

Of all the things we have worked on together, I am most proud of passing the bill that created the 988 Mental Health Lifeline. Since it went live last summer, millions of Americans have received help in a moment of mental health crisis, with countless lives saved as a result.

As fellow veterans, we have seen firsthand the consequences of inadequate mental health care. We knew it could be an uphill battle to pass our bill, and it was. You wouldn't believe some of the stories.

That is why you need a partner you can trust. That is CHRIS. Beyond his admirable commitment to his family and this job, it is just hard not to like CHRIS.

He is an Air Force veteran who broke the world record for the fastest non-stop flight around the world. He is a successful businessman. He has authored multiple best-selling books. What can't this guy do?

Well, one thing he didn't have to do was take a lot of political risk to work across the aisle with a Democrat on a big bill like 988. Political courage means something to CHRIS. We need more leaders like him in Washington.

CHRIS, thank you for your service. We will miss you, and I wish you and your family only the best.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of congratulations and appreciation from the Massachusetts and Utah chapters of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

September 12, 2023.

Hon. CHRIS STEWART,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STEWART: The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP), Massachusetts chapter writes to congratulate you and wish you well as you leave Congress this month. We extend our thanks and appreciation for your outstanding leadership in finding bipartisan solutions to prevent suicide and help save lives.

Suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in the United States in 2021. We are grateful for your partnership with Representative Seth Moulton to establish the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and build out a comprehensive crisis response system. Since its launch just over a year ago, the 988 Lifeline has responded to millions of calls, texts, and chats from people needing life-saving support.

Our chapter also appreciates your work to address the youth mental health crisis and Veteran suicide prevention. Veterans are about 1.5 times more likely to die from suicide than their non-Veteran peers, and we appreciate your collaboration with Representative Moulton to bring needed attention to this important issue.

During your 11 years in Congress, you successfully worked across the aisle to help ensure that people struggling with their mental health are connected to timely supports and services. We thank you for your service, and we wish you and your family well.

Sincerely,

JESSICA VAN DER STAD,  
Executive Director, Massachusetts Chapter,  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

September 12, 2023.

Hon. CHRIS STEWART,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STEWART: The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP) Utah chapter writes to congratulate you on your remarkable career in Congress and to thank you for your leadership on suicide prevention and mental health during your 11 years in office. We thank you for your collaboration to raise the visibility of suicide prevention and increase access to mental health services and supports, and we wish you well as you leave Congress later this month.

AFSP Utah celebrated alongside you when the bipartisan National Suicide Hotline Designation Act), a bill you led with Rep. Seth Moulton to establish the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, passed in 2020. We were especially proud that you built on the success of the crisis line in Utah to enact this bill, which represents a monumental opportunity to transform the way our country responds to suicide, mental health, and substance use crises. Since its launch in July 2022, the 988 Lifeline has helped millions of people in suicide and mental health crisis, and we have been honored to work alongside you to support its implementation.

Through your leadership on the House 988 & Crisis Services Task Force and the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, you took many concrete actions to reduce the stigma associated with mental health, educate other members of Congress and the public about mental health and ways to get help, and identify bipartisan solutions to prevent suicide. We are proud that AFSP recognized these significant accomplishments with several awards, including the 2018 "Allies for Action" Congressional Award and, most recently, the 988 Crisis Response Champion Award with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the #ReimagineCrisis campaign.

We thank you for your leadership and collaboration, and we would be happy to continue to serve as a resource for you. Hope to see you at our Central Utah Walk in Richfield on September 30, 2023. We wish you and your family all the best in your next chapter.

Sincerely,

TARYN HIATT,  
Executive Director, Utah Chapter, American  
Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

#### CALLING FOR INVESTIGATION INTO INSENSITIVE COMMENTARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). 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 I rise today at this moment to call attention to a news story reported by CNN.

I have a news article that has been printed, and the style of the article reads: "Seattle police officer under investigation as footage shows him saying woman's life had 'limited value' after she was fatally hit by police car."

Madam Speaker, this lack of empathy and sympathy, this is what I would call, as has been called by others, shockingly insensitive commentary. It is something that cannot go unnoticed.

I do believe that there must be a thorough investigation. For those who

have not had an opportunity to see what I am calling to your attention, it is available to you on the internet.

This officer made a comment that concerns me, and I believe it would concern many others.

