

the gruesome Rabaa Massacre. I penned an Op-Ed to the Egyptian people apologizing for the Islamist Political movements' political mistakes. My decade in solitude that followed compelled me to delve further inwards, to think and rethink. When your father and I shared a prison cell, I engaged in deep contemplations and introspections. Those were both bitter and sweet days. I miss him so much. We engaged in endless debates as I contemplated the meaning of justice, injustice, and advocating for the most disenfranchised. I pondered anger, violence, righteousness, the common good, and reform. I held myself accountable, questioning whether I adhered to my intellectual commitments for the benefit of all or only for certain groups. I reflected on my intellectual journey from Egypt to the United States, Bahrain, and beyond. I have learned and grown and want to acknowledge my regrets and mistakes, as acknowledging what is right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom.

The Palestinian cause shaped my generation's worldview and awakened my political consciousness and activism. It laid the foundations for my understanding of justice, starting from my elementary school days until I obtained my Ph.D. in Islamic jurisprudence. For many years, I allowed my anger to inform my reactions to the senseless bloodshed, and the desecration of sacred sites and to drive my approach to the Palestinian issue privately and publicly. I focused on the losses and struggles of the Palestinian people and their powerlessness and while then as now, many more Palestinians have been injured and killed. My impassioned defense of the oppressed in the Muslim world in those days relied on the common rhetoric that was fueled by anger which turned to hate. As the death toll mounted, my statements sometimes veered toward antisemitism. In doing so, I displayed a blind rage that contradicted the fundamental principles of our beautiful religion. We are a religion of tolerance and compassion toward all religions and such rhetoric has no place in our community or our pursuit of justice. I deeply regret times when I engaged in that kind of rhetoric that I shudder to recall and condemn all rhetoric that is discriminatory, hateful and violent. The ends can never justify the means and noble objectives can only be attained through noble methods. Let me be clear, my commitment to justice for the Palestinian people remains steadfast, as is my belief that the many paths towards justice and peace do not require demonization of the other. Salah, justice and solidarity must extend to those with whom we disagree. In fact, our true commitment to these ideals is measured by how we apply them to those who differ from us.

Look at me now, Salah; I find myself in a country with a Muslim ruler, where the judge, warden, officer, and guards who wrongfully imprison, torture and deny me basic medical needs are all Muslim. While those who stand up for me (and others) are individuals who share little in common with me, except for our shared belief in justice and freedom. I recall how Eric Lewis, a Jewish lawyer and now a dear friend of the family, was the sole international lawyer permitted to visit a political prisoner in Egyptian prisons. I remember how Andrea Prasow, a Jewish human rights lawyer, assumed your father's position as the Executive Director of a rights organization advocating on behalf of Arab political prisoners. Senators Patrick Leahy (liberal Christian), and the late John McCain (Conservative Christian) also come to mind. These individuals, spanning the political spectrum, have dedicated their professional careers to advocating for the oppressed despite their respective political and ideological differences. All

of these contradictions and ironies have compelled me to see the error in some of my previous beliefs, statements and positions.

My previous statements and stances are wrong and the best of us are those who reflect, hold oneself accountable and repent. Here I am, reflecting and seeking forgiveness from God for the harm that may have been inflicted upon anyone. I apologize to everyone harmed by what I said and called for. I leave behind these prison walls all forms of anger, hate and coarseness. I bear the burden of upholding the sanctity of human life, speaking truth and defending it wherever it may be.

I had only intended to stand up for justice, but what I did resulted in the exact opposite of the intent; and became a reason for further oppression, suffering and marginalization of the innocent. In fact, my oppressors used my decade-old stances to justify and fend off pressure from concerned western parties about my release.

Lastly, my dearest grandson, I am writing to you in pursuit of a world that leads with love and eschews hatred. Life is far too short and precious to allow it to be dominated by anger. I urge you to set your moral compass towards justice and truth. Defend those with every peaceful means at your disposal. I hope you grow up to build a world where tolerance, peace and coexistence despite differences is the norm. My beloved, I pray that you grow up knowing and being proud of your grandfather and everything he stood for. I love you, and I long for the opportunity to meet you, whether it is in this life or in the corridors of Paradise in the one after. Oh God, please make me better than they think, and forgive me for what they do not know.

Your loving grandfather,

SALAH EL DEEN SOLTAN,

16/6/2023,
27/11/1444.

