

RESTORE FUNDING FOR LIFESAVING FOOD AID

(Mr. MAGAZINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the 22nd time to call on the Trump administration to restore funding for lifesaving food aid for malnourished children.

Today, I remind this Chamber that this is not just a moral issue. It is a national security issue. Lieutenant General John Bednarek said: "Anytime that we, the United States, depart an area that we used to be in, either with USAID . . . or other soft power initiatives, some foes, whether it is China, Russia, or North Korea" fills the gap.

The general is right. Food aid helps stabilize fragile regions. It keeps our adversaries from gaining ground and good will.

Plumpy'Nut, a product manufactured in my district in Rhode Island, is a lifesaving source of nutrition for starving children around the world. The Trump administration needs to honor its word and restore the funding for this and other lifesaving food aid before more lives are lost and before our adversaries gain more ground.

COMMEMORATING 160TH ANNIVERSARY OF JUNETEENTH

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. McCLELLAN of Virginia was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which 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 gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pride that I rise today to anchor this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour. For the next 60 minutes, members of the CBC will have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people on an issue of great importance.

Today, we commemorate the 160th anniversary of Juneteenth. Juneteenth commemorates the date on June 19, 1865, when General Gordon Granger entered Galveston, Texas, and ordered the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect over 2 years earlier on January 1, 1863.

While many people think the Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery, it did not. The Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in the States that were in rebellion during the Civil War, but slavery continued. Even in the States in rebellion, it continued for

over 2 years. It would take another 6 months, with the ratification of the 13th Amendment, for slavery to be abolished in America.

Virginia has the distinction of being the birthplace of American democracy and, a month later, the birthplace of American slavery. In Virginia, we love our commemorations, and 1619 was the year that what now is the Virginia General Assembly, the longest continuing representative legislature in the Western Hemisphere, began in Jamestown. It was the first time we had representative democracy in the British colonies.

A month later, the first recorded Africans arrived on the shores of Point Comfort at what is now Fort Monroe. It was 20-and-odd Africans who had been stolen from their home in Angola and then stolen again by a pirate ship, brought to Point Comfort, and traded for supplies.

That began the forced labor and servitude that would become chattel slavery in the American slave trade.

Virginia depended heavily on the slave trade. In my hometown of Richmond, which I represent right now, we had the largest slave trade market on the East Coast. Between 1775 and 1865, it was the number one source for enslaved African labor.

Over the break, I joined a commemoration of Juneteenth at the Manchester Dock. The Manchester Dock is the port where enslaved Africans were brought into Richmond. Many spent their time in what became known as the Devil's Half Acre, the notorious Lumpkin's Slave Jail. Many then made their way west.

Ironically, for my own family, we cannot trace the McClellan line beyond my great-grandfather, who we know was born in Montevallo, Alabama. Based on DNA evidence, we have reason to believe that his ancestors were enslaved people in Virginia. We can't prove it, but the DNA suggests that is the case.

Juneteenth reminds us that emancipation was not a moment. It was a movement. It was a movement that began in 1619 with acts of self-liberation, resistance, and rebellion that continued until December 1865, when slavery was finally abolished by the 13th Amendment, but freedom and justice for all was a continuing struggle.

We made progress. After the Civil War, during Reconstruction, with the advent of the Freedmen's Bureau, we saw formerly enslaved people, mostly men, gain for the first time social, political, and economic power. The Virginia Constitutional Convention, which allowed Virginia to be readmitted into the United States, had 22 Black men who served. During Reconstruction, over 100 Black men served in the Virginia General Assembly.

I didn't know that until I was an adult. I didn't know that until Yvonne Miller, the first Black woman elected to the Virginia General Assembly, first as a member of the house of delegates

and then the first Black woman elected to the State senate, as part of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus' annual tradition of telling untold stories during Black History Month, asked a researcher at legislative services who the first Black person elected to the general assembly was. We had all heard that Dr. Fergie Reid was the first elected since Reconstruction, but we didn't know who the first was.

Thanks to research done by the Library of Virginia, we discovered the over 100 Black men who served. I was proud, first as vice chair and then as chair of Virginia's Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Commission, to uncover all of their stories, to pass legislation, and to put a plaque in the former capital of the Confederacy that lists all of their names.

I was proud to help build a monument to emancipation and freedom that told the stories, often untold, of Virginians who fought for emancipation and then who fought to make "liberty and justice for all" true for all Virginians.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we made progress during Reconstruction. Then, it ended, and there was a backlash.

