do so.

Indeed, this is really an anachronism, this process of appointing Senators in the case of a vacancy, and it has been subject to rampant abuse.

We had Governor Rob Blagojevich go to prison after he essentially auctioned off Barack Obama's vacated Senate seat. We have had Governors who have appointed their family members, who have appointed their spouses. Several Governors have even appointed themselves.

I am calling on Members of the House and Senate to join me in passing that to do away with this anachronistic, antidemocratic process of appointing Senators.

In the meantime, this almost certainly will not take effect prior to the current situation with Senator FEINSTEIN being resolved, so I am calling on the California State Legislature, which has oversight over election laws and itself is responsible for creating the procedure for gubernatorial appointment, to address the situation.

There is actually a little bit of a backstory here. When Senator PADILLA was appointed to the Senate following the election of KAMALA HARRIS as Vice President, I raised an issue at the time with the legality of that appointment. Actually, the California State Legislative Analyst's Office, the legislative counsel's office in California, agreed with me that it would not be constitutional for the Governor to appoint a Senator who would then serve out the remainder of KAMALA HARRIS' term, which was set to expire in 2022.

The reason for that is that the Constitution, the 17th Amendment, only allows temporary appointments. So, if you appoint someone who serves the rest of the term, that is not temporary. That is permanent.

What the legislature did in response to the legal issue I raised, and that the legislative counsel's office agreed with me on, is they passed a bill to say that they will have a special election to determine who the new Senator is going to be and who is going to finish the term, but we are not going to have that special election until the next election. That actually happened in November 2022 at the exact same time we held the election for who would serve the new 6-year term.

It was an absurdity. We literally had the same election on the ballot twice. One was for the new 6-year term, and the other was just for the last couple of months, the lame duck portion of the existing term.

That was the way our legislature figured out to give basically as much advantage to the Governor's chosen appointed Senator as possible while still abiding by the letter, if not the spirit, of the 17th Amendment.

What I have been in conversations with some members of the legislature about is that they should change this law or, at the very least, make an exception to it for the current situation

with Senator FEINSTEIN, to say that if there is a vacancy, then there will not be an appointment, that there will be an immediate special election, and that is how the successor will be chosen for the remainder of Senator FEINSTEIN's term, which is set to expire in 2024.

I think that this is what will allow for fairness in the process of choosing our next Senator. It will give millions of Californians a say, rather than just one individual, and it will give Senator FEINSTEIN the ability to make a decision that is best for her, best for the State, and best for the country.

I urge that action on the part of the California Legislature and Governor.

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

RENAMING THE RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

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. And still I rise a proud descendant of the enslaved people who are the foundational mothers and fathers of the United States of America.

They are the foundational mothers and fathers because many of them had their entire lives sacrificed so that the country can have the economic foundation that it had in the early stages of its existence.

These foundational mothers and fathers are the persons who were kidnapped, brought to this country, placed into slavery, forced into labor, centuries of labor, not compensated, no remuneration. I am a proud descendant, and I am a proud descendant because they ought to be respected.

It is time to respect the foundational mothers and fathers who laid the economic foundation upon which this Nation stands today.

I am also proud to be here today to speak about the conscience agenda.

We want to make sure that we have a slavery remembrance day, August 20. On August 20, 1619, the *White Lion* docked in Point Comfort, Virginia, near what we now call Norfolk, Virginia. On this *White Lion* were persons who were placed into slavery in this country.

August 20, 1619, a moment in time that will impact the rest of time, we will never be able to escape the fact that it happened. It was a seminal moment in time. August 20 ought to be slavery remembrance day.

We ought to also do something to acknowledge those persons whom I call the foundational mothers and fathers. I am a proud descendant of them.

In 1956, we accorded a Congressional Gold Medal to Confederate soldiers, to those persons who would enslave persons or maintain slavery. This Con-

gress did it, a Congressional Gold Medal.

Well, why not have a Congressional Gold Medal for the enslaved, the foundational mothers and fathers?

This is part of the conscience agenda, a Congressional Gold Medal for the enslaved.

In this country that I love, I salute the flag; I say the Pledge of Allegiance; and I stand for the national anthem. It means something to me to be an American.

By the way, the greatness of the country won't be measured by whether I do these things. The greatness of the country will be measured by whether I would defend those who choose not to salute the flag, who choose not to say the Pledge of Allegiance. The greatness of America is in how we tolerate persons who have opinions that are not popular.

That is the greatness of America, in part. There are many other aspects of it.

