

American Dream, pay taxes, and be contributing members of society. I believe that there is a long-term dividend in the psychology and the culture of young children thanks to what we accomplished on welfare reform.

I am so honored to be here now as we work hard to reenact this liberating bill, and I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I now yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that my dear friend and colleague, the honorable gentleman from Florida, central Florida, and, if I may add, a wonderful part of the State, that is a free plug while I can, stated something that is very true. The poor who are stuck in this cycle of dependence to this horrendous system that we had before, the old welfare system, did not want to be that way. We have to be very clear about this. Poor people that were on welfare did not want to be dependent on government.

Unlike what some would like to believe, that these are people that did not want to work, that were just there because that was their choice, that was their number one choice, no, these are good people. These were people that wanted to work, but all they needed was an opportunity; and yet they were stuck in this system that forced them to stay in that system. They could not save money to buy a piece of property because they would lose their benefits. So, therefore, they had to stay in the system. That is the cruelty of this sad joke that was the old welfare system. And the people that really hurt, yes, the taxpayers had to pay a lot of money for this broken system, but the people that were really hurt were those that were forced into the cycle of dependence, dependence on government.

So now, where are those people? Where are they? Millions of them, millions of Americans, are now working. They are earning a living in the free marketplace. It is not easy; it is tough. Hey, life is difficult. They have got to work hard. We know that. But they are working hard, and they are proud of it. They are paying taxes and they are leading by example. So, yes, this is wonderful for the taxpayers, but let me just say that it was even more wonderful for those millions of Americans that were finally allowed to break out of this vicious cycle of dependence and of poverty. That is the untold story, I think, in this wonderful experiment that was called welfare reform, that I think worked better than any of us ever suspected.

We knew that the system was broken. In Florida, we knew that the old system was broken. I did not expect the results to be so dramatic, so unbelievably dramatic. Imagine if in the rest of government we could get increased performance by 75 percent, or close to 75 percent, as we did in Florida

of people getting off welfare and getting to work. That would be a miracle in government. We would all be ecstatic. That happened in welfare reform. And the true recipients of this wonderful experiment, the ones that broke out of the cycle of poverty, are those poor people, poor decent Americans that for a generation were told that they would always be there.

My colleagues may well recall the naysayers. The gentleman just pointed out a couple of those naysayers, saying this is going to destroy the country; that it was going to destroy the poor people. No, it helped more than anybody else those poor people who are now working, earning a living, and are a part of the American Dream. It helped the taxpayers by giving them a little bit of relief, and it was a wonderful thing for the country.

And as my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY), just said a little while ago, I am so proud first to have been a part of it in Florida when the United States Congress and the leadership of the United States Congress gave our State the opportunity to participate and break the dependence on government and that cycle of poverty for millions of people, hundreds of thousands of people in the State of Florida. I am also so proud to now be here; and, hopefully, we will be a small part in making sure that this wonderful reform moves forward so that we can continue to help those that are truly needy; those that really need the help; and, yes, also create a system that breaks that cycle of dependency and of poverty.

Mr. KINGSTON. Well, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman spoke of naysayers. Here is what the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) said, who is the ranking member on the Committee on Ways and Means, a distinguished man, but clearly wrong on this: "The only losers we have now are the kids."

And yet here is another face of poverty, another success story: Mr. Bruce Mullins lost his home and entered the Welfare to Work program in September 1998. He now has a life of joy and promise for himself and his two children. Here is a picture of Mr. Mullins and his kids, and they do not look like losers. They look very happy.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), a friend of mine, as they all are, but friends can be wrong, in 1996 said, "I am saddened that today it seems clear that this House will abdicate its moral duty and knowingly vote to let children go hungry in America." Pretty harsh words. Pretty wild predictions.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for just a second. Sadly, the truth of the matter is we have been told by our Surgeon General and other experts that the biggest problem children have in America today is not hunger but obesity. After 6 or 7 years of welfare reform, we need to get back to exercising, working out, and into good nutrition. But certainly

hunger is not the major problem we have with today's youth after 6 years of welfare reform.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, here are some interesting statistics: 3.6 million fewer Americans live in poverty today than they did in 1996; 2.7 million fewer children live in poverty today than in 1996, including 1 million African American children. These are statistics, incidentally, by the U.S. Census Bureau, not by the Republican Party or the committees in charge; but these are stats that I think people in the honest spirit of debate need to talk about.

I think it is good to have criticism and opposition on legislation, because I would think that it makes the legislation better. We should bring our ideas to Washington. Both of my colleagues are from Florida and have served in the State legislature together, but one is from south Florida and the other from central Florida. When I served in Georgia, I was from south Georgia, or coastal Georgia, which I still am, but when we come up here we are taking on a bigger role. We bring our ideas, be it from south or central Florida or coastal Georgia, we bring them up here and, if they are so good, doggone it, we ought to be able to get 218 people to agree with us. And if they are not founded in substance and fact, probably we are not going to get that to happen.

So I think criticism is good, but I think it has to be founded on facts; and that is one of the things we do not have around here.

Mr. Speaker, we are running short on time, but I know we have a few minutes, and certainly if the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) wanted to add a few comments.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to thank my dear friend, the honorable gentleman from Georgia, for this opportunity.

