

it edits its past for comfort, it weakens its future. History is not an accusation. History is instructional. History is not about assigning perpetual guilt. History is about cultivating perpetual wisdom. That is why institutions devoted to preserving our collective memory matter so profoundly.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is not merely a building of bronze and stone. It is one of America's greatest classrooms. It reminds us that the story of African Americans is not a chapter added to America's history. It is one of the central texts from which American history is written. African Americans in history make American history whole.

The labor of enslaved people helped build this Nation's wealth. They built this building. The courage of abolitionists challenged its conscience. The sacrifices of Black soldiers defended its flag. The determination of teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, clergy, laborers, and ordinary citizens expanded the meaning of democracy itself. To diminish those stories is not simply to diminish African Americans. It is to diminish America itself.

Throughout our history, there have been recurring efforts to narrow the Nation's memory. Certain voices have always argued that some stories are too uncomfortable, some documents too inconvenient, and some truths too disruptive.

That pattern is not new. It appeared after Reconstruction. It appeared during the long struggle against segregation. It also has appeared whenever honest history threatened comfortable myths.

When debates arise over museums, classrooms, archives, monuments, historical interpretations, and books that are being banned in schools, we should recognize them as part of a much longer American conversation about who belongs within the Nation's narrative.

The stakes extend far beyond any single institution. They concern whether future generations inherit a history expansive enough to include all who helped build this Republic. The answer should never be fewer stories. The answer should always be fuller stories to tell the whole truth, for memory is not a scarce resource. Truth is not diminished by inclusion.

Indeed, the opposite is true. Every time America has widened its understanding of itself, it has become more faithful to its founding ideals.

Consider the long procession of those who enlarged the American promise: those who challenged slavery, those who defended the Union, those who fought for women's right to vote, those who demanded women's suffrage, those who organized workers, those who secured civil rights, those who expanded voting rights, those who insisted that democracy belongs to every citizen rather than a privileged few.

Each generation inherited an imperfect Nation. Each generation left be-

hind a better one. That is the true American tradition: not perfection but progress, not complacency but correction, not silence but an honest conversation, not fear but an abiding faith.

At 250 years, America does not celebrate because every promise has been fulfilled. America celebrates because generation after generation refused to surrender those promises. The American story has always advanced because citizens possessed enough patriotism to criticize injustice and enough hope to repair it.

Love of country has never required blindness. It has required courage. It has required the truth to confront those things that are uncomfortable, the courage to confess, the courage to correct, and the courage to continue.

Mr. Speaker, a happy 250th anniversary to our country. May God bless the United States.

HONORING THE LIVES OF JACOB HULL AND ROBERT JOHNSON

(Mr. GALLAGHER of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to two of my constituents who tragically lost their lives in a senseless act of gun violence at a public library in Chico, in the heart of my district.

Libraries are places of learning and community, spaces where families, children, and neighbors come together. Last week, that sense of safety was shattered by unimaginable violence.

I take this time to honor Jacob Hull and Robert Johnson and offer my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and community who are devastated and forever changed by this tragedy.

Jacob, or "Cody" as he was known, had taken someone he cared for deeply, a close friend's 8-year-old daughter, with him for a visit to the library. He gave his life that day to protect hers by shielding her from the attacker in an act of extraordinary courage and selflessness. Because of his actions, she was able to escape, flee to safety, and reunite with her family.

Jacob Hull is a hero.

Robert spent 30 years as a resident of Orland, California, where he spent a career in the ag industry before retiring. He was beloved by his family, who fondly referred to him as Uncle Robert.

Robert found great joy in spending time at that Chico library, which his family described as his favorite place in the world. It was a place of comfort, of learning, and peace, where he could indulge in his passion for reading. Reading was the passion that remained with him throughout his life.

Robert was a quiet strength.

Both Robert and Jacob were beloved members of the greater Chico and Butte County community, whose absence will be deeply felt, and it leaves a void that cannot be replaced.

Members of the Chico community have already banded together to raise

money in support of the devastated families of both victims. Two memorial funds for Cody and Robert have been started by the North Valley Community Foundation, and donations can be made on the North Valley Community Foundation's website at www.nvcf.org.

I also extend my gratitude to the librarians, the bystanders, and the first responders who selflessly rushed to the scene to provide aid during this horrific crime.

I commend Chief Aldridge and his amazing officers of the Chico Police Department, who responded to this incident within 4 minutes. Their excellent training was on full display, and they quickly apprehended the suspect. Their heroism undoubtedly saved lives that day. We are grateful to them, and we salute them, the thin blue line that protects our community each and every day.

No words will ease the deep pain and suffering our community is feeling, but I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the memories of Jacob Hull and Robert Johnson and in praying for justice and healing for their families and our community in the difficult weeks and months ahead.

CALIFORNIA'S FISCAL BUST

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, a new fiscal year starts off in California, and we have a fiscal bust that could cost us vital wildfire funding.

The cap-and-tax system doesn't raise enough money this year. Under a terrible deal struck between Gavin Newsom and a select group of politicians, money meant for wildfire prevention may be lost because it was put into last place under this deal; and the high-speed rail, a project that hasn't built a single mile of track, was put in first place, along with legislative projects for a select group of legislators: \$125 million for transit passes, \$25 million for a UC Climate Research Center.

