

He motioned to a D-Day veteran saying goodbye. He said that man was a combat engineer on Omaha Beach. He led the first wave ashore. He was the only man of his unit that made it alive onto the shore, and he comes back to visit his buddies every year.

This year, when I parachute into D-Day on Friday, I will be carrying a portrait of Glenn Stevens, G Company, 3rd Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment, who parachuted into D-Day. He was a constituent all those years ago in CD-3 in Texas.

I will also be carrying a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart that belong to Staff Sergeant Starlin Lee Click who was a veteran of D-Day. It is my little way of honoring the men who risked everything on June 6, 1944. May we never forget.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas and certainly all my colleagues. That is quite an amazing story to get firsthand in letters.

I will close with an actual excerpt from a newspaper describing the reaction to D-Day at home in Montgomery, Alabama.

Dear Gang, you are probably wondering what it was like at home on D-Day. Well, like everything else in the world, we guess, Montgomerians were steeped in reserved excitement, wanting to shout out: We are pulling for you, gang; but realizing there was an ocean in between.

Everyone was literally burning with pride as the news flashed throughout the day. Radios were never turned off during that first 24 hours, and there was one topic of conversation and only one.

All stores closed at 5 p.m., and at that same hour, twoscore buglers, stationed throughout the city, went into action.

All traffic stopped, and a period of silent prayer was observed. At 8 p.m., prayer services were held in every Montgomery church. Almost without exception, every pew was filled.

WSFA canceled all commercial programs and announcements and for more than 30 hours broadcast only invasion news or specially prepared programs in honor of the courageous men who sailed and flew across the channel.

When prayers were being said over the air, it was not uncommon to see a sidewalk group, including some, perhaps, who were praying for the first time, lift their hats and stand reverently until the prayer was done.

At 9 p.m., the whole town, along with the remainder of the Nation, listened with bowed heads as President Roosevelt offered his invasion day prayer.

As the full Moon, riding in the partially clouded sky, shone down in later hours, Montgomerians finally closed their eyes; proud, appreciative, and confident of the eventual outcome.

I thank all my colleagues again who participated and Congressman PALMER and his staff for their help in coordinating this Special Order.

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

□ 2030

IMPROVING FOSTER CARE OUTCOMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order hour.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to co-anchor the CBC Special Order hour along with my distinguished colleagues, Representatives JONATHAN JACKSON and GWEN MOORE.

For the next 60 minutes, members of the CBC have the opportunity to discuss the importance of foster care and outcomes among Black families and children involved with child welfare, an issue of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for heading up this Special Order hour.

At this time, we have many Members in the Congressional Black Caucus who are concerned about this issue. I am so happy this evening that we have also been joined by not only JONATHAN JACKSON but by a member of the Ways and Means Committee, a mentor of mine, Representative DANNY DAVIS, who has served as a social worker and has kept abreast of those formal studies by engaging and being passionate about foster youth.

I thank the Congressional Black Caucus for shining a light on this particular issue. We must face it: These are our children.

There are about 400,000 children currently in foster care, not counting the ones who are in informal arrangements of foster care. They are our children. They are children of color, and particularly Black children are disproportionately in the system.

For example, I live in Wisconsin. While African Americans in Wisconsin make up only 9 percent of the population, almost a quarter of the children in foster care are African-American children.

I can tell you that these are the most vulnerable kids in our country, but my God, they are also the most resilient children. Even the most resilient need our help and our support. As Congress, we must support them because, after all, these youth are our future workforce. They are our workforce, and who will support us if we don't support them?

We just left May. May, of course, was National Foster Care Month. This

year's theme of National Foster Care Month was "Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities." I think that that is a really important theme, as I want to announce happily that we are going to have another foster youth day, a shadow day. I invite all of my colleagues to engage in the extraordinary experience of letting one of these youth shadow you. You will be surprised that while you think that you are teaching them stuff about your craft as a ranking member or as a chairman, you will learn so much from these youth. That will be something that will carry through for the rest of your time serving. It is a blessing.