I do want to end just again reminding all my friends and all our friends in this august Chamber and also the Chamber next door that we have a historic opportunity, a historic opportunity to pass welfare reform in order to continue the gains that we have made in the past. We also have a historic opportunity to do something that has never happened, which is to have the first Hispanic in the D.C. Court of Appeals. It would be a wonderful thing for all Hispanics, but more importantly it would be a wonderful thing for the entire country, a beautiful sign that diversity is acceptable and accepted.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank both gentlemen from Florida, and I appreciate their time this evening.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in my role as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for the 108th Congress to talk about Black History Month and the state of our union for Americans of color.

Throughout the month, we should all take a moment to remember the heroes whose legacies of service have shaped this great country, America.

We should remember Rosa Parks, a leading force behind the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott. Activist Fannie Lou Hamer, the daughter of sharecroppers who fought for African American suffrage in Mississippi. Dr. Charles Drew, whose blood plasma research has saved millions of lives. Their bravery and sacrifice must not be forgotten.

While we celebrate the past, we also should honor the African American women and men who are making a difference today. We should thank Marion Wright Edelman for her tireless work on behalf of America's children. We should salute the nearly 300,000 African American men and women who proudly serve in our military. We should express our gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of African American police officers, firefighters, and first responders who dedicate their lives to serving and protecting us. Their constant acts of sacrifice serve as a model for all of us.

During Black History Month, the Congressional Black Caucus embraces this year's theme as determined by the Association for the Study of African American Life, whose theme is: The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections. We encourage all Americans to commemorate our shared past and work together toward creating a more just and fair society.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, I, along with my colleagues, want to take this time to reflect on the state of our union and focus on the issues that are central to the lives of most Americans; issues like education of our children, access to health care, for any who might need it, prescription drug coverage for our seniors, civil rights protections for all Americans, economic security and national security.

During the 108th Congress, we will face many challenges. We will face the challenges of securing our homeland, getting our economy going again, putting people back to work, closing the education and health care gaps that exist in our communities, providing prescription drug coverage for our seniors, and thwarting those who want to roll back civil rights protections.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honor and it is a privilege to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLANCE).

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, our distinguished Chair of the CBC. I am honored and, indeed, I am right proud that in the middle of a month that has been set aside as Black History Month to stand in the well of the House of Representatives of the United

States of America representing 619,000 citizens of rural, poor, eastern North Carolina, known as the first congressional district.

I am honored to be here as a freshman member of the 108th Congress. It is amazing that princes and kings and clowns that caper in sawdust rings, and ordinary people like a young boy who grew up on a tenant farm in Bertie County under civil rights, the 13th and 14th amendments to the United States Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, all of the great decisions of the United States Supreme Court guaranteeing that we hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men, including Africans in America, are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

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And I want to say that as we have struggled to gain equal rights and civil rights and to celebrate those rights and to build on those rights and to have the opportunities to work, to earn our living, to pay our taxes, to build institutions, to build businesses, to send our children to college, yes, to historically black universities founded by people fresh out of slavery, and even to those universities that at times in the past have denied our entry.

Is it not amazing, as we stand here tonight, there are great debates going on in these halls of this prestigious institution known as the United States Congress, and I am told that the debate that was going on a minute ago about issues of welfare reform that this majority and this Congress, this Republican majority, Mr. Speaker, is going to use brute power and minutia rules to deny freshman Members like me my civil rights and to deny my constituents their rights, their constitutional rights, to have an opportunity to debate those issues involved in the welfare rights reform bill.

That is to say, in this great, and I will call it the "great depression" that we are going into, where we are losing jobs all over this country because the party in power wants to give a tax cut to some rich Americans, and therefore we have no jobs. And now we have a bill that is going to say that people who cannot get a job have to work even longer hours or they will be thrown off the welfare rolls whether they deserve this assistance or not. Would it not be one of my civil rights?

And I know it is my constitutional right as a Member of this body to have an opportunity to debate that issue, to debate whether or not we are going to have funds to provide child care adequate so that those parents who are threatened to be thrown off welfare will indeed have an opportunity to go to work or to go to school.

Yes, in the midst of this Black History Month, we celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the author of the Emancipation Proclamation. President

Lincoln, a member of the Republican Party, a party that supported civil rights at one time, a party that supported the enfranchisement of African Americans and former slaves. Yet as we stand here today, the leader of that former great party and the President of our country has come out foursquare against the concept of affirmative action; and therefore I will contend that he is against Black History Month.

Why do I say that? What is Black History Month if it is not affirmative action? There was a time when those who wrote history left out of the pages of history about people of color, and so Carter G. Woodson came along, and as he read the history books, as he read the tabloids, he did not see anybody in the books that looked like him, and he saw none of the great works that Africans were doing in America. And so he started what became Black History Week, affirmative action, and then it became Black History Month, affirmative action.

And now we have an opportunity under a plan that has been approved by the United States Supreme Court to say that race can be one factor in deciding admissions to the University of Michigan, and we find that the President is opposed.

I am going to close by saying it is a long journey from Africa to America. It is a long journey from slavery to freedom. It is a long journey from the back of the bus to being the driver and owner of the bus company. But we have made it, and I contend that one reason we did was because of those human rights that were at one time properly enforced, and I hope and I pray that they will be in the future.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman and to say to him that several members of the caucus were moved, I think it was just yesterday, when the gentleman was talking about how at one time he was plowing fields and did not imagine himself in the Congress of the United States of America. And so many members of the Congressional Black Caucus have similar stories, have come through very, very difficult times and are doing everything in our power every day and every hour to make sure our children and our children's children have these same opportunities.