□ 1630

One of the comments made is the person is "... a regular person." A regular person. I believe that all people merit the same amount of respect. I don't know what a regular person is, but in this dialogue with another person, he is known to have said, "Yeah, just write a check," and then he laughs. Then he goes on to make the comment that I called to your attention earlier, "she had limited value." Limited value.

To the family, I do not know them, I extend my deepest sympathies, and I assure you that I stand with you when you have a demand for a thorough investigation, as is the case with India, the country of origin for this young lady who was killed by a police officer who was responding to a call.

I hope that this will not quietly go away. Her life meant something, and we ought to make sure that we do all that we can to thoroughly investigate and make sure that justice prevails.

Now, Madam Speaker, I will make my additional comments from another podium.

Madam Speaker, and still I rise, proud to be an American, proud to have this opportunity to serve in the Congress of the United States of America.

Madam Speaker, today I rise to call to the attention of the Congress and to the attention of the Nation that we have a problem related to Black lives. Black lives still matter, and there is a reason for saying this that will become more apparent as I give my commentary.

I will start with this article that was printed in USA Today on September 4. This article, the title of which is, 2022 Hate Crimes Up 10 Percent Over Prior Year, reads in part: Study shows new record for 10 largest cities.

In another article from USA Today, it reads in one place: "Last year, as has been the case every year since the count began"—some things bear repeating.

"Last year, as has been the case every year since the count began, most hate crime victims were Black, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University San Bernardino, which collects and analyzes official State and municipal hate crime data sets."

Since the genesis of collection of this data, per this article, most hate crime victims have been Black. I will explain why, but first another article.

This one is styled, "Police fatally shot a pregnant Black woman in Ohio. The calls for accountability are growing." This is in Vox, dated September 8, 2023. This article talks about an organization named Mapping Police Violence, and there is the following language: "Mapping Police Violence, a

group that collects data on police shootings, found though Black Americans make up roughly 13 percent of the population, they comprised at least 20 percent of the people killed by law enforcement so far in 2023."

This is not old news. This is contemporary. Blacks comprise 13 percent of the population, but at least 20 percent of the people killed by law enforcement so far in 2023. This relates to Black people. I will explain why in just a moment.

This article goes on to say, "Per The Washington Post tracker of fatal police shootings, the number of these killings has risen in the last few years."

It goes on to say, "Because of incomplete policing data, the race of all police's victims isn't known. But from what data is available, it's clear police also continue to shoot and use force against Black people at disproportionate rates." I am paraphrasing slightly. "The Post's data shows Black people are roughly twice as likely as White people to be the victim of a fatal police shooting, while Mapping Police Violence—that is the organization I mentioned earlier—"which tracks police killings by any means, found Black people are nearly three times more likely to be killed. Part of this disparity stems from the fact Black people are more likely to be profiled by police"—then it goes on—"for instance, Black Americans are 20 percent more likely to get stopped for traffic stops than White people."

Now we get to something meaningful and substantive. This article in Vox says, "There are a number of factors behind police violence and racial disparities"—"There are a number of factors behind police violence and racial disparities, including deep-seated systemic racism. . . ." Remember, this is from Vox, an article dated September 8, 2023. This is from Vox.

"There are a number of factors behind police violence and racial disparities, including deep-seated systemic racism that dates back to how 'slave patrols' were used to police enslaved people who attempted to escape. . . ."

Madam Speaker, this takes us back to why Black people were brought to this country. Some say the initial introduction into the Colonies was on August 20, 1619. August 20, 1619.

There is a depiction that I would like to show. This represents the persons who were of African ancestry brought to this country on August 20, 1619, aboard this ship, the White Lion, and they were traded for goods. The Colonies took the people of African ancestry, and they, in turn, accorded the persons who were aboard the White Lion goods. People traded for goods. August 20, 1619.

Now, this, my friends, was the genesis of something that continued for more than 240 years. 240 years.

Why did this continue for more than 240 years? Remember, I will be getting back to what I said about the police and the killings and the hate crimes against Black people.

Why would this continue for more than 240 years? Because during that period of time, a decision was made to have in this country an identifiable, subservient, obsequious class of people, a class of people who would be identifiable. Black people are identifiable. They were to be subservient, enslaved for more than 240 years. However, it wasn't to end. It was to continue. For 240 years, people were enslaved because there was a desire for an identifiable, subservient, obsequious class of people.