HONORING OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to honor the 25th anniversary of the tragic passing of two fallen Capitol Police officers, Officer Jacob J. Chestnut, Jr., and Detective John M. Gibson, who were killed while bravely defending the Capitol on July 24, 1998.

In the afternoon of July 24, 1998, a lone gunman forced his way past a security checkpoint, fatally shot Officer Chestnut, and ran toward the offices of Majority Whip Tom DeLay. Detective Gibson, a member of Representative DeLay's protective team, told others to hide and find cover while he stood in defense until he was mortally wounded himself. Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the lives of others in the Capitol that day.

Officer Jacob Joseph Chestnut, Jr., was a 20-year Air Force veteran, having served two tours in Vietnam and retired as a master sergeant. He has the distinction of being the first African-American to lie in honor at the Capitol.

Detective John Michael Gibson had served with the U.S. Capitol Police for 18 years. He left behind his wife, a 17-year-old daughter, and two sons, 14 and 15 years old. He lay in honor with Officer Chestnut in the Capitol Rotunda.

Both men were buried with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

These men gave their lives here on the grounds of the Capitol, in defense of our democracy. In the days that followed, Representative DeLay stated that their deaths symbolized "the sacrifices of thousands of police officers across the Nation who do their duty to serve and protect the public, sometimes under great abuse, sometimes under great disregard, and many times people take them for granted. It all comes together when an incident like this happens and we realize how much we owe to police officers all over this country."

The men and women of the Capitol Police put their lives on the line every day, and each and every one of us who works here are indebted to their sacrifice. Today we remember Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Gibson while thanking all of the officers of the U.S. Capitol Police Department.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, today, we commemorate the 75th anniversary of a momentous event in our Nation's history: the signing of Executive Order 9981 by President Harry S. Truman on July 26, 1948. This landmark executive order marked a significant step forward in our ongoing journey toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

A fundamental value of the United States is to support the equality of all. E.O. 9981, titled "Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services," proclaimed that "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin." By desegregating the military, this order shattered long-standing discriminatory practices and set a precedent for the pursuit of justice and racial equality.

The issuance of E.O. 9981 was a response to the tireless efforts of countless civil rights activists, military leaders, and concerned citizens who recognized the moral imperative to confront racism and discrimination. It represented a critical turning point in the fight against racial injustice, serving as a catalyst for the broader civil rights movement to follow.

Over the past seven and a half decades, the principles enshrined in E.O. 9981 have had a profound impact on our society. By integrating the military, this historic document not only helped to foster a spirit of unity among servicemembers, irrespective of their race or background, but it also provided a model for progress, inspiring subsequent legislation and initiatives aimed at combating discrimination and inequality in various sectors of American life.

Moreover, E.O. 9981 has served as a beacon of hope for marginalized communities, demonstrating that institutionalized prejudice can be dismantled

through bold leadership, determined activism, and collective will. Its legacy has reverberated far beyond the military, contributing to the broader struggle for civil rights and social justice, including the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s and the ongoing quest for racial equality today.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, it is essential that we reflect on the progress made and acknowledge the work that remains unfinished. While E.O. 9981 marked a pivotal moment, we recognize that systemic racism continues to persist in various forms, demanding our unwavering commitment to its eradication. In honoring the 75th anniversary of E.O. 9981, let us recommit ourselves to the enduring principles of equality and justice for all. Let us continue to strive for a society that values diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunity, where the color of one's skin does not determine their worth or limit their potential.

As members of Congress, entrusted with the duty of shaping legislation and promoting the well-being of all Americans, I urge you to draw inspiration from the spirit of E.O. 9981 and to uphold our fundamental American values. Although our painful history cannot be erased, let us work together to enact policies that dismantle systemic barriers, rectify historical injustices, and build a more equitable and harmonious future for our Nation.

HONORING CAPTAIN ROBERT C. HARMON AND PRIVATE JOHN R. PEIRSON

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I rise to honor posthumously half-brothers Captain Robert C. Harmon and Private John R. Peirson from New Richmond, WI, who both made the ultimate sacrifice for our great Nation during World War II.

A week before the D-Day invasion on the Normandy coast and on his 51st mission, Captain Harmon's plane was shot down over occupied France by German artillery. Initially listed as missing-in-action, Captain Harmon was officially declared dead on May 29, 1945, by the U.S. War Department.

Motivated by a sense of duty to his country, as well as the loss of his older half-brother, Private Peirson enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was mortally wounded during the April 16, 1945, Easter Day assault on the island of Okinawa, Japan, and died of his wounds the following day.