One area that is clearly of great importance to the souls of black folks would be our health care, and we are very honored to have in our Congressional Black Caucus the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), whom I will yield to.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As amazing as it is, the words of the distinguished African American scholar, Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, resound as loudly today as they did when he first wrote them more than 100 years ago. How appropriate and on target are his words as he remarks on the lack of health care for African American at that time and as we compare them to our situation today.

I want to take the liberty, though, of focusing on his treatise on the "Philadelphia Negro" because in chapter 10 we see in his description a clear indictment of this Nation's health care system as it existed in the African American experience. One hundred years ago, and shamefully still today it has been bereft of both health and care. In short, while there have been some advances in the last 100 years, on the whole, nothing has changed.

Several recent surveys, for example, clearly show that the general public even today thinks that health status and access to care is equal among all population groups. In this, we echo what Dubois wrote over 100 years ago that "the fact of high death rates and other signs of neglect of the laws of physical health have not yet been apprehended by the general public," he wrote. After a wealth of articles and scientific and lay journals, reports commissioned by this body and with the Congressional Black Caucus and other organizations representing people of color giving voice to the inequities in health at every opportunity, my question is, is anyone listening?

Infant mortality in our community is 2.3 times more than in those of our white counterparts. AIDS affects African American eight times more than it does whites. Death rates from heart disease are 30 percent higher in blacks. Our incidence of diabetes is more than twice as much as in the white population. The black male has the lowest life expectancy of any population group in our country, and in our hemisphere only men in Haiti have a lower life expectancy than those in our Nation's Capital.

The chapter on Negro health also focuses on the lack of reliable or complete statistics, which is still an issue that is very relevant today. Just last week we cosponsored a Hill briefing on the Institute of Medicine's report on public health for the 21st century. In that briefing, the importance of collecting accurate data for minorities and using this data to build research, treatment, and prevention infrastructures was stressed. It is essential if we are ever to close the gaps in health status, as we must, that we collect and analyze important data on race, ethnicity, and other socioeconomic factors that are relevant or cause them.

Dubois also spoke of poor health infrastructure, as he termed it, "the lack of nearly all measures to prevent the spread of disease." This is the state still of our deteriorating health care infrastructure in our community and many rural communities. A chilling thought in days such as these, where we are on high alert for a chemical or biological terrorist attack. If our communities are not prepared to protect our residents and respond to any such attack on their behalf, then no one is prepared and no one can be protected.

We in this caucus recognize, as Dubois did back then, that health does not exist in an unhealthy environment,

and our Congressional Black Caucus agenda reflects that. "Broadly speaking," he wrote, "the Negro, as a class, dwell in the most unhealthy parts of the city" and have "a large degree of poverty." We still have the lowest income levels, the highest unemployment, and many of us still live near toxic sites.

But the most compelling statement in that chapter in the Philadelphia Negro, which I would ask us all to contemplate as we go through yet another term, another budget process in the face of these glaring disparities in health is this:

Dr. Dubois wrote: "The most difficult social problem in the matter of Negro health is the peculiar attitude of the Nation toward the well-being of the race. There have, for instance, been few other cases in the history of civilized people where human suffering has been viewed with such peculiar indifference."

Given the many deaths caused by the lack of health insurance in this, the last industrialized nation that does not guarantee health care to its residents, given the cuts or level funding of programs designed to address our health care deficiencies, the refusal of the department and this body to target dollars to build capacity in our, the most affected, communities, the movement to remove the words "minority" and "disparity" from the health lexicon, and the failure to respond adequately to the recommendations of several Institute of Medicine reports on the inequities of health care among people of color and those who speak different languages in this country, I think it is appropriate for us to ask ourselves the question whether this attitude has indeed ever changed in the more than 100 years since those words were written.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I thank the gentleman.

Tonight, as we celebrate Black History Month, we look at all aspects of African American history and again reflecting on our theme, the Souls of Black Folks Centennial Reflection, we have the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS), one of our new Members, who has been just a tremendous asset to us, and we are anxiously looking forward to continuing to work with him.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for yielding to me.

I have the distinction of representing the Seventh District of Alabama which, as so many people should know if they do not, is the home of the civil rights movement in this country. It is the battlefield where so many of the battles were fought in the 1960s: The City of Birmingham where 40 years ago this April, children were marshaled in defense of equality in this country, and they were met with literally the teeth of dogs and the bite of fire hoses; Selma, Alabama, where 38 years ago individuals had to march across a bridge under a threat and rumor of sniper fire in order to petition for their right to vote.

Montgomery, Alabama, is no longer in my district, but it is my hometown, and of course it is the city where Dr. King picked up the torch of the civil rights movement in part of the 20th century and gave it so much of its vibrancy and so much of its currency.

What is striking about my district in 2003 is that if Martin Luther King could somehow come back and visit west Alabama and visit the battlegrounds on which he fought, he would see cities and counties that look very much the same as they did four decades ago.

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The rate of poverty in four counties in my district hovers around 40 percent, 40 percent in times of economic growth and 40 percent in times of economic decline. It is a constant condition of despair.