There was to be an upper class, and it existed; a middle class, and it existed; a lower class, that is what they called it at the time; and beneath that class, this subservient, obsequious class of people. They were to be submissive and obedient. They were to address the master's son, who might be 5 years of age, to the same extent that they would address the master. They were to be obedient, and if they were not obedient, the master could take whatever actions desirable to chastise, and that is being polite. Whatever actions desirable to do whatever it was believed necessary to force them to comply and be subservient and obsequious. More than 240 years.

Babies were born into slavery. They were enslaved. Babies. Slavery was not just hard work, which is what a good many people think of it as, just hard work, that is all. No. The truth has to be told, and those who would deny the truth being told, Governor DeSantis, those who would deny it will be judged harshly by posterity. You will not find yourself within the annals and the halls of those who are considered great and noble people. History is going to judge you harshly.

However, it was more than hard work. They didn't get any benefits. There were no benefits associated with being enslaved.

So let me tell you for just a moment what it was, as I make my case. It was kidnapping, yes, but it was more than kidnapping. People were kidnapped from their homes, their homeland. By the way, many of them were traded into slavery by their own people; own people meaning from the same continent, same country.

□ 1645

They were traded into slavery, so many were kidnapped. It was more than kidnapping; it was lynching. Once they traversed the ocean, those who were able to survive the harsh voyage, being shackled together, stacked on top of each other, it was cruel and inhumane what they did, it dehumanized from the very moment they were taken into captivity.

It was more than kidnapping. It was more than the brutality of having to suffer this transatlantic journey. It was lynching, because if you got out of line, you were lynched—or could be, not all were, but you could be lynched. Meaning, literally taken out, a rope thrown over some branch of a tree, some limb or branch, some part of it,

other means of doing it as well, noose tied around your neck, and there you were to hang until you died.

Thereafter, you would stay so that others could see the consequences of not being subservient and obsequious. It was more than kidnapping and the brutal transatlantic slave trip and the lynching that took place, it was also castration. Many men, enslaved human beings, who were not subservient and obsequious were literally castrated.

Remember, these persons were the property of another human being. Property at that time under the laws that existed, not ever in the eyes of God, property of another human being. Courts declared that these enslaved persons had no rights that a White person had to respect. It was more than the slave trade: crossing the Atlantic, being kidnapped, lynched, castrated. It was also rape.

It wasn't just rape—and there is no way to say "just rape"—but it wasn't rape where a person decides, I am going to show you who is in charge. It was also done to destroy the manhood of the woman's significant other because it could be done in his presence to dehumanize him, to make him understand that he had to be subservient and obsequious.

It was all of these and more. It was also the separation of families at the auction block, literally. Children could be sold and go to one master, mother goes to another, father could conceivably go to another.

It was the dehumanization of human beings. By definition that is what dehumanization is. They were dehumanized. They had to be reduced to something less than a human being so that the rest of society could say, well, it is okay, these are not human beings. We would not treat a human being this way.

They were something less than human beings, and they were to be subservient and obsequious.

This, Madam Speaker, is what I agree has been called one of the greatest crimes ever committed against humanity. Crimes against humanity which continued for more than 240 years. Not only did it continue for 240 years, it then metamorphosed into convict leasing for almost another 100 years.

Convict leasing wherein there were Black codes and if you violated one these Black codes, you could be arrested. If you were arrested, you could be incarcerated. Then after incarceration, you could be leased to someone who could work you possibly for the rest of your life, so you were back into slavery by another name.

There was also lawful segregation. With this lawful segregation came the notion—it didn't go away—that the persons who were segregated had to be obedient. They had to be subservient and obsequious. There was still the belief—that didn't end with the ending of slavery. It was the passage of the 13th Amendment which ended slavery in this country. Of course, we had the

Emancipation Proclamation. I understand this, but it was the 13th Amendment that lawfully said: You can't do this.

The ending of slavery did not end the mentality that had been inculcated in society. Remember, society now had been corrupted with this mentality, and this was passed on through the generations that these people who were brought here to be this permanent subservient, obsequious class—some would say underclass—it didn't end with them being extricated from slavery by way of the 13th Amendment. It was still within society. It had been baked into society.