June is National Family Reunification Month. We have had a foster care system in this country for many years. One of the things that we have learned is that foster care ought to be the last resort and that if we separate children from their families out of necessity, we ought to do everything that we can to try to reunify them and to learn what strategies work toward that effort.

We want to do prevention to make sure that these children don't end up being separated from their families, but if they are, we need to prioritize kinship care.

One of the co-chairs of this committee is a Republican, Representative DON BACON, and he is adamant about kinship care and keeping kinship groups together. That is one of his passions, and we need make sure we support his legislation.

We have another co-chair, a Democrat from California, Representative SYDNEY KAMLAGER-DOVE. She has come into this Congress, succeeding the now-mayor of Los Angeles, Karen Bass, and gone headfirst into this issue and is a passionate supporter of our programming.

MARY GAY SCANLON, an attorney from Pennsylvania before she joined us in this body, brought those skills and her own experience doing a lot of pro bono work for children and families caught in the foster care system. She is a passionate co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth.

Representative NANCY MACE, who we all know as a person who has served in our Armed Forces, brings her leadership to this task. Representative ZACH NUNN is another Republican in our group. It is a bipartisan group, and we need to save our children.

In just a few days, we are going to have the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth's annual Foster Youth Shadow Day. We want Members to sign up to pair with a foster youth. I can't explain how impactful it is for these former foster youth to shadow my colleagues for just a day and how beneficial it is for us as policymakers. It is a great reminder that beyond these statistics are real people.

Madam Speaker, I have so much to say, but there are others here who want to share. I will be happy to get into a dialogue or colloquy with them.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative GWEN MOORE for her words.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, let me commend the chairwoman and the Congressional Black Caucus for hosting this discussion this evening on what I consider to be one of the most important issues in our country and in our society, and that is taking a hard look at what is happening with our children, especially those who are in need of care.

I will focus on the adage that I have always believed in, that an ounce of prevention is worth much more than a pound of cure. It just reminds me of some of the many things that we have championed in trying to make sure that not only do our children receive the care and attention that they need once they are in care but also trying to prevent them from having to have that experience.

I was thinking of 2023 when Illinois and the Nation benefited from the reauthorization of the MIECHV program, which I was fortunate to lead. The MIECHV program funds evidence-based education and services proven to improve mother and child health, family safety, and child development. I helped create this program in 2010, and it has brought over \$119 million to Illinois and \$5.2 billion to the country to help make families stronger and try to help them to be able to retain their children.

I am also reminded that Illinois and the Nation benefited from the Family First Prevention Services Act, which I helped enact. It made historic improvements to child welfare, fundamentally shifting policy from separating families to strengthening them by addressing the key reasons that families struggle. Illinois has received over \$66 million from the law in prevention funding to strengthen families since it was enacted almost 6 years ago.

National Family Reunification Month, what does that really mean? I think it means trying to keep families as connected as we possibly can.

I thank the Illinois Department of Corrections for allowing our fatherhood initiative every year to take children to correctional institutions to visit with their fathers. As a matter of fact, we have done that now for about 10 years. The results are startling in terms of how fathers and children and the children's mothers, significant others, or grandparents relate to this experience of, even though their fathers are away, letting the children know that their fathers still have meaning and a great deal of meaning to their lives.

As we meander our way through trying to figure out how we really make our world a better place in which to live and how we provide for those young people, I think of the laws that we have tried to enact and made some progress on, such as helping foster

youth get driver's licenses so that they can have transportation services and get from one place to another.

The thing that I am very proud of is that we are close to providing opportunity for foster youth who have benefits due to them from Social Security. Rather than having these benefits go to their payees or go to States for operational expenses, we are getting close to having these benefits come to the foster youth themselves and put into a trust fund or something for them, so when they age out, it helps the older foster youth.

Think of how meaningful it would be for a young person who is aging out, reaching adulthood, who has never had any real access to resources of their own, having a few thousand dollars in a trust fund to help them transition to adulthood, so that they now can act like an adult, have their own resources to go to college, have their own resources to help get an apartment, have their own resources before they get a job and not struggle during that period.

