

honoring the immeasurable contributions of Caribbean Americans to the fabric of this Nation, contributions that have shaped our politics, our culture, our arts, and our very understanding of what it means to fight for justice.

Every month I try to recognize many different individuals of Caribbean-American heritage who come from many walks of life, but this month I want to focus on the accomplishments of Caribbean-American women: their accomplishments and their struggles at the highest levels of government, and at the highest levels of politics that are shaping and have shaped this country.

I stand here as a proud daughter of the United States Virgin Islands, a territory whose people carry within it the full weight and beauty of Caribbean culture.

I am honored to serve alongside my sister, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE of Brooklyn, New York, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, who spent her entire career championing the rights of working families, immigrants, and communities of color with a tenacity that reflects the very best of the Caribbean tradition.

I am honored to serve alongside Congresswoman FREDERICA WILSON of Florida, a proud Bahamian American, whose bold leadership and refusal to be silent in the face of injustice has made her a force in this Congress and a hero, a shero in her community.

Of course, we remember the late Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE of Texas, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, who for three decades was one of the fiercest advocates this Congress has ever known.

These women do not simply represent Caribbean Americans, they embody the excellence that our communities demand of them.

The story we continue to write did not, of course, begin with us. It began on the islands themselves, with women like Queen Breffu, an Akwamu woman enslaved on St. John in the Danish West Indies, who in 1733 helped lead one of the earliest slave revolts in the Americas.

It continued with Queen Nanny of the Maroons in Jamaica, a leader of a community of formerly enslaved Africans who waged war against the British empire and won, seizing their own freedom and building their own societies. That spirit of self-determination is the spirit Caribbean Americans carry with them to this day and this country.

It continued with Shirley Chisholm, the daughter of immigrants from Barbados and Guyana, who in 1968 became the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress, and who in 1972 had the courage to run for President.

It continued with Claudia Jones, a journalist, activist, and visionary whose legacy endures; Cicely Tyson, who wasn't just an actor but a great civil rights leader, an advocate not

confined to the roles that were assigned to her; and, of course, Kamala Harris, the daughter of a Jamaican father who shattered what many believed to be an unbreakable ceiling when she became the first woman and the first Black American to serve as Vice President of the United States. Vice President Harris carried the hopes of Caribbean Americans with her into the White House, a reminder that children of the Caribbean do not simply contribute to this Nation. We lead. She dared to lead a nominating party 107 days. Only a Caribbean woman could do that.

Caribbean leadership extends across the region. Dame Mary Eugenia Charles of Dominica became the first woman to serve as the head of government in the Caribbean. The Iron Lady, as she was known, bent to no outside pressure. Other influential women include Dame Pearlette Louisy of Saint Lucia, Dame Cynthia "Mother" Pratt from the Bahamas, of course Ruby Rouss of the United States Virgin Islands, and now Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, who stands today as one of the most consequential leaders in the world, reshaping global conversations.

When people say we are not ready for a Black woman President, a Black woman Governor or CEO, my brothers and sisters, we have been doing it all along. We just need the support for the titles that we already deserve.

I wish all of my brothers and sisters of Caribbean descent Happy Caribbean American Heritage Month.

#### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

(Mr. MANN of Kansas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of the BUILD America 250 Act, the surface transportation reauthorization that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is marking up today during National Infrastructure Week.

This marks 70 years since President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 into law. For Kansans, that anniversary carries special meaning. President Eisenhower understood that a strong transportation network was essential to the safety, commerce, and unity of the United States. His vision helped connect a growing country and gave future generations a highway system that changed the way Americans live, work, and move.

Seventy years later, America's transportation needs have changed, but Congress' basic responsibility remains the same. We have a duty to maintain a surface transportation system that allows people and goods to move across this country safely, efficiently, and reliably.