Even to this day it still resides in society, to a certain extent. Not to the same extent, but to a certain extent, but it was in my lifetime. Racism and invidious discrimination, which is what slavery and then the leasing of persons metamorphosed into. It then evolved and metamorphosed into something that we call invidious discrimination.

Racism didn't go away with the passage of the 13th Amendment. White supremacy didn't go away. To have this subservient class, this inferior class, you have to have a superior class. It didn't go away.

In fact, in my lifetime, I live to see racism so inculcated in society that preachers literally preached it, teachers taught it, police officers policed it, judges adjudicated it. In my lifetime, it was pervasive in such a way as to be visible. It is less visible now but it still exists.

This notion that Black people should be subservient and obsequious still exists. It exists to the extent that Black men cannot talk to police officers the same way White men can. I know. They cannot.

This is why parents have this, what they call "talk" with their children, if they have Black sons. Black women can't treat them the same as White women, but I am focusing on Black men for this moment. Black men are taught early—I was taught, and if you talk to any professional, they will tell you that they teach their boys more so than their girls, but the girls are taught as well—that when an officer stops you, you give him all of the deference that you can because they understand the consequences of being what the officer might perceive as disrespectful.

Many of these officers, many of them, not all of them—this is not to indict the entire police department, which is what my critics will say—which is not true. My uncle was a deputy sheriff. I have great respect and reverence for the police, but I don't have it for those who are the dastards who brutalize people without justification, just decide that you are going to teach people a lesson.

This class of people, the obsequious, subservient class, from time to time we assume that we have arrived, and on a dark night, we will make comments to a police officer. Well, those comments can cost us our lives.

I know that people would say to them: Give me your badge number. I am going to report you.

Black men can't do that.

There is still a belief that we have to be respectful at all times and show some degree of subservency. There is still this desire that we be obsequious.

This explains George Floyd. Those officers who held George Floyd down, they wanted to punish him. They wanted to teach him a lesson. It wasn't just about arresting him. You don't have to put your knee on a person's neck for this length of time to arrest him. They wanted to teach him a lesson. They wanted him to understand that he was to be subservient and obsequious.

As bad as that was, and it was bad because it cost him his life, they not only wanted him to understand, they wanted all of those onlookers to understand as well.

Just as when they would lynch a Black man, they wanted all of the other enslaved people to understand.

Just as when they would castrate, they wanted all of the other men to understand, to understand that you had to be obedient, that you had to be subservient, that you had to be obsequious.

If you failed to abide by this unwritten protocol of life in this country, then these are the consequences; what happened to George Floyd and what happened to many of those who were enslaved. They wanted to put fear into the minds of those who were the onlookers and cause them to cower and to understand that they did not occupy a space such that they could speak up and stand up for themselves.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this is why for 240-plus years we had persons enslaved, but to this day they have not been respected. They have been disrespected. The proof is readily available.

We in this country revere the enslavers and revile the enslaved. We revere the Confederate soldiers who fought to keep them enslaved, and we reviled the people that were being enslaved.

□ 1700

We have not given these persons whose lives were sacrificed for some 240-plus years the opportunity to be respected as they must and should be. They must be respected. They were the persons who planted the seeds, harvested the crops, fed the country, built the roads, built the bridges, built this very facility that I have the honor of standing in, and helped to construct the White House and many other prominent facilities. They are the economic foundational mothers and fathers of this country.

They gave the United States of America a 240-year head start with free labor. You had to feed them, of course, and you had to clothe them, of course, to the limited extent that they were, but it gave this country 240 years of free labor that we all stand on. We all stand on the foundation, the economic

foundation, that was built upon the sacrifice of millions of lives. Some estimate more than 10 million lives were sacrificed to make America great.

To this day, we still have some of the remnants of this behavior that lasted for some 240 years, and this is why we, to this day, are seeing those persons disrespected. They are still being disrespected.

They are not being honored, and the ability to honor them resides right here in this House because, in 1956, the Congress of the United States of America honored the Confederate soldiers with a Congressional Gold Medal. This is the highest honor that the House of Representatives can accord. The Senate also followed suit, and the President signed the legislation honoring Confederate soldiers.

These were the enslavers. We have revered them, yet we still revile those who were enslaved for 240 years.