I commend and thank my colleagues and the Congressional Black Caucus for raising this issue, providing direction, and giving us an opportunity to recognize that the needs are great and that we want to make society a better world.

I end by thinking of one of my favorite expressions that a poet and blues singer said. That is that:

I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride

If we can do that, then I am confident that America, our Nation, will become a better place in which to live.

□ 2045

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative DAVIS for his words.

Madam Speaker, today I rise to discuss the disparities that Black children and families face within our Nation's foster care system. Study after study has shown that Black children in the United States statistically spend more time in foster care and are significantly less likely to be reunified with their families. We have a moral obligation to address the glaring disparities that persist within our child welfare system.

Nationwide, the average number of days for children to exit foster care is 633 days, yet for Black children, the average number of days was a staggering 743.

In my home State of Florida, the average number of days for Black children to exit foster care is 633 days, which is the longest average number of any racial group. These discrepancies speak volumes about the systemic barriers that hinder the timely reunification of Black children with their families.

These numbers represent the extensive damage being done by the child

welfare system to the well-being of Black children in Florida and throughout our country. These disparities perpetuate a cycle of instability and trauma and exacerbate existing inequalities, perpetuating a system that disproportionately affects communities of color.

We cannot afford to ignore these disparities. Each statistic represents a child with hopes, dreams, and a future that should not be determined by the color of their skin or the shortcomings of our system.

We must commit to addressing the systemic issues that disproportionately affect Black children in foster care. Together, we can build a child welfare system that truly supports and nurtures every child, giving them the foundation they need to succeed.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON), who is my co-anchor.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, first, I thank the Honorable Congresswoman from the great State of Florida, the Honorable SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today I rise because June is National Reunification Month, and we owe it to Black families not to be silent about what the child welfare system has done to them in both tragic and traumatic ways.

I say to you today, Madam Speaker, the effects have been devastating and long-lasting on our children. The fact that we even have to have a National Reunification Month says it all.

How can it even be possible that a system that purports to help Black families has been so chiefly responsible for the separation of the very families it supposedly exists to serve?

This kind of morose contradiction cannot be allowed to persist and linger because whether some people in this country are willing to admit it or not, families come in all shapes and sizes. Families come in all colors and configurations. They even come in various economic conditions and levels of education.

All of them are still families, and all of them deserve our commitment. All of them are dependent on the work we do in this Chamber, and the Members of this body cannot just care about the families that remind them of their own.

No matter the race or configuration of a particular family, we are here to serve every family in this country. Either we care about all American families or, in truth, is it that we only care about some, most, or none?

Black families deserve all the rights and opportunities extended to every other family in this country. In fact, considering the historical assault on this country's institutions and policies against Black families, one might even suggest that Black families deserve to have more than most. We have been through a lot.

I am honored to be a Member of this congressional body and to represent

the First Congressional District of the State of Illinois. When I think of the life of a young child who was kidnapped from West Africa by the name of Phillis Wheatley in 1753, who was manumitted from slavery in 1773, our Nation has come a long way, but let us never forget that a child had been kidnapped who was 8 years of age. They approximated her age because of the size of her teeth. She had to go up and talk to John Hancock and others and had to recite poetry that we later came to find out were anagrams. She was an absolutely brilliant child, and she was the first person of African ancestry from 1619 to 1753 to have been manumitted from slavery.

I want us to know that Black families are more valuable simply because they have been through so much. Black families don't have their value just because they have been through so much. It is because of the compassion they have had to grow. Not one family is more valuable than the others. We all have different experiences, and sometimes they have had a long-lasting and devastating legacy of neglect that has too often resulted in outright violence.

We rise tonight to reflect on the role of this tragic system and how we might strengthen bonds and not just perpetuate historical problems and systemic norms in the child welfare system that is tearing so many families apart.