The entire House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has been

hard at work for over a year to ensure the BUILD America 250 Act delivers for American travelers. This is one of the few major bills that we take up on a regular schedule, and it has historically been bipartisan because every district in America relies on roads, bridges, rail, airports, and freight movement. That is especially true in rural America.

In the Big First, our district alone has more than 83,000 miles of roads, 4,000 miles of railroads, and more than 100 airports. That infrastructure supports the farmers, ranchers, producers, manufacturers, small businesses, schools, hospitals, and families that keep our communities strong. We also have 11,172 bridges, more than any other congressional district in the country. That is why I am especially proud that our legislation provides the largest investment in our Nation's bridges in American history.

When a highway is unsafe, a rural bridge is closed, or a freight route is inefficient, the consequences are real. A farmer may have to take a longer route to get grain to market. A rancher may face higher costs of moving livestock. A manufacturer may struggle to ship products on time. A first responder may lose valuable minutes reaching someone in need.

Transportation policy in Washington has a direct effect on the daily lives of Kansans. That is why this reauthorization must get back to the basics.

In recent years, Washington has created new programs, expanded existing ones, and spent money our country does not have. This surface transportation bill, on the other hand, focuses our limited Federal resources on the fundamental needs of our transportation system: roads, bridges, freight movement, safety, and the infrastructure that helps Americans get where they need to go.

One of my top priorities is maintaining and expanding flexibility in Federal highway programs. States are best positioned to understand their own transportation needs. Kansans should not be forced into the same mold as New York or California. A rural road that carries wheat, cattle, schoolbuses, and animals serves a very different purpose than a major urban corridor. Federal policy should respect those differences.

The BUILD America 250 Act provides States and local communities with the flexibility to direct resources where they need it most. It also helps ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively instead of being tied up in Washington-driven mandates that do not fit local realities.

Finally, we are addressing the long-term solvency of the highway trust fund. The trust fund was created to provide a dedicated revenue source for the construction of the interstate highway system. It was built on a user-pays principle, with Federal fuel taxes serving as the main funding source.

That principle is still the right one, but the current model is no longer sustainable. American vehicles have become more fuel efficient, and some Americans even drive electric vehicles. That is why our legislation updates the highway trust fund, ensuring owners of electric vehicles still contribute to the maintenance of the roads they also rely on.

We are preserving the conservative idea that those who use the system help pay for it, while modernizing the way we keep our trust fund solvent and focus on our core mission.

Mr. Speaker, America is a nation that builds. That spirit helped President Eisenhower, a proud Kansan, leave a transportation legacy that still serves our country today.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is honoring that legacy by focusing on the basics, respecting States, spending taxpayer dollars wisely, and strengthening the roads, bridges, and freight networks that keep America moving. I urge my committee colleagues to support the BUILD America 250 Act going forward.

#### STATE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA TODAY

(Mr. MAGAZINER of Rhode Island was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, generations of Americans fought and bled for civil rights, to make the United States of America a place where everyone's voice can be heard, regardless of the color of their skin.

However, in the last few weeks, at the urging of the President, the Supreme Court effectively overturned section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which had been the law of the land for decades. Since then, Republican Governors and State legislators across the South have been racing to break up majority Black and Hispanic congressional districts.

What a horrible state of affairs, to see the law that Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, John Lewis, and Lyndon Johnson fought for cast aside. What a shameful way for Republicans to try to win elections, by breaking up majority-Black and Hispanic districts, to try to rob those voters from being able to elect their chosen Representatives in Congress.

Now, these Republican politicians redrawing the maps in State after State claim with a straight face that they are not engaged in racial gerrymandering, only partisan gerrymandering. Well, then why is it that only majority-Black districts are being split up in Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, and potentially South Carolina and other States? It is only the Black vote in those States that they are trying to dilute.

Republicans, you see, have given up on trying to make the case to people of color in those States that their policies are better. They have given up on try-

ing to persuade people and win elections through campaigning. Instead, they have resorted to splitting up those communities to rob them of their chosen representation in Congress. What a shameful way to try to cling to power.