The truth is, in this country that I am proud to be a part of, proud to say I am an American—the United States is my home; the origin of my descendants was far away—we revere the enslavers and revile the enslaved.

How can we possibly allow this to continue? These were human beings. They merit a Congressional Gold Medal.

If we can give a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslavers, the Confederate soldiers, then we can accord one to the enslaved people who were the foundational mothers and fathers who worked for hundreds of years to make this country the great Nation that it is.

That is all a part of the conscience agenda. Today, however, having spoken of these things briefly, I am going to focus on the third item on the conscience agenda.

The third item on the conscience agenda is removing the name of Richard Russell from the Russell Senate Office Building.

To properly address this, I have to lay a predicate. We have to talk first about beneficial bigotry.

□ 1330

And to properly explain beneficial bigotry, we have to address a concept. It is this notion that those who tolerate bigotry perpetuate bigotry. Those who tolerate bigotry, because of that toleration of bigotry, you are perpetuating it because you're not doing what you can to stop it.

We ought not tolerate bigotry. The Russell Senate Office Building is named after Richard Russell, a self-proclaimed white supremacist. That is what he called himself. He was a person who fought antilynching legislation. That means he did not want us to pass antilynching legislation.

He was a person who fought integration. If he had his way, there is a good likelihood I would not be standing here today. He was the person who coauthored the Southern Manifesto. Richard Russell, his name is on the Russell

Senate Office Building. He identified himself as a white supremacist.

Well, dear friends, his name ought not be there. We ought not tolerate his name being there. To tolerate his name there is to perpetuate the bigotry associated with his many exploits.

Richard Russell's name should be removed from the Russell Senate Office Building, and it should be replaced with the name that it had before it became the Russell Senate Office Building. I don't have a person's name that I would call to the attention of the Congress, I don't. There will be some debate about that.

I do believe we can let it revert to the name that it had prior to becoming the Russell Senate Office Building, and that was the Old Senate Office Building. I think it should be called the Old Senate Office Building. Let it revert back to this, then take as much time as you need to acquire an honorable name to go on the building.

The Russell Senate Office Building is currently a symbol of national shame. It is. The Senators ought to be ashamed because they have the power to remove this name from the building. They have the power to do it, the Senate. The same Senate that voted on removing names from military bases can remove this name from the Russell Senate Office Building.

The toleration of bigotry is the perpetuation of it. Allowing this name to stay there is the toleration of bigotry, especially when you have the power to remove it. We ought to use that awesome power that the Senate has to do not the right thing but the righteous things. It would be a righteous thing to remove this name from the building.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about beneficial bigotry, this is a part of my predicate. When you benefit from bigotry, if you believe it benefits you in some way, you tolerate it.

I, by the way, have not been afforded that luxury. If I say something that is bigoted or if I am near bigotry, I have to apologize. I have apologized, by the way, for things that I found to be unacceptable. I have. I have to. I am not allowed the luxury of having the benefits that beneficial bigotry can afford people.

There are many who fight bigotry until it benefits them. They don't have to apologize. They can let a building be called the Russell Senate Office Building, fight bigotry everywhere but in the building wherein they happen to have offices. They fight it everywhere but here, the Russell Senate Office Building, with this name.

Let me give you some examples of what beneficial bigotry allows. Beneficial bigotry will allow a country to name a town after a bigot. Beneficial bigotry. Beneficial bigotry allows some people the luxury of associating with bigots and justifying it. That is what beneficial bigotry accords some people.

We ought not allow the benefits of bigotry to allow us to tolerate bigotry, such that we perpetuate bigotry. That

is what is happening with the Russell Senate Office Building.

My friends, I live today to live to see the day that this name will come off of this building. I don't know when it will happen—it will. But I do know how the system works, and it is beneficial to know how it works.

The system functions such that when some people demand things of others who have the power to make the change, they will not make that change because of the simple fact that the demand was made, and they don't want it to appear as though they had to succumb to the demand that was made. I am demanding. I am demanding. I am not begging. I am, in a sense, pleading. I am demanding that the name come off.

You see, when you do this and when you are bold enough and you have the courage enough to demand that the righteous thing be done, there are some people who are not going to do the righteous thing simply because they can't let it be said that they have caved in, as it were—to borrow the parlance of many persons—that they caved in to a demand to do the righteous thing. They can't accept that.

What they will do is they will try to find a way to do this, to remove the name, and proclaim victory because it was done for some other reason, not because of the demand, but for some other reason. I am okay with that. Just remove the name. Find a clever way to do it.