We have talked about health care tonight. Eight hospitals in my district have closed their doors in the last 2 years, and suffice it to say that the disproportionate number of people who have been disenfranchised on the health care front in my district have been people of color.

If Dr. King could somehow travel through the streets of Birmingham today, he would find parts of that inner-city that look exactly as they did 40 years ago. He would see young black men, able-bodied, casting about looking for some anchor in their life, looking for some economic anchor in their life.

Too much of my district, which has its urban and rural components, too much of my district looks like America looked in 1963; and that does not say as much as it should say about where this dream stands. Forty years after the fact, 40 years after the battles of 1963, America stands frozen in so many ways.

I had an opportunity to give a speech to a high school class in Selma, Alabama, on Martin Luther King Day. Selma is a racially divided city. It is a city that is 60 percent black, 40 percent white. As I stood in the gymnasium, Mr. Speaker, I looked around the gymnasium as I got to the part in the speech where I talked about Dr. King's legacy of integration, and it struck me all of a sudden that every single student sitting in that gymnasium was black. In a public school, 49 years after Brown v. Board of Education, 38 years after the Selma to Montgomery march, the legacy is a segregated public school system. And with inequality comes disparity in resources; with separateness comes a separateness in resources.

The dream is in an interesting state today, because too much of America is financially unchanged, unchanged in every measure that we could possibly draw on the floor of this House.

People sometimes wonder why we have a Congressional Black Caucus. People sometimes wonder why we have Black History Month. They wonder why there is a need to continue to talk

about these things. And my answer to them is this: as long as we have a country where the conditions of one's life are determined in large measure by the conditions of one's birth, the American Dream is not what it ought to be. As long as we have a country where the lifespan of a black child born today differs dramatically from that of a child of any other race born today in this country, there is a story that still needs to be told.

Some say, including Justice Scalia, that we can get past the problem of race if we stop talking about it. That sounds good, but that is not the world that we live in. The world that we live in is one in which we have to keep talking about these struggles, because so many people have never lived them; but they have also never lived the lessons of that time.

We are the country that we are today; we are the envy of the world because of a very simple promise. The promise of America is that wherever you begin, you have an opportunity to rise. That is the rhetorical reality of our country. Until it becomes the political reality and the economic reality and the social reality, we fall short of the American Dream, and the state of this union is in some disrepair.

So I call on all people of conscience to recognize that America has work to do. I call on all people of conscience to recognize that there are battles that still need to be fought. Because until we smooth out the gaps in this society, until we tear down the walls that continue to divide us, the legacy that we honor and the dream that we honor is incomplete. There is work that needs to be done, and that is the unfinished task of this caucus.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank the gentleman.

The gentleman mentioned Martin Luther King. Certainly we are very proud of all that Dr. Martin Luther King did. One of the things he said is that a citizen must assert the full measure of his citizenship, and the very things that this Congressional Black Caucus stands for are merely asserting the full measure of our citizenship.

One thing about asserting the full measure of your citizenship, you have to serve, and you have to serve this country, and African Americans have played very significant roles in the military, have played very significant roles in exploration, in space.

I am very pleased now to yield to the distinguished gentleman from the great State of New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. Let me commend the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for the outstanding job that he has done in the short time that he has been in that position. I think that we will reach all kinds of heights with his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate Black History Month this year, there is a sober and anxious mood in our Na-

tion. Our communities are worried about the uncertain state of the economy, the loss of jobs, the growing budget deficit, the budget cuts, which threaten to eliminate vital services for our children, students and for our senior citizens.

We are going to work diligently in the months ahead to address these pressing concerns and to try to prevent the gains that African Americans have made from being reversed.

We have all been touched by the recent tragedy which took the lives of seven astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. They represented the best of our Nation and our world: courage, diversity, optimism, and the pursuit of scientific knowledge for the betterment of humanity.

Among the crew were a young woman from India who immigrated to the United States of America to follow her dream, and with the *Columbia* mission she became the only Indian woman to travel into space; an Israeli man whom his country loved, the first Israeli astronaut, a symbol of national pride for Israel; and an African American astronaut from New York who was formerly a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, Michael Anderson.

He was an outstanding student of physics and astronomy who was selected by NASA in 1998 to make his first flight, which was aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour*. It traveled 3.6 million miles in space during 138 orbits around this world to reach the Mir Space Station.

In 1998, there is a picture on my wall that I took with Michael Anderson when he came to my Washington office to discuss how he could try to get more African American boys and girls involved in the space program, in physics, in mathematics, and he was talking about promoting more interest in NASA.

In fact, there was another African American astronaut whose name was Robert E. McNair, who was one of the seven crew members killed on the *Challenger* that exploded 73 seconds after its launch on January 28, 1986. On this mission he was supposed to carry out extensive studies on Halley's Comet.

Another African astronaut, Frederick D. Gregory, served as the commander of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*, which also performed important missions for NASA.

The first African American woman to join the space program, Dr. Mae Jemison, traveled aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* on September 12, 1992. Dr. Jemison is a chemical engineer, a scientist, physician and astronaut, who worked as a Peace Corps volunteer, a medical officer in Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa.

Looking back in history this month, we pause to remember the men and women who laid the groundwork, often at great personal risk, for the benefit of future generations.