One curious one: \$85 million of our taxpayer funding to go to some entity chosen by the legislature to explore climate innovation and solutions for the future—where is it going? No one really knows, but what we do know is that wildfire funding could very well be slashed under this terrible deal.

Even worse, our CAL FIRE firefighters' budget could be slashed if we do not reach a deal that comes to putting wildfire prevention and wildfire suppression first in our State.

I rise to call out this terrible and atrocious deal, and I demand that my former colleagues in the State legislature put wildfire first. I demand that they put victims first after they have been through so much horror over these many years in California, wildfire after wildfire. Put them first by making sure that that funding is there.

We can do our jobs here in the U.S. Congress, as well, by passing our Fix Our Forests Act, which is now on the Senate side. We need to make sure that we get that through so that we can increase the pace and scale of removing dangerous fuels.

□ 1145

OPENING OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

(Mrs. FEDORCHAK of North Dakota was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation celebrates America's 250th birthday, North Dakota has the extraordinary privilege of marking this milestone in a truly historic way.

Tomorrow, on July 1, we open the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in the Badlands of western North Dakota. It is a place that forever shaped one of America's greatest Presidents.

First, I recognize the countless people whose vision, generosity, and determination made this remarkable library possible. They are too numerous to mention each individually, but I thank the TR Presidential Library Foundation Board, its staff, donors, volunteers, community leaders, Secretary Doug Burgum, Robbie Lauf, Ed O'Keefe, and so many more. Because of their efforts, future generations will come to North Dakota to experience the place that shaped Theodore Roosevelt.

Theodore Roosevelt famously said: "I never would have been President if it had not been for my experience in North Dakota."

He arrived in the Dakota Territory as a young man, grieving unimaginable loss. He left transformed. The rugged landscape, hardworking ranchers, and independent spirit of the people he met there, these things forged the character that would later define his Presidency.

North Dakota didn't just change Theodore Roosevelt. North Dakota helped shape the leader who would shape America.

Roosevelt embodied what he famously called the "Bully Spirit," an expression of enthusiasm, optimism, courage, and confidence in America's future. He believed in living boldly, embracing challenges, and approaching life with energy and purpose.

This is a spirit that has defined our Nation for 250 years, and it is one we should carry forward into the next 250.

TR was a rancher, a soldier, and a conservationist. He was a reformer, an explorer, an author, a statesman, a Nobel Prize recipient, and one of the most energetic Presidents our Nation has ever known.

His life was filled with stories that have become American legend. After being shot while campaigning for President, Roosevelt refused to leave the stage. The bullet had been slowed by a thick, 50-page speech that was folded inside his breast pocket. He insisted on finishing his remarks before seeking medical attention.

His White House reflected the same fearless, determined, and adventurous spirit. His children filled it with dogs, snakes, birds, ponies, and every imaginable creature. They showed us that

public service and joy are not mutually exclusive.

Theodore Roosevelt lived a big life because he believed America was meant to dream big, build big, and accomplish big things.

Interestingly, today's President carries some of these same qualities. At President Trump's 2025 inauguration, he said: "In America, impossible is what we do best."

Consider some of the big accomplishments of Roosevelt. He strengthened our Navy, completed the Panama Canal, won the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating peace between Russia and Japan, and changed the way we think about conservation by protecting our public lands, forests, parks, and wildlife.

Perhaps Roosevelt's greatest legacy wasn't simply what he accomplished. It was what he asked of every American. His words from "Man in the Arena" remain just as relevant today as when he first delivered that speech over a century ago.

This strikes me so profoundly on the cusp of our 250th birthday, when our country is so divided, so angry, and so critical of each other. Theodore Roosevelt gives us encouragement. "It is not the critic who counts," he reminds us. "The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

Those words are a challenge to each of us and to every generation to participate, to lead, to serve, and to have courage to act rather than merely criticize.

As we dedicate this remarkable library in my beautiful State of North Dakota, as we do this during America's 250th year, we are reminded that the strength of our Republic has never come from spectators. It has always come from the citizens willing to enter the arena.

May every visitor who walks through the doors of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library leave inspired by the example of this President whose character was forged in North Dakota and whose leadership strengthened America.

His enduring message still calls each of us to live courageously, serve faithfully, and leave our country stronger than we found it.

That is Theodore Roosevelt's legacy. That is the Bully Spirit. As we begin our Nation's next 250 years, may it continue to inspire us all.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of North Carolina). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Holy God, author of our lives and source of our many blessings, may we, in gratitude, take time to reflect on the many men and women who came to this land over 250 years ago with a vision of freedom and a commitment to justice.

We pray that the blood they shed and the hope for which they toiled, all to establish the Republic on these foundational principles, would inspire in each of us our full measure of devotion to this Nation.

For out of many, one—the many people, many ideas, many voices that join together before You in the founding of this Nation, so that the sacrifices they made would inspire the generations to follow to do likewise.

You have told us what is good. In their service to You, they have left us both a legacy and a challenge: To bear faithfully our responsibility to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with You.

Bless then our history and its sacred memory. Sanctify our celebration of our Nation's birth, that we would receive the inheritance of Your blessing with humility, gratitude, and sincere devotion to Your divine providence in our day.

Preserve, oh, Lord, these United States, and keep this country in Your care for the years to come.

In Your sovereign name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CLEAVER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.