Usually they will find some person that they find favor with to become the person that actually caused it to happen. History is replete with examples of where persons of African ancestry have not been properly credited for what they have done in history. I can think of some examples that are in my book that I will share with you at a later time.

The point is this: We cannot allow persons to simply decide that because they have the power, and they get to set the agenda that they won't do it. There is nothing preventing the Senate from changing this name, removing it, saving will. Just the will. Remove the name of the bigot from the building. There is nothing preventing it except for will.

My prayer to the Senate is that the Senate would do the righteous thing. Don't tolerate bigotry. You don't have to. Your offices are in the building. Your offices are in the building, in the Russell Senate Office Building, a symbol of national shame. You ought to be ashamed that it is there—your office.

What is wrong with us?

I know how the system works. I am a part of it, I ought to. There is some positive news related to Richard Russell, and the positive news is that one of my colleagues of whom I am proud to associate with, as it relates to this, the Honorable BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN is proposing legislation that would take Richard Russell's name off of a bill—off of legislation. I came to this

floor some time ago, and I brought up the fact that his name is on more than a building, his name is on legislation. There is a lunch program that his name is on.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN has legislation that would rename the National School Lunch Program Act. It is going to remove his name and substitute it with another name. I compliment you, my dear friend, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I compliment you for doing this.

This is the honorable thing to do. I appreciate it. I am going to appreciate it. I am going to, if allowed, be her co-lead on this legislation.

I made a commitment, and I want the world to know that I try my best to honor my commitments. I made a commitment, and the RECORD of the Congress will reflect that on April 28, 2023, Volume 169, Number 72 of the Daily Edition, there is a topic styled "The Conscious Agenda." It is part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I stood right here in this very spot, and I made a commitment. About halfway through my message, you will find the commitment where I am speaking of legislation that bears the name of Richard Russell—the same person whose name is on the building.

I said: "It is the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Program." That is what I am talking about. I indicate that this legislation bears his name. Here are my exact words: "His name shouldn't be on a school lunch program." I go on to say: "I am filing legislation"—and I said—"this is the update"—because the last time when I spoke on this topic it was an update—I say, "this is the update."

"I am filing legislation—this is the update—to have Richard Russell's name removed from all legislation that happens to bear it currently—all legislation—and to never have his name listed again." And I go on to say: "He is a symbol of national shame. His name should be removed."

I still stand by that. So while I am going to support and co-lead and am proud to know that Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN is filing her legislation, I will file my legislation to keep my commitment that I have made to people who chronicle the things that I do. I want them to know that I am following through. I will be filing my legislation, notwithstanding the fact that I will support, proudly, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN's legislation.

Friends, we live in a country that accords us free speech. This is a priceless possession to have, free speech. There are so many places in the world where one cannot stand as I am standing today before the world, literally, and say the things that I have said. This is one of the reasons why I love my country because of the free speech.

Here is a question that we have to ask ourselves: If we have free speech and free speech can be the methodology by which we can bring about change, and if we are tolerant of bigotry, is that free speech really being used to

the benefit of the people who actually accorded us or afforded us the free speech, the people who are the Framers of the Constitution?

I have great respect for them. The Framers who thought this thing was so important that they put it in the Constitution.

I am standing here to take advantage of and use that free speech. That free speech allows me to stand here and tell you that beneficial bigotry is going to become the shame of many persons in this country.

I have here invitations. These are all invitations. I won't turn them toward the camera because I really don't want to today expose the names of the persons who sent me these invitations.

Here is one that is for a luncheon that took place in the month of May. I won't give the date because I am not interested in identifying the organization. They are inviting me to an event taking place in the Russell Senate Office Building.

□ 1345

Obviously, if you know me, you know that I didn't go.

I am a one-person protest. I refuse to go into the Russell Senate Office Building except to protest. I am not going into that building unless I am to protest, and I will go in for that purpose.

However, my friends, whose names I shall not reveal, sent me this request and I wrote them a letter in response. I will come back to the letter in just a moment.

I have other friends having an event in the month of May at the Russell Senate Office Building. I didn't attend. I sent them a letter. I will come back to the letter in just a moment.

I received another offer to attend the Russell Senate Office Building and be a part of an event. I did not attend. I sent them a letter.

Now, all of these are just for the month of May, and while not calling names, some of the people who sent me these invitations are people who fight bigotry vehemently, who stand against bigotry in all its forms. They do, but they have events in the Russell Senate Office Building.