□ 1940

Mr. Speaker, that backlash involved three things. It involved the propaganda, the lie of white supremacy that was intended to break up a growing coalition between formerly enslaved African Americans and poor, White individuals who came together to pass public policy in Virginia. The lie of white supremacy was designed to drive them apart.

It involved the propaganda of Confederate iconography such as statues to Robert E. Lee, even though General Lee himself said he did not believe such statues should be erected because they would pick at the wounds left from the war.

The backlash didn't end there. It included racial terror and violence. Thousands of people were lynched totally for the color of their skin. They were grabbed and accused vaguely of a crime, then they were hung, shot, or worse.

It didn't end there. Voter suppression included a wave of laws across the South that immediately responded to the 14th and 15th Amendment in an effort through literacy tests and poll taxes to keep those formerly enslaved people—men—who had gained the right to vote from exercising it.

These three things worked. For a generation the gains that were made during Reconstruction were erased. That history was not taught in school. I never learned that history in school.

Because my great-grandfather wrote a book, I knew about his literacy test that he had to take. I knew about the literacy test. When he went and took it and got all of the questions right, the registrar said he needed more questions because my great-grandfather was on a

list of community leaders who were not to be registered to vote.

He got those questions right. Then he was told he needed to find three White men to vouch for his character to be able to register to vote. It took some time because there were very few who were willing to do that. He did it. He registered to vote. He voted every chance that he got.

Despite this backlash, we continued to press forward. Despite the poll tax that my grandfather and my father had to pay, and despite the limited opportunities available to my mother, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother. Then through the leadership of Dr. King and John Lewis and so many others, culminating in the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, that was the second wave of progress.

There was backlash that included the assassination of our leaders, attempts at voter suppression, and even more propaganda.

We kept pressing forward. We kept pushing and pushing to eradicate the legacy of over 300 years of slavery and Jim Crow, which did not go away with the wave of a magic wand when the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were passed.

We made progress, as evidenced by the election of Barack Obama, and by more Black men and women getting social, political, and economic power. Then there was a backlash that included propaganda about stolen elections and birtherism.

There was a wave of voter suppression when the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. We saw a wave of laws across the South very reminiscent of those that passed over 100 years ago. We saw propaganda, violence, and voter suppression, but we kept pushing.

Then in Virginia, we had the backlash of the Unite the Right rally. We had the murder of George Floyd. There were people who had never learned any of this history that I have just walked through and for the first time—because they didn't have family members who experienced it and told their stories. They didn't have textbooks in school that told them this history.

When they began to have their eyes opened and we began to make progress again, there was a backlash. There was the propaganda of wokeism and how diversity, equity, and inclusion was actually discrimination. We saw violence culminate on January 6. There is voter suppression, as we see more laws trying to roll back access to voting.

Mr. Speaker, I remember how I felt as I sat at home, watching George Floyd call out for his mother. I felt the same pain that my parents felt when they saw Emmett Till's body in his coffin. In that moment I realized in a lot of ways I am fighting the same fights as my parents, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents.

We have made progress, and I fight those fights as the first and only Black woman ever elected to Congress from Virginia. I fight those fights from a po-

sition of more strength and power than they ever could have dreamed of. I fight those fights so that my children and my grandchildren don't have to.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I get tired. Sometimes I get weary when I see a Secretary of Defense who fires people solely because he assumes they only got their job because of the color of their skin. He ignores the case of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who has a lifetime service record.

I get tired. When I think about everything that was used to try to overcome the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, that held a lot of people down with a weight on their ankle because their families didn't have access to education or economic opportunities, and they are trying to come out of generations of oppression, when I get tired, I go back to that history.

Earlier this year, just as the President issued an order that calls into question whether exhibits can even stay in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, I went back and took my children. I have been to that museum so many times.

In April of this year, I stood in the exhibit on the Middle Passage. Mr. Speaker, if you haven't done it, I highly recommend you do. It is the Middle Passage between Africa and probably the Manchester Dock in Richmond. It is so horrible that so many people chose to jump off the ship and chose death rather than what was waiting for them on those shores.

As I sat and looked at the exhibit, this time a voice came to me and said that somebody survived this so that I could be here as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, fighting back against this latest backlash.

This backlash looks a little different, but it is the exact same one we have been fighting. For almost 250 years, the history of this country has been: How do we reconcile the fact upon which we were founded with the birth of American democracy and the birth of American slavery less than a month apart in the same town, basically? How do we reconcile that with the ideals upon which we were founded? How do we make sure those ideals are true for everyone?

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus will fight every single day to make sure they are true.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE), our chair.