It also can explain why this building is a symbol of national shame. This is the Russell Senate Office Building. For edification purposes, that means that this building is where Senators have space. The Russell Senate Office Building is a symbol of national shame. This building is paid for with taxpayer dollars.

Why is it a symbol of national shame? Because Richard Russell was a racist and a bigot. Senator Richard Russell was a racist and a bigot. Senator Richard Russell fought antilynching legislation, the legislation that would stop people from lynching. Lynching is a crime. It is to stop people from just deciding that you are going to take the law into your own hands as though there was no law that you had to abide by.

Richard Russell fought civil rights legislation, opposed it. Richard Russell was a coauthor of the Southern Manifesto. Richard Russell was a bigot and a racist, yet we have a Senate office building honoring Richard Russell.

That is why the building is a symbol of national shame, and the Senators ought to be ashamed to allow this to continue. They ought to be ashamed of themselves, a Senate office building paid for with taxpayer dollars named after a person who was a racist.

Why? Here is what some have said: We don't change the name until we can acquire another name, and we can't agree on another name.

That, my friend, is a facade. That is just a way of avoiding having to deal with the reality of the facts that make this a symbol of national shame. It is a poor excuse.

The Senators ought to be ashamed. They ought to be ashamed to even say this because here is what they can do, and I have a resolution asking them to do this. They can let the building revert back to the name that it had before it was the Russell Senate Office Building, and that name was the Old Senate Office Building. Let it revert back to this name and then take all the time you need, ad infinitum, to select another name.

I have no name to recommend. I have not suggested that it be named to honor any person, and I am not going to. I want Richard Russell's name off because I don't think that we should demean the people of color, the Black people, who have to go into this building by having his name on the building.

I don't go into the Russell office building unless I am going to protest Richard Russell. I will go there for protestation. In fact, I have written letters telling people who have invited me to speak in that building that I will not. I am not going into the Russell Senate Office Building. I will be more than honored to go in when that name changes, and it will change. It will change, but why is it still there?

I have explained to you the fact that there are people who say we can't agree on a name, but I am going to give you another reason why. It is still there because Black people don't have to be respected the same way White people have to be respected. It is true. They don't have to be. There are no consequences for those Senators.

I assure you that if this building had a name that was insulting to White people, the name would change. I can think of some names that if those names were on this building, they would come off immediately, if not sooner.

Again, Black people don't have to be respected. This is what is inculcated within the minds of many, not all, but many people in this country. They don't have to be respected to the same extent as White people. That is a belief that exists in this country.

This is why a woman in the park, Central Park, I believe it was, could make the allegation that a person of African ancestry was accosting her when it wasn't true, but in her mind, she knew that she could fall back on that. That was something that would trigger police action.

Black people are not respected to the same extent, and we know it. We feel it. We are not respected to the same extent.

The Senators know there are no consequences. Why remove the name? What are Black people going to do? What can AL GREEN do other than come to the floor and denounce this with facts? What can he do other than this?

No consequences. We are not going to lose an election because we are working in a building that is named after a racist. There are no consequences because Black people are not respected to the same extent as White people.

There is a belief still inculcated in this society that Black people ought to be subservient and obsequious. All people don't believe this, not all people, but a good many do, and a good many of them wear badges and carry guns, and a good many of them have raised their right hands and been sworn to uphold the Constitution and serve in the Senate of the United States of America.

The Russell Senate Office Building is a symbol of national shame. This is why we have a request for the Congressional Gold Medal for African Americans who were enslaved. I believe that if a Congress in 1956 can accord a Congressional Gold Medal to the Confederate soldiers who were the enslavers, surely we can do it for the enslaved. Surely, we can, but they don't have to.

What are the consequences of doing the righteous thing, not the right thing, the righteous thing? What are the consequences?

I would hope that there are no consequences for doing the righteous thing, but for not doing the righteous thing, there are no consequences. There are no consequences for deciding that there will not be a Congressional Gold Medal given to people who were enslaved for 240 years, who were the economic foundational mothers and fathers of this country whose lives were sacrificed to make America great. There are no consequences.

We don't have to do it. Not much would be said about it, but there is this conscience agenda that I put forth. On this agenda, the conscience agenda, there is the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal. There is inculcating the date August 20 annually as slavery remembrance day. There is the removal of the name "Richard Russell" from the Russell Senate Office Building. There is also something else: the enacting of the Securities and Exchange Act.