We are reminded that African Americans have achieved greatness in many

fields: law, medicine, physics, the military, education, journalism, music, theater and literary arts.

But we must remember outstanding men like Ralph Bunche, the United Nations Undersecretary who became the first African American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

We honor the memory of Thurgood Marshall, the first African American to become an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court with the great May 17, 1954 case that he argued.

While we are speaking of firsts, let us congratulate our colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), who made history last month by becoming the first African American woman to earn a seat on the prestigious House Committee on Ways and Means.

We also pause to continue the debt of gratitude we owe to strong women of the past, like Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist and orator who risked her life, and Harriet Tubman, who helped conduct the Underground Railroad.

As a former teacher, I am committed to passing along stories of African American heroes to our children and grandchildren, so that they may dream of achieving great things in their lives.

I am proud of the fact that my brother, William Payne, who serves in the New Jersey State Assembly, authored a bill which was signed into law which the Governor of New Jersey, which establishes the New Jersey Amistad Commission to develop teacher-training programs to promote educational and awareness projects regarding the things that African Americans have done and their descendants, and the African Americans' contribution to the development of this country.

The commission will work to promote a more comprehensive study of African American history by revising the history books of New Jersey and promoting more extensive classroom discussion. The Amistad Commission is named after the enslaved crew of the ship *Amistad*, who organized an uprising in 1939 to gain their freedom. The crew had their case successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court.

As I conclude today, as our Nation awaits and watches the possibility of war which continues to loom, Black History Month is a good time to reflect that many African Americans have given service to our country.

African Americans fought in every major battle of the Revolutionary War: Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Trenton, Long Island, Valley Forge, and Yorktown. Crispus Attucks, an African American, on March 5, 1770, was the first person to give blood at Boston Commons where he was brought down by the British when he protested taxation without representation.

It was a black Minuteman, Peter Salem, at the battle of Bunker Hill, when they said don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes, who brought down Major Pitcairn, who led the British military.

In the Civil War we had many top African Americans. In 1862, the First Kansas Colored Volunteers won one of the first battles at Island Mound, Missouri. There were 168,000 black combat troops in addition to 200,000 members of service units in the War Between the States.

One out of four Union Navy personnel was black. The black calvary, with the Buffalo Soldiers, showed their importance at the Battle of San Juan Hill, where they prevented the Rough Riders, Teddy Roosevelt, from being annihilated at San Juan Hill. It was the Buffalo Soldiers that saved him, but we heard very little about them. As a matter of fact, they had a lower desertion and alcoholism rate than any other calvary people in our history.

Concluding, W.E.B. DuBois in *World War I* said, in spite of the problems, "first your country, then your rights," and urged African Americans to go to war.

The 369th Regiment from Harlem spent 181 days in the trenches, a half a year, without relief. This is history that no one knows about. And no one ever spent 181 days in the trenches. Yet a person who lived a block from me, Mr. Needham Roberts, along with Private Henry Johnson, captured 30 Germans and held them for weeks, and people still do not know how they were able to keep this large number of Germans at bay.

My Uncle John Garrett was in the invasion of Normandy. When that was over, D-Day, they allowed the white troops to march through the Arch of Triumph; but the black troops were brought up a day later, and they were unable to march through the Arch of Triumph.

President Eisenhower, then general of the Army, wrote a letter to every combatant on D-Day, except African Americans. My uncle did not get a letter. But my Uncle John Garrett, we brought that to the attention of President Clinton, and all of the surviving D-Day African American veterans who we could find, and we worked with the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and his Committee on Veterans Affairs that he was working on, we found many African Americans, and President Clinton sent the letter that chief of our Army, Eisenhower, at the time refused, only because they were black.

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Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I wanted to emphasize, the gentleman spoke about the astronaut who recently perished, coming to his office and talking about having more young African American boys and girls go into science and math, and that is one of the reasons why we even do this this evening, to remind our children of all of the great things that African Americans have done, so that they can follow on that path and have models to emulate.

Speaking of a model to emulate, I am very pleased to yield to my friend and

colleague from the great State of Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), who is going to address and will continue on with some of the things that the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) was talking about with regard to our contributions, military contributions.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, by learning about the good and the bad things that happened in our past, we gain a deeper understanding about how to correct the bad and preserve and strengthen the good. That is why the study of history is important. It tells us about the past and it guides us to a better future, for he who understands his past controls his future.

Black History Month is important for just this reason. I commend the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the members of the Congressional Black Caucus for arranging tonight's Special Order, and I thank all of our colleagues for their support and for their participation.

At a time when our country is intensely focused on national security, I will talk about some of the many African American contributions to our Nation's safety and well-being. Many have lost their lives in combat. They are part of a long tradition of service and sacrifice. As the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) pointed out, that goes back to the Revolutionary War when more than 5,000 blacks served on the front lines.

By World War II, with black leaders calling on black citizens to fight fascism abroad and racism at home, more than a fifth of our men and women in uniform were, in fact, African American. Today, more than ever, blacks are at the forefront of defending the Nation, from the lower ranks to the top echelons of military leadership.

One of the trailblazers was Henry O. Flipper, the first black graduate of West Point. Henry Flipper was born in Thomasville in an area of southwest Georgia that I now have the privilege of representing. Although he was born into slavery and had little opportunity to acquire a formal education, his brilliance, his courage, and steadfast forbearance enabled him to secure an appointment to West Point and to graduate with distinction after years of mistreatment and ostracism.