□ 1950

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia, Congresswoman JENNIFER MCCLELLAN, for setting the tone for this evening's hour and for anchoring this evening's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus in recognition of national independence, Juneteenth National Independence Day.

On June 19, 1865, more than 2 years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, 2,000 Union troops reached Galveston Bay, Texas, with the news of the President's decree. On that day, more than 250,000 Black Americans were officially free.

From that day on, the newly freed people of Galveston established Juneteenth as a day to celebrate the long journey to freedom, and our Nation's second Independence Day, when all citizens were finally declared free.

To this day, the impact of Juneteenth on our community remains unparalleled. On Juneteenth, we celebrate Black joy, culture, and the unbreakable spirit of our community that has overcome so much across generations. Today, we continue to uplift values of hope, determination, and the preservation of our history and our people.

We celebrate and pay homage to our history and those who have gotten us here today, figures like Texas native Opal Lee, known as the Mother of Juneteenth, who campaigned for decades to make Juneteenth a federally recognized holiday.

We also remember the role of the Congressional Black Caucus and how they played that role to solidify Juneteenth as a Federal holiday. In 1996, former Congresswoman Barbara-Rose Collins, a CBC member, introduced one of the earliest bills in Congress to designate Juneteenth as a national holiday.

Following this effort, the late Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee picked up the mantle, reintroducing legislation from 1997 to the year 2000 to commemorate the holiday, pushing for broader recognition and funding for education and celebrations.

In the wake of the tragic murder of George Floyd, nationwide protests renewed national conversation around this legislation, creating a path for CBC members to, once again, call for Federal recognition.

Among other demands from the caucus during this nationwide social justice movement, the U.S. Congress passed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, led in the House by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas and signed into law by President Joe Biden.

The Juneteenth holiday offers us not only a time for reflection but also a time to mobilize to protect our communities from the endless assaults from the Trump administration that seek to erase our history, cut off access to economic opportunity, and roll back the clock on progress in our communities.

On Juneteenth, and every day, the CBC continues our commitment to Black liberation and unity by fighting to make our communities safe, prosperous, and free.

Juneteenth as a national holiday exemplifies the values of this caucus. As the conscience of the Congress, the CBC remains steady in our goals of

centering issues of equity and justice for our communities, always remembering that freedom delayed is freedom denied.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from Virginia, Representative McCLELLAN, for holding this CBC Special Order hour tonight specifically for our celebration of Juneteenth.

I really want to thank her so, so very much more for that amazing history lesson, and it will forever be here marked in this House and in this Chamber for generations to come because we understand and know that we must always, in each generation, make sure that we continue to understand our history and to celebrate our history.

I thank my colleague and CBC Congressional Black Caucus leadership in tonight's Special Order hour.

To me, Juneteenth, Mr. Speaker, is a solemn remembrance of the long-fought battle to fully realize freedom for African Americans. It was one of the highest honors of my congressional career to actually help to work to pass the legislation which has formally established Juneteenth as a Federal holiday.

I remember how excited I was that day that we were invited to the White House for the signing of this legislation. It was truly a day that we believed felt like freedom. As I stood in the White House with many of my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues watching President Biden sign that legislation into law, I was deeply moved by the sight of Miss Opal Lee, who has just been mentioned here as the mother of Juneteenth or the grandmother of Juneteenth, seeing her vision for Juneteenth come to fruition as a national holiday actually realized in her lifetime after she worked so hard and so long recognizing that African Americans needed a day where we could just, once again, celebrate ourselves and celebrate the liberation and the freedoms that we had fought so hard for.

This woman, whose family home was burned by White rioters on June 19, 1939, never lost the hope, though, that she would, one day, live to see the day when Juneteenth would become our Nation's next Federal holiday. I hope that we can really look back and think about these days when the days going forward become dark.

It was Toni Morrison, the great writer, who once called us to: "Dream the world as it ought to be." I am so glad that because of her, historic societies across America have worked to commemorate the stories of enslaved people and reflect on their place in our national history.

Our stories create their own bench by the road. What I mean by that is that I went to an event last week in my community. We were celebrating a

simple bench placed in a garden of flowers in my community and in my district that was representing a family of once former slaves. A woman in the garden organization, the garden group, moved into a home, and in that home, she saw in the cupboard a piece of paper with the names of four people on this piece of paper.

She said that she felt so touched and felt like there was a story behind these four names. She held on to the piece of paper. She felt compelled to find out who were these people who lived in this area and lived in this house.

Who were they?