This legislation would require the insurance companies that insured people who were enslaved, insured them so that the master, the owner, could receive some compensation when or if the enslaved person died for certain reasons, to atone. They have admitted that they have done it through their predecessor institutions as well as the banks.

I was the chairperson of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for Financial Services. The big banks came before us. There was an acknowledgment indicating that they knew of their predecessor institutions being engaged in the process of helping persons to buy and sell enslaved people, people who had been dehumanized. They did it, and I asked them the question: Do you think you have done enough to atone? The answer was, no, they didn't think they had, but they haven't given us reason to believe that they will. Therefore, this legislation will help them to move toward atonement.

There is more than this. There is a need for a department of reconciliation to deal with the transgressions our Nation has engaged in over the centuries—a department of reconciliation not just for the enslaved but a department of reconciliation to deal with the many other transgressions.

□ 1715

We hold ourselves out to be the bearers of the torch of liberty. We hold our-

selves out to be people who pledge allegiance and want liberty and justice for all to a flag that symbolizes our desire for liberty and justice for all.

We hold ourselves out to be the people who believe that all persons were created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We can't do this with the credibility that should be a natural corollary of holding ourselves out as such without having reconciliation. Reconciliation has to come to America.

I love my country. I salute the flag. I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I sing the national anthem. So I am not a person who hates this country. By the way, I should love it. My ancestors are the ones who made it great. They are the ones whose lives were sacrificed so that America could be great. Yes, I love what they have done. I love other people in the country, too. My religion requires that I love everybody. It doesn't require me to like everybody. So I love them.

This department of reconciliation would help us to achieve what we claim we represent. This department of reconciliation would have a secretary of reconciliation just as the Department of Labor has a Secretary of Labor and the Commerce Department has a Secretary of Commerce. This person would report to the President just as these other Secretaries report to the President.

This person would have a budget—this department would—just as other departments have a budget. I have suggested that it be linked to the Defense Department's budget, to some portion of it, so that it would always be funded. The money would not come from the Defense Department, but a percentage that would relate to what the Defense Department's budget is because the Defense Department is always going to be funded, notwithstanding current circumstances where we have difficulties arriving at agreements. We are going to fund the Defense Department, make no mistake about it, so this department would be funded.

It would deal with all forms of invidious discrimination. It can deal with the Trail of Tears. It can deal with what happened to the indigenous Americans, the aboriginal Americans, the persons who were here before Columbus, the persons who were here at the genesis of human beings being here. They were treated brutally. The only reason they exist in this country now is because they were strong enough to survive the attempts to impose genocide. They survived it. There has been no atonement for this, no proper atonement. No proper atonement.

The list goes on and on. All of these, the persons who were interned, American citizens interned. There has to be atonement. America owes it to itself to atone for these transgressions.

That is what this conscience agenda is about, our moral imperative. Our

moral imperative. The conscience is that thing within you that says this is the right thing to do. The moral imperative is the thing that says this is the thing I must do. So we have the conscience agenda, our moral imperative to do the righteous thing; to inculcate August 20 as Slavery Remembrance Day.

In Houston, Texas, we had a Slavery Remembrance Day event. I had the opportunity to present legislation and talk about it, and we had over 1,000 people to attend. This month, I was at Georgetown University where a slavery remembrance event took place. The students there were the sponsors. They did an outstanding job. We have had slavery remembrance events in other places, and there are now calls from additional institutions to have slavery remembrance events.

I look forward to inculcating August 20 as the annual day for remembrance of those who were enslaved.

This conscience agenda calls for the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal, calls for the removal of Richard Russell's name from the Russell Senate Office Building, calls for the enacting of the Securities and Exchange Attestation Act, and, of course, the establishment of the department of reconciliation.

All those things are doable. All these things I hope to see done in my lifetime, but if not, I believe they can be done. I believe that one lifetime may not be enough, but I do believe that in somebody's lifetime we have to have the genesis of all of this. To be the progenitor of it is in no way insulting to me.

I close now with what I have on my letterhead. After I sign my name right under my name on my letterhead we type in "Congressman AL GREEN, Ninth Congressional District of Texas." Then right under that you will see the words "scion"—scion is a way of saying descended, but it has nobility associated with it—"scion of the enslaved people whose lives were sacrificed to make America great."