Although he had an exemplary record on the western frontier while serving as the only black among the Army's 2,100 officers, he was unjustly dismissed from the military. Nothing stopped him, however. He went on to have an illustrious career as an engineer, a surveyor, a government official, playing a significant role in the development of the oil industry, the railroads, and the Nation's expansion in those formative years.

At the time of his death in Atlanta in 1940, he was a forgotten man. But in later years, he has been remembered with memorials at West Point, in Thomasville, Georgia, ceremonies at the Pentagon and at the White House as someone who resourcefully and bravely paved the way for others.

Lieutenant Flipper served at the time of the legendary Buffalo Soldiers, the thousands of black cavalrymen who were deployed in the West for some 20 years to protect settlers, escort wagon trains, assist homesteaders in remote areas, even carrying the mail when no one else would, playing an invaluable role in our Nation's growth and development in the late 19th century.

These young men, mostly in their early 20s, came from many States in the aftermath of the Civil War, who endured harsh and often dangerous conditions in the performance of their duty and they were greatly relied upon. There are countless stories, like the time 34 Buffalo Soldiers came to the rescue of a railroad camp which was under attack by a Cheyenne war party during the Indian wars. The soldiers broke through an encirclement of more than 100 warriors and successfully defended the workers, who were all saved. Many were seriously injured, one fatally. But, as always, they did their duty bravely.

Many of the senior military leaders who were still in office when the Tuskegee Airmen were formed in 1941 would have been familiar with the story of the Buffalo Soldiers and their record of service. Certainly the Buffalo Soldiers helped pave the way.

The military was still segregated at the outbreak of World War II, and the all-black fighter group that was activated at the Tuskegee Army Airfield had to deal with racism and prejudice every day. But the commitment of the pilots and the crews and the support personnel never wavered. They steadfastly went about their duties, about their business, and eventually flew scores of combat missions in Italy and other areas of Europe. They fought heroically, though some were lost. They proved to be tremendously effective in bringing down hundreds of enemy planes and providing support for ground troops advancing in Germany.

Today, we express the thanks of a grateful Nation to the soldiers, sailors, and airmen of all races and creeds and ethnic backgrounds whose service and sacrifice have kept us free and kept us strong for more than 2 centuries, and to those on the home front who also fought to make freedom available for all.

Today, we also pay tribute to those thousands of African Americans who are now engaged in protecting our national security here in the homeland and those deployed around the world. God bless you, and may God continue to bless your service to America.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the gentleman it was the great theologian Zwingli who said, so often people who make tremendous contributions make them when they are unseen, unnoticed, unappreciated, and unapplauded. And I appreciate the gentleman lifting the names of so many who have given so much to this country.

Eleanor Roosevelt once observed that human rights must begin in small

places close to home. They are the world of the individual person where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, and equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, she said, they have little meaning anywhere.

It is my great pleasure to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), who has given his blood, sweat and tears to making sure that the rights of all Americans are protected.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to join with my colleagues this evening in participating in this Black History Month Special Order. In my neighborhood, we do not only celebrate Black History Month in February; it is a year-round, ongoing celebration.

The thing that always gives me great pleasure when I rise on this floor and participate in this 1 hour of comment with my colleagues is that I am always fascinated that I learn a lot from my colleagues of their experiences and other things that I did not know about the history of the African American people in this country. I am tremendously proud to be a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and this body.

Our celebration of black history is a daily event because we understand that we stand on the shoulders of Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Dubois and Sojourner Truth and Fannie Lou Hamer and Rosa Parks who sat down so that we could stand up, and those four gentlemen from my congressional district in Greensboro, North Carolina, who sat in at the fountain, at the counter there, and started a movement that spread throughout our Nation to guarantee that the fight for justice and equality would continue.

Unfortunately, most of what we have talked about, a lot of what we have talked about today, suggests that many of the inequities, many of the injustices, many of the inequities still continue today. It is on that that I want to focus a little bit because some of our colleagues would have us believe, and our President, I think, would have us believe that the era of addressing these inequities is over, that there is no need to have an affirmative action program anymore.

I have often wondered, if you started a race at one point and you started somebody 100 yards ahead and the other participant in the race 100 yards behind, how long would it take and how fast would they have to run to make up that 100 yards. There is, I am sure, a mathematical formula that could anticipate that. Unfortunately, we cannot run faster, we cannot learn quicker, we cannot make up the economic disparities that exist. We cannot make up the health disparities that my colleague, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) has described, that continue to exist, by running the same pace without some kind of adjustments being made.

We could not make up our position in this Congress of the United States from North Carolina from 1898 until 1992 without an affirmative action that took into account that racism existed and disparities existed and the unwillingness of part of our community to vote for another part of our community.

So I think Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Dubois and Sojourner Truth and all of these people that we pay tribute to during our Black History Month celebration would not want us to dwell necessarily on giving them honor because they were not about honor. They were about justice and equality and running faster and trying to catch up to close that gap. Unfortunately, that gap continues to exist today in education, in economic disparities, in health care.

As part of our obligation as members of this caucus, and as part of our obligation as Members of this Congress, not only members of the Congressional Black Caucus, to assure that what took 200 years or 300 years to create, we do not assume can be wiped out with running faster for 30 or 40 years. It is going to take a long time to make up these disparities, and I applaud my colleagues for continuing to run faster and work harder and to work for equality as all of these people on whose shoulders we stand worked for equality.