She did some work, she did some research, and she actually started doing a genealogy on the family. She came to find out that they had come from former enslaved individuals in my community. Actually, there were over 1,300 enslaved individuals in that district on that plantation.

So this woman who was part of the garden society decided that we need to do something to honor the history of these enslaved people because they meant something to this community, and they meant something to the families who lived here. So what they did was they created a bench. They built a bench in a garden, and that is called the Bench by the Road so that we will never forget the histories and the families of the enslaved people who lived, worked, and died there in my district.

□ 2000

So in that, I say that it is really important for African Americans, for people of color, every time this year, but as we should do all year long, to reflect on the legacies of all the men and all the women and all the children that preceded us but were enslaved.

While I was in my district in Georgia last week, I had the honor of attending that bench dedication that I just spoke about and to actually recognize one of the descendants. Her name was Matilda Ruff. She now lives in Cobb County, and that information by which those enslaved individuals had lived in my district in Cobb County, that information came from the 1860 Census.

We were joined by Matilda Ruff's great-great-granddaughter Tanyah. Her story and the stories of all of Matilda's descendants are essential to understanding the full history of who we are in our community and my district. As my community in Georgia continues to enjoy Matilda's Garden and benefit from the Bench by the Road, I am encouraged every time I drive past that bench. I am so encouraged because I know that there are projects and people like this that are working to keep the histories of African Americans alive all over the Nation.

Although we are really facing some really extraordinary challenges, I think about the quiet resolve and that everlasting hope of the men and women out in Texas who waited years for the Emancipation Proclamation so they

could receive word of their freedom from their enslavement. I just feel like as African Americans we must always really, really work not to succumb to a lack of hope but continue to make sure that we are building up ourselves, building up our communities, building up our future generations to live in the hope of a better day.

Inspired by the life and legacy of Matilda Ruff, guided by the words of Toni Morrison, and motivated by the activism of Opal Lee, I really hope that my people will stay reinvigorated and always remain awakened to that hope.

I will say that I remember as a child growing up in the civil rights movement, and that tells you how old I am, but at 3 years of age I was at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in a stroller, and that was the time that our dear, departed colleague, John Lewis, gave his first big speech.

I remember growing up when a lot of the civil rights leaders, workers and volunteers were coming to my home as a child. My father was Illinois branch president of the NAACP. I grew up in the marches. I grew up in the rallies. I grew up understanding how important it is for African Americans to continue to fight for the freedoms that they had gained.

It is really painful for me now because I know all the work that my parents did. My mother invited all of the volunteers and the workers into my house at night as they were preparing for the marches and rallies and creating poster board signs. I really believe it would be so painful for my father to know that everything that he has worked for now is being stripped away and eroded. Everything that he worked so hard for, for me, for his daughter is being stripped away.

It is painful to even think about the fact that my own child, his grandson, died from a lot of the racial discrimination and bigotry and hatred that is emerging its ugly head here again in America. I think about my father and what he would believe or what he would think about all of the ancestors that had come before us that worked so hard and they died so that I could be here today representing Georgia as a Member of the House of Representatives.

What I say is that I believe it will always be important for African Americans to remember their history. It will always be important for us to celebrate who we are, to uplift who we are, to stand in the greatness of who we are and what we have overcome because truly, more than anything, I believe we will have to continue to work as hard as we can to be overcoming.

As I think about this Juneteenth holiday, I pray going forward that my family and friends and my community will find it equally as important to stand and to celebrate who we are as African Americans and to know that we are intricately fashioned into the fabric of this country, and nothing will ever be able to erase that.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining? The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia has 27 minutes remaining.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story" is a song from one of my favorite plays, "Hamilton." It is very appropriate because there are a lot of stories in American history that have never been told.

Black history is American history. Our fates were inextricably linked as the founding of American democracy and the founding of American slavery happened at the same time in the same place.

I am proud to say, though, that Virginia also was the birthplace of the ideals upon which this country was founded, and there is contradiction there too. When Thomas Jefferson wrote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Mr. Speaker, he didn't mean me when he wrote those words. He didn't even mean the mother of his children when he wrote those words. He didn't mean the hundreds of people who lived in forced labor considered as property on his beloved Monticello.

For years their stories weren't told.

James Madison who came up with the Virginia Plan, which was the foundation for our Constitution, the idea of a government by, of, and for the people didn't mean me in "We the People." He didn't mean the hundreds of people that lived at Montpelier that his wife considered her property.