A joint memorial service was held in New Richmond, WI, on April 26, 1949, for the repatriated remains of the two fallen brothers. They are buried side by side at the Fort Snelling Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN. Both were posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

In recognition of their service and sacrifice, I was proud to sponsor and witness successful passage of S. 2932 during the 117th Congress, a bill to designate the facility of the U.S. Postal

Service located at 430 South Knowles Avenue in New Richmond, WI, as the "Captain Robert C. Harmon and Private John R. Peirson Post Office Building." This legislation was passed in the Senate by unanimous consent on May 25, 2022, and was signed into law by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., on December 29, 2022.

The official dedication and celebration of the Captain Robert C. Harmon and Private John R. Peirson Post Office Building will take place on August 25, 2023. Family, friends, fellow veterans, elected leaders, and community members will come together to remember these brothers and their service to our country. Local support of this dedication includes the New Richmond City Council, along with Mayors Fred Horne and Jim Zajkowski; the New Richmond Chamber of Commerce; the Butler-Harmon American Legion Post 80; and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10818 New Richmond/St. Croix County. Special recognition is due to Ms. Sally Berkholder who has been a tireless advocate for this dedication and ensuring that the family and community is able to properly celebrate and honor the service of the Harmon/Peirson brothers.

Captain Harmon and Private Peirson heroically gave their lives serving our country during World War II. They bravely fought for our American values and freedom, and we are indebted by their sacrifice. I am proud that their memory will live on by the official dedication of the New Richmond Post Office as the "Captain Robert C. Harmon and Private John R. Peirson Post Office Building."

REMEMBERING WALTER KNIGHT

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Walter Knight, who passed away on June 20, 2023, at the age of 89. Mr. Knight will be remembered for his numerous acts of leadership in the community of Beloit, WI—notably, serving as the first African-American on the Beloit Police and Fire Commission and the first African-American to be elected to the Beloit City Council.

Mr. Knight spent the first 17 years of his life in Arkansas where he attended segregated public schools and graduated from Union Grove High School in 1951. Upon graduation, he moved to Beloit, WI, where he went on to work for Fairbanks Morse in the foundry. The grueling conditions of the foundry motivated him to enroll in Blackhawk Technical College. This allowed him to move into a position in the machine shop at Fairbanks Morse where he remained for 25 years. Later in his career at Fairbanks Morse, he was elected the president of the Local Union 1533 United Steelworkers of America from 1972–1976.

To further advance his educational career, Mr. Knight studied union policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. At the time he attended Madison, less than 1 percent of students were Af-

rican-American. After securing higher-level education, Mr. Knight's activist voice and profound leadership in the Beloit community led him to be elected the first African-American on the Beloit City Council, where he served from 1972–1985. Mr. Knight's involvement and dedication to the Beloit community did not stop there. As an African-American, he spent his early years in Beloit fighting segregation by exposing and assisting in the closure of local discriminatory and prejudice businesses.

In addition to his fight for racial justice, Mr. Knight spent over 30 years with the Rock County Opportunities Industrialization Center. As executive director, he dedicated his time to helping minority and other local residents build occupational and social skills to enhance their career prospects. Mr. Knight always wanted to be remembered as someone who did all he could to help others. His life of selfless acts for his community accurately displays this. From working in the foundry at Fairbanks Morse to becoming president of the Beloit City Council, Mr. Knight was truly a trailblazer and has left an indelible mark on the Beloit community.

By creating opportunities and a voice for the minority community in Beloit, Mr. Knight's leadership granted him induction into the Beloit Historical Society Hall of Fame in 2014. Additionally, as a part of the 2019 Juneteenth celebration, the Portland Avenue Bridge in Beloit was renamed "Walter R. Knight Bridge" in his honor. Mr. Knight will be whole-heartedly missed and always remembered for the years of compassion and love he bestowed upon his community.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TRUE COMPANIES

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 75th anniversary of True Companies. This network of Wyoming businesses spans several major industries that directly benefit Natrona County, Wyoming, and our Nation.

Headquartered in Casper, WY, True Companies is a Wyoming institution. Proudly owned and operated by the True family, the businesses that make up True Companies are diverse. They contribute to multiple industries including energy, agriculture, real estate/development, and the financial sector. True Companies employs over 1,000 individuals across the United States in Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

In Wyoming, we follow the Code of the West, a set of cowboy ethics that drive and shape our values. These principles remind us to take pride in our work and to do what has to be done. Today, the Code of the West hangs in the lobby of True Companies, serving as a reminder of the values of its