I am convinced now more than ever that we must do whatever we can to reduce the need for foster care and strengthen families in whichever configuration they are formed.

Until the system of child welfare can see the value in keeping families together, we must hold the system accountable for what we know to be right. What we do, we also have to know is the right thing. We know that, yes, every child should be protected, and they still need their mothers and their fathers no matter the frailty and the conditions that they suffer from.

Yes, children should have their basic needs met, too, but they still need their grandmothers and grandfathers.

Our child welfare system should not separate children. Our child fostering system that is supposed to help feed and nourish children should not separate children in any case.

Every child who has a brother or a sister deserves to have a relationship with their brother or sister they possess. As much as children should be protected from whatever seeks to threaten the integrity of their lives, it is also the case that no child should be erroneously or permanently separated from people who love them.

We must change the economic conditions and political factors that make it even possible for Black children to end up not being cared for by their relatives because of a lack of capacity and their resources.

There is a reason Black families are more likely to be investigated by child protective services and to have their children removed and placed in out-of-

home care. There is a reason more than 50 percent of Black children in the U.S. will experience a child welfare investigation before their 18th birthday and 10 percent of Black children will be placed into foster care.

These are not accidental occurrences. Rather, they are the manifestation of a deep and pervasive systemic bias. Black children spend more time in foster care; Black children have more placements; and, yes, Black children are less likely to be reunified with their families.

Somebody needs to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Since the children of our community cannot speak on the floor of this Chamber tonight, we dare to speak for them. Tonight, we pick up the standard for their cause and declare emphatically on their behalf: Let these children return home to loving families. Let them be treated with respect. Let's give them the presumption of innocence and virtue that they deserve. Let them be reunited with the kindred spirit that produced them and continues to love them in spite of the challenges that they face.

This pattern of unjustified investigation and prolonged separation must be brought to an end, not just for the sake of the children but also for the sake of this Nation's future.

Unless the children of our community are returned to the loving arms of their families, no child in this country is safe. No child can sleep easy tonight, and we will not rest until the circle is restored and until the village can, once again, decide for itself what is best for our children.

As we work to keep them safe, let us live to make them free because the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it alone.

We thank God for the life, the living, and the legacy of the Honorable Phillis Wheatley, a child who was separated and was the first to be manumitted to be free in America, a child who was kidnapped that God had borne free and who had to have her rights restored as a human being.

Madam Speaker, I thank the Honorable SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK from the great State of Florida for her continued service.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative JACKSON for his passionate speech.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss how historical trauma and systemic racism have perpetuated cycles of intergenerational poverty and have disproportionately impacted the welfare of Black children in America.

We must acknowledge a painful truth: By the age of 18, one out of every 100 children in America will experience the court-ordered termination of their parents' rights. This stark statistic is even more alarming for Black children nationwide, who are 2.4 times more likely than their White counterparts to endure the devastating loss of parental rights. In my home State of Florida,

Black children are 1.3 times more likely to experience this.

These numbers represent the lives of children torn from their families, often due to circumstances rooted in historical and structural inequities. Historical trauma, rooted in centuries of enslavement, segregation, and discrimination, continues to echo through generations.

Structural racism further exacerbates these challenges, manifesting in biased policies and practices that disproportionately affect Black families in the child welfare system.

Intergenerational poverty is both a cause and a consequence of child welfare involvement. Families trapped in cycles of poverty face challenges in providing the necessary resources and support for their children. This economic instability often leads to increased scrutiny and intervention from child welfare services, perpetuating a cycle of disruption and disadvantage.

Children have better outcomes in life when they are nurtured and cared for by their own families. We need to reimagine and reform our approach to child welfare to ensure it is fair, equitable, and supportive of family unity.

Our children's futures and the future of our Nation depend on what we do here today in Congress to redirect and make sure that most children get to stay with their families while protecting the children who need it.

Madam Speaker, you have heard from my distinguished colleagues about the foster care system and the issues facing the Black community, all issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, our constituents, Congress, and all Americans tonight.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at 9 a.m.

OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;