How can you have events in the Russell Senate Office Building and say that you are antithetical to bigotry, that you are going to fight bigotry?

There are some places that if I went into, I would have to apologize because those places are associated with bigotry, but not my friends over in the Senate, in and out on a daily basis. I have friends inviting me to come to events there, be a part of programs. The Russell Senate Office Building is a benefit to them. You cannot allow beneficial bigotry, my friends, to cause you to tolerate bigotry.

When you do this, you perpetuate bigotry. I told you I sent a letter to my friends explaining my position. I am just going to read some excerpts from the letter, and the reference is, invitation to luncheon, leaving out the rest

of it, and it is in the Russell Senate Office Building.

I am going to say "friend" so as not to identify the persons, Dear friend: "Thank you for your invitation to the luncheon," without getting into the details. "I am compelled to decline your invitation as I am boycotting the Russell Senate Office Building wherein the luncheon will take place."

Yes. The "yes" is not here. That is just a part of me expressing myself because I feel good about what I did. Yes.

I write: "Richard Russell was an unapologetic bigot and a white supremacist who claimed that America was 'a White man's country.'" Check the records if you don't believe me. It is all there. We are talking about the same Richard Russell that the building is named after, "a White man's country."

He goes on to say: "'We are going to keep it that way.'" It is "'a White man's country . . . and we are going to keep it that way,'" meaning, we are going to keep it a White man's country.

I know this is uncomfortable for many people to hear. We would rather have AL GREEN simply tolerate bigotry and perpetuate bigotry. That is what we would like to do when it is beneficial bigotry and it benefits other folk.

Let me go on, if I may. "He not only successfully filibustered antilynching bills, but also voted against the 1964 Civil Rights Act"—Richard Russell—that is my commentary—"calling it"—these are his words—"shortsighted and disastrous."

The man whose name is on a building paid for by taxpayer dollars, many of whom are people of color, indicated that the 1964 Civil Rights Act was "shortsighted and disastrous."

Richard Russell, a beneficial bigot, whose name is on the Russell Senate Office Building.

Permit me to read on. These are my words: "Furthermore, he coauthored the 'Southern Manifesto' in opposition to racial integration."

I won't read it in its entirety. I am going to go to the next to the last line in the letter.

I indicate: "For these and other compelling reasons, I will not enter the Russell Senate Office Building (except to protest) until the name of the bigot is removed from the building."

I know there are people who are saying, Who let him say that? How could you let AL GREEN come to the floor of the House of Representatives and say these things? Here is how: Free speech. Here is how: Speaking truth.

This is how it happens. I am here to do what we say we will do but many times do not. I am here to speak truth to power.

Yes, there are consequences, but at some point in life you ought to decide that you are not going to tolerate beneficial bigotry, especially when you are not allowed to tolerate it and to see others tolerate it while demanding that you not tolerate it, that is also

hypocritical, I indicate, until his name is removed from the building, upon which I still stand.

Now, I would go on record saying this, just as I went on record saying that I would file the bill to remove his name from legislation, and I will. I have my bill prepared, and I am going to sign on to Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN's bill, but now my commitment is this: I am going to send a letter now to all of my friends in the human rights/civil rights movement, because many of the folk who wrote me these letters that I have, many of these people are in the human rights/civil rights movement.

I am going to send them all a letter, do not invite me to attend meetings in the Russell Senate Office Building. Be so kind as to not insult me. I am not a perfect victim. I am not the victim who is going to tolerate the bigotry and witness your toleration of it because it is beneficial, so don't send me a letter, don't invite me. I am not coming.

They can continue to tolerate the beneficial bigotry that they enjoy by being in the Russell Senate Office Building, but know this: There will come a time when this name will be removed. There will. It will come down. The universe is constructed, such as Dr. King put it, the arc, "the moral arc is long, but it bends toward justice."

This will be the just thing to do, to remove Richard Russell from the Senate Office Building.

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

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I always appreciate hearing from the gentleman from Texas. Don't always agree, but he is a friend and he is a gentleman, and I always enjoy seeing him down on the floor.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I just want to say that people don't know the relationships that people have. They don't know. We can respect people that we don't agree with. That is the greatness of America, respecting people that we have antithetical views with, but we can respect them. If we work with them long enough, we will find common ground. Thank you.

Mr. ROY. Amen. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the words from my brother, my friend from Texas. He is exactly right.

Just last night, I was on an interview on Fox with my friend BYRON DONALDS, and we have staked out two different positions in the primary fight for the Republican nomination for President, and we were talking about how we will be, you know, coming together in a