John Adams, our second President, wrote that the House of Representatives should be in miniature a reflection of the people at large. Yet, when it comes to the Republican side of this House, their own former Speaker of the House, KEVIN MCCARTHY, admitted that they do not look like America. He said that his Republican Congress looks like "the most restrictive country club in America."

Now, the Democratic Party is not perfect. We don't always get it right. There have been times occasionally when I thought that most of my Democratic colleagues were wrong on an issue, and I voted with the Republicans, but I am a Democrat because the Democratic Party is the one party left that is still committed to government of, by, and for the people.

Seventy percent of the House Democratic Caucus are women, people of color, or LGBTQ. I am none of those things, but when I look at the two sides of this Chamber, I know what side I want to be on. I want to be on the side that looks like America. I want to be on the side with an inclusive vision of America, that wants every American's voice to be heard, not the side that is cheering the destruction of the Voting Rights Act.

I want to be on the side that honors the legacy of King, Parks, Lewis, and other civil rights heroes, not the side moving at breakneck speed to try to break up majority-minority districts and rob people of color in our country from their chosen representation.

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I don't care what your politics are. There is no honor in winning that way, and it is not good for America.

Republican colleagues should think about their own legacy. If they refuse to speak out against the racial gerrymandering their party is engaged in, if they stay silent, history will see them for who they are.

At times like this, it can be easy for people of good faith to become discouraged, but I still believe in the fundamental goodness of America. I still believe that the politics of division cannot prevail over the politics of hope. As long as we are willing to do the work, we will move past this troubling chapter in our Nation's history, and our country's better angels will prevail.

#### HONORING OUR VETERANS

(Ms. STANSBURY of New Mexico was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day, we pause to honor the brave Americans who gave their lives in service to this Nation, those who

wore the uniform knowing that freedom and liberty always carry a cost.

Today, I rise in remembrance of the fallen from my home State of New Mexico, a State with a proud military tradition, where generations of servicemembers have answered the call to serve from communities large and small, from Tribal communities, rural towns, land grants, and our great military installations.

In New Mexico, military service is woven into the fabric of our communities and the identities of our families. Families sacrifice together. Spouses hold households together through deployments. Children grow up learning resilience and service. Veterans continue serving long after they have hung up the uniform.

On Memorial Day, we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This year, we are also mourning the 13 American servicemembers killed during the Iran war, Americans who stood in harm's way on behalf of this country and paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We remember: Captain Cody Khork, Sergeant First Class Noah Tietjens, Sergeant First Class Nicole Amor, Sergeant Declan Coady, Major Jeffrey O'Brien, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Marzan, Sergeant Benjamin Pennington, Major John Kliner, Captain Ariana Savino, Technical Sergeant Ashley Pruitt, Captain Seth Koval, Captain Curtis Angst, and Technical Sergeant Tyler Simmons.

We honor these brave men and women. They were sons and daughters, husbands and wives, friends, neighbors, teammates, and leaders.

Behind every fallen servicemember stands a family whose life will be forever changed.

To the Gold Star families in New Mexico and across this Nation: We see you. We honor you. We carry a solemn responsibility to remember your loved ones not just on Memorial Day but every single day.

Memorial Day is a sacred reminder of the human cost of war and the extraordinary courage of those willing to defend this Nation even at the highest cost.

As we honor the fallen, we also recommit ourselves to supporting our veterans and military families who continue carrying the burdens of service today. That means ensuring veterans can access care through a strong VA system. It means supporting our military families who endure repeated deployments and long separations. It means investing in the servicemembers who are stationed today in places like Kirtland Air Force Base in my district. It means never forgetting the debt this Nation owes to those who have served.

This Memorial Day, may we honor the fallen not just with words but with action worthy of their sacrifice.

May we remember them, may we honor them, and may we strive every single day to build a nation truly worthy of what they gave for us. Amen.