We must continue to do the same.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman, and I want to thank him for working so hard on the very issue that you just spoke about.

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I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to yield to my distinguished colleague from the great State of California who has made it her mission to address the issue of AIDS in Africa and made it her mission to address many, many concerns of people who have often been left out and unheard, the great lady from the State of California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that very humbling introduction and for his leadership in putting together this very important Black History Month Special Order, also for his really steady and magnificent leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, today we do stand at the crossroads in our battle against the global AIDS pandemic. Now because this is Black History Month, I would like to take a minute and set forth the historical record with regard to this issue and the role of the Congressional Black Caucus in bringing the African and the Caribbean AIDS pandemic to the attention of the United States Congress, the Clinton administration and the Bush administration.

After years of hard work on the part primarily of the Congressional Black Caucus and our friends in the activist and the NGO community, we are finally seeing the issue of AIDS in Africa

and the Caribbean in the national spotlight. Now, several years ago my friend, a former colleague we all know and respected, Congressman Ron Dellums, and several American and South African activists developed a very comprehensive plan to combat AIDS in Africa.

Now, we envisioned creating an AIDS Marshall Plan in Africa that would mirror the original Marshall plan that helped our friends and allies in Europe rebuild from the aftermath of World War II. So I have introduced the AIDS Marshall Plan as legislation. Let me just say that each and every member of the Congressional Black Caucus signed on as co-sponsor. I think that is a historical fact that needs to be recorded.

As my colleagues on the Congressional Black Caucus, especially the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), as the CBC took up the cause in Congress and Ron Dellums forged ahead outside of Congress, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) helped us fashion the AIDS Marshall Plan into the legislative framework for a global trust fund to be housed at the World Bank. Finally in 2000, we began to see some progress as our pushing and prodding gained support for the issue in this House.

In July of 2000, we were successful in adding \$42 million to the FY 2001 foreign ops bill for global AIDS spending, which was really a small amount compared to the actual need; but it took a monumental effort on the part of the Congressional Black Caucus, the activist community, and our minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Soon after, thanks to our consistent consultations with President Clinton and other administration officials, we won passage of the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act, which was signed into law in the summer of 2000 and which formally committed the United States to seeking the establishment of the global trust fund to fight HIV and AIDS. This was in August of 2000.

The passage of this bill was a major achievement and really I must say a vindication of the very hard work that went into the initial AIDS Marshall Plan put forth by Congressman Ron Dellums.

Now in the last Congress, we made great strides towards the passage of other comprehensive global AIDS bills, and we really managed to engaged this administration and our colleagues in the House and the Senate on this issue. Most importantly, we witnessed the international community, led by Secretary General Kofi Annan embrace the newly established global AIDS fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, again, an achievement which the Congressional Black Caucus is very proud of.

Now, in many ways the result and the leadership of primarily the Congressional Black Caucus' work over the last 5 years was evident at the State of the Union address 2 weeks ago when President Bush announced an emergency plan for AIDS relief in Africa and the Caribbean that would devote 15 billion over 5 years to treating those who were infected and those who are not. But our work on this issue does not end here, and we still have a long way to go before we can truly claim victory over this horrendous disease.

There are still an estimated 29.4 million Africans and 440,000 Caribbeans living with HIV and AIDS. Over a third of the populations of many sub-Saharan African countries are infected with AIDS, and in the Caribbean nearly 90 percent of all the AIDS cases are in Haiti.

In Africa and in the Caribbean, however, we are not just fighting against AIDS, but we are fighting tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases, high rates of infant mortality, the lack of access to health care, underfunded education systems, underdeveloped agricultural capacity, poor infrastructure and excessively high debt burdens. All of these developmental issues are tied to HIV and AIDS, and all of them contribute to its spreads in one way or another. That is why the fight for us continues.

The President's initiative represents a major step in a marathon, and we intend to make sure that the United States and the international community finishes the race. We cannot compromise on the substance of what our response to the pandemic should be, and in particular we will continue to push for your funding for the global fund because multilateral institutions do work and they deserve our support.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say that during this Black History Month I hope that we all, members of the Black Caucus, this entire body, rededicate ourselves to the ideals that so many sung and unsung African American heroes and sheroes have lived and died for, and that is for liberty and justice for all.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire as to how much time we have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I grant time to the gentleman from New York, who has fought issues with regard to education (Mr. OWENS) for many, many years and has stood at the forefront of that issue and many other issues.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman also for sponsoring this Special Hour on Black History Month, and I want to discuss a few milestones and events in African American history that are related to education and that should not be forgotten.

We should not forget that one time to teach reading to a slave was a crime.

If you want to know why we are in a position where we need affirmative action, if you want to know why at present the median net worth of white families in America is \$120,000 while the median net worth of black families is America is only \$17,000 then take a look at where we had to come from.

For 232 years it was a crime to teach a slave to read, and then we went through a period where we had to endure separate but equal; but separate but equal was never equal. I came from the Southern schools, the Southern schools. All my life I was in Southern schools, and there was a point where the books and desks and everything that we had had been used for 5 or 6 years by white schools before they were shipped to the black schools. So in every way there was no equality.