As a matter of fact, when the Constitution was ratified, our ancestors—as members of the Congressional Black Caucus—were only considered three-fifths of a person for purposes of figuring out how many people would serve in this body. We weren't even given three-fourths or three-fifths of the rights of a person though.

The struggle of our country has been how do we reconcile that? How do we overcome the facts upon which we are founded with the ideals upon which we are founded. Again, I will acknowledge and be proud to say we have made progress. Most of that fight happened in Virginia culminating in the Civil War.

As somebody born in Petersburg, home of the longest siege during the war, I lived in and now represent Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, for most of my life, and I am 52 years old, the trauma of slavery and Jim Crow was never discussed. Like any family, if you don't acknowledge the trauma and begin to address the lingering impact of it, the family will never heal. That is exactly what has happened in this country.

□ 2010

Every time we begin to have an honest conversation and dialogue about

what happened, it is uncomfortable and painful, but we have to have that conversation. We have to teach this history in our schools. We have to talk about it in public history spaces and museums and on public grounds because the people who lived it are passing on.

My parents lived under Jim Crow, but they are now gone. Again, I was not taught these stories in school or anywhere else. It was going mainly to my family and original sources where I learned it.

I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, that now that we have gotten closer than ever before to actually beginning to heal as a nation, this backlash that we constantly see, which we are in again, is going to threaten any progress toward healing because people won't learn this history and deal with it.

Yet, it happened. Yes, it is uncomfortable. Yes, standing on a site where someone was lynched solely because of the color of their skin and because they had the temerity, allegedly, to whistle at a White woman is uncomfortable, but it happened.

Just like that community can't heal until they reckon with it and acknowledge that it happened and that it was wrong and move on, we as a nation can't heal if we put our heads in the sand and decide that if it is uncomfortable, it can't be taught, that if it is uncomfortable or puts the United States in a bad light, it can't be put in a museum, acknowledged on our military bases, or acknowledged in public spaces.

This is not a perfect country, just like people aren't perfect. We cannot heal if we don't come together and talk about our history.

Unfortunately, the President of the United States decided that Juneteenth wasn't worthy of celebrating. That makes me incredibly sad because I think the President has a lot to learn from Juneteenth. Juneteenth teaches us that we can't take anything for granted. We can't take freedom for granted because too many people had to fight and die to get it.

Juneteenth is a reminder of the resilience of all the American people, particularly Black Americans. When we acknowledge our past, how far we have come, and how still further we have to go, we will be that more perfect Union that we are striving toward in a government by, of, and for the people.

I will close with this. When I was first elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, I learned very quickly that everyone's political views are shaped by their life experiences and what they know. I learned very quickly that public policy can either exacerbate or overcome inequity that happened in the past.

What I learned as a 32-year-old Black woman from the most Democratic district in the State in a body that was mostly White Republican men over 50 was that I needed to reach out to them

and meet them where they were. I needed to understand why they believed what they believed. I needed to understand their history and culture. More importantly, I had to share mine and my parents', grandparents', and great-grandparents'.

More often than not, when we did that, we found that we had more in common than not. Yet, they didn't know much about the life experiences that my ancestors faced, so they would put forward public policy that exacerbated inequity.

"Inequity" is not a dirty word. Inequity recognizes that the legacy of over 300 years of slavery and Jim Crow did not go away with the wave of a magic wand when laws were passed and that Black neighborhoods that were destroyed to build a highway, purposely chosen because of who lived there, has an impact still today.

We have to acknowledge this history, but the first step is to talk about it and to teach it, whether it is comfortable or not, because when we do, we will heal. If we don't heal, then someone who wishes us harm will exploit the tension.

I don't think it is an accident that whenever anyone from outside the United States wants to stoke tension in the United States, the first thing they go to is race. There is a reason for that. If we come to terms with our past, no one will be able to use it to divide us.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your attention. I thank you for giving the Congressional Black Caucus the opportunity to remain the conscience of the Congress. I thank you for giving us an opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Juneteenth.

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

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Juneteenth.

Why celebrate Juneteenth? Some would argue it's not the exact historical point when slavery ended . . .

But I'll tell you why I do and will continue to—because it is past time we begin confronting the real history of this country.

Confronting it and addressing it all as it is—the good, bad and ugly.

Confronting it because despite that sometimes ugly and sordid history—it is a country that still we love. It is our country.

Black folks bled and died in every war this country has ever fought.

And speaking to freedom, there are black and white folks who sacrificed their lives so that we could occupy these spaces and have the opportunities they did not.

It is an honor for me and should be for all Americans to celebrate this holiday.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH DAY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. BERGMAN of Michigan was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members