And still I rise, to quote Maya Angelou: Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of—I will paraphrase and say—the enslaved. And still I rise.

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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ELLZEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ELLZEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a fellow fighter pilot, a pilot who is immediately recognizable to millions worldwide who have seen the movie "Top Gun: Maverick." I know my good friend is watching right now. Those fanboys and fangirls know him only from the credits as the "pilot in bar" who thanks his fellow captain for inadvertently buying a round of drinks.

That fighter pilot is my good friend Brian Ferguson, "Ferg," who is retiring from the Navy Reserve after 30 years of dedicated service next Friday.

Ferg's accomplishments in the Navy are too numerous to completely list here, so I will just provide a few highlights. After graduating from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 1993, he joined the Navy, went to flight school, and earned his naval aviator Wings of Gold. He spent the next 10 years flying F-18s from the decks of aircraft carriers in peace and war, including multiple night strikes into Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After 10 years on Active Duty, he transitioned to the Navy Reserve as an adversary pilot—being the bad guy—flying F-5s with Fighter Composite Squadron 13. As I can personally attest, the high point of any fighter pilot's career is the opportunity to command a squadron. Ferg took command of VFC-13 in 2012, and with the help of his enlisted sailors and tactically brilliant junior officer pilots, the squadron won awards for combat readiness, safety, aircraft maintenance, and personnel retention.

Following command, Ferg continued to serve in important roles with Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center, Carrier Strike Group Fifteen, the Sixth Fleet Navy Reserve Headquarters Unit, and then as the deputy commander of the Naval Air Force Reserve.

In 2018, an irresistible opportunity presented itself when Ferg was asked to be the Navy's technical adviser and aerial coordinator for the filming of "Top Gun: Maverick," an opportunity he declined at least twice because—despite being a TOPGUN graduate himself—of the time it would require him to be away from his family.

Of course, finally it was his wife, Susan, who is a lot smarter than Ferg—yes, we wrote that out, Ferg, and we mean it—said: If you don't help make the flight scenes in the movie look realistic and they don't, you will spend the rest of your life telling people you could have done it better—which he would—so just go do it yourself so you can't blame anybody else if the scenes don't live up to the hype.

So Ferg spent nearly 2 years working as the Navy's point man on the film. His hand is in every scene with an airplane, and as we all know, those flying scenes lived up to the hype.

In spite of all that he has accomplished in the air, Ferg will be the first

to tell you that the most important things in his life are on the ground: his lovely wife, Susan, and their four children. While Ferg was out flying fighter jets and other kinds of things all throughout his career, Susan raised four exceptional children. I will tell you as a fellow naval aviator, it is the spouses who endure most of the sacrifice and do the raising of the children. In Ferg's case I am very grateful that Susan was the one who did that; and of course she was working full time herself.

Their three sons, Cole, Evan, and Connor each earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Cole and Evan graduated college, and Connor is currently in college. His daughter, Cassie, earned her Girl Scout Silver Award and is a college student and skilled equestrian.

I also know that when Ferg was in leadership positions, particularly as the deputy to a two-star admiral, everybody's favorite thing, he often stayed late so that his sailors and junior officers could get home to be with their families.

It was the love and support of his own family that enabled Ferg to serve and succeed in the Navy for the past 30 years, and I rise today to recognize them for their service, as well.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I thank the Fergusons: Brian, Susan, Cole, Evan, Connor, and Cassie, for the sacrifices they have made for the Navy and our country over the past 30 years.

Fair winds and following seas, shipmate. You are an American hero. You will be missed in the Navy.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), my good friend.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend from Texas for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today I stand before you proud as an American and the son of a Navy veteran. Throughout my life I had the opportunity to witness our servicemembers' unwavering commitment to this Nation.

I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of our all-volunteer force in the United States military.

In January 1973, the Department of Defense replaced mandatory service with an opportunity for brave men and women to voluntarily step up and serve.

Over 15 million proud Americans have served over the last five decades with more than 2 million voluntarily serving today. These American heroes epitomize patriotism through their courage, honor, and selflessness and represent the cornerstone of our military's unparalleled strength.

We may think of our military strength in regard to weapons systems and ships and aircraft, but, Madam Speaker, this does not highlight our biggest military advantage, which is our people.

We have the most professional military in the world with a clear command and control structure. As we face