We should remember this. We went through separate but equal, and now we are in a situation where it is official neglect. The money, the resources necessary for education is not there. We have a lot of rhetoric supporting public education where most of our black youngsters are educated, but we do not have any resources.

My time is short so I will have to cut this sort. I just want to say that education is a civil rights issue of our time. It is a civil rights issue we must focus on. The slaves who were set free understood very well the most important thing for them to do was to read. People who learned to read had a great deal of status in the new free-slave communities, and we have to get back to that in our African American communities.

Education must be our first priority. It is the only way out of poverty. It is the only way to achieve political equality.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, our last speaker is a lady from the great State of Texas, who I yield the balance of our time to. But we just remind America that as we celebrate Black History Month, every day black history should be celebrated. Without further ado, I yield the balance of our time to the great lady from the State of Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), who is also the first vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman. And I will count the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, to be the beginning. And that is to acknowledge that we are just beginning to explain to America some of the issues that still plague us but also offer to America a sense of hope, that we are Americans, African Americans who believe in this country and believe in America's promise.

That is why I think it is appropriate to cite from the letter in the Birmingham jail of Martin Luther King. And when he wrote this letter on toilet paper as he was incarcerated, he was responding to the clergy who had condemned him for coming from Atlanta to Birmingham to agitate in Birmingham. He simply said, "We have

waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights."

And so I conclude this evening with a beginning and that is that we must continue to fight for our civil rights. And we hope that we can educate America that even though it appears that the civil rights era is over we begin anew. It is extremely important to recognize that the Kerner Report written in 1968 is in actuality a statement of America today. Oh, yes, we have made achievements. We are very gratified that we have leaders in academics, leaders of corporation, leaders in science; but yet we still find an unequal community as it relates to criminal offenses and judgments, racial profiling, the now attack on affirmative action which I believe is an attack out of lack of understanding and ignorance. Because if you understood the University of Michigan's very astute and very precise program, Mr. Speaker, you would understand that it is equal to giving 20 points for being an alumnus child, 20 points for living in northern Michigan, 20 points for speaking a different language. It is not in any essence a quota or preference. It is an outreach to make sure the university reflects America.

So we say today that even though we had Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and many of us thought we had integrated America's school, we are in fact going backwards by showing a large degree of segregation. It means that our work is just beginning, Mr. Speaker. It means that I call upon my colleagues here in the United States Congress to join us not in celebrating African American History Month on a day or night when the members of the Congressional Black Caucus rise to speak to you, but let us do it in our actions by working with us to ensure the Supreme Court does not rule affirmative action unconstitutional. Let us encourage Republicans and Democrats to file briefs that will support the idea of a color blind society and an outreach society that ensures a diversity as it should be.

In conclusion, let me suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that we are reminded of the words of Martin Luther King explaining why we cannot wait. We cannot wait because we are still unequal. The scale is still unbalanced, and it is necessary that we fight not isolated as one community against another but as Americans recognizing that this Nation is better by understanding our history, being able to suggest that our history is American history, and fighting with us for America to reach its promise.

Mr. Speaker, my entire statement is as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that is timely: the State of Civil Rights. I am pleased that the Congressional Black Caucus has reserved this hour to focus on Black History Month. This year's theme is the "State of the Union 2003." We heard recently the President's State of the Union. The President did not speak to the real State of the Union for African Americans.

We celebrate Black History Month at a time when our civil rights are under attack. I joined many of my colleagues in filing an amicus brief in support of the affirmative action plan of the University of Michigan. Affirmative action is under attack in this country more than 30 years after the Supreme Court's decision in Baake.

Nearly 35 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11365 to establish the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to respond to the civil unrest in urban cities. The problems identified by the commission: disparities in police practices, unemployment and underemployment, inadequate housing and poor education remain problems in the African American community three decades later.

The 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission, also known as the Kerner Commission Report, recommended expanding opportunities for higher education and removing the financial barriers to higher education. Yet, here we are, three decades later, defending affirmative action efforts, battling high unemployment rates in the African American community, dealing with poor housing and deteriorating education in urban areas for children in K-12.

Affirmative action has moved to the center of public debate with the challenge to the University of Michigan's affirmative action program. It has become the catchall phase for those who challenge efforts to promote diversity.

Affirmative action is a set of tools used to give qualified individuals equal access and equal opportunity to employment or education. It means taking positive steps to end discrimination so that managers or other people who make hiring decisions have to give every candidate a reasonable chance to compete. What it does not mean is quotas or preference for unqualified applicants.

I would like to remind my colleagues that before the release of the Kerner Commission Report, affirmative action law can be traced back to the early 1960s, when the Warren Court, and then the Burger Court, dealt with the problem of integration in America's public schools. The basic statutory framework for affirmative action in employment and education services is the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Public and private employers with 15 or more employees are subject to a comprehensive code of equal employment opportunity regulations under Title IV of the 1964 Act.

Affirmative action is needed to address present day discrimination, and the problems that women and minorities must contend with when they apply for jobs, educational opportunities or try to move up the corporate ladder. We need affirmative action because discrimination still exists and is holding America back from achieving the highest principles of fairness and equality.

It dismays me that affirmative action is under such intense scrutiny. If the Supreme Court rules against the University of Michigan, opportunities to enter the doors of our great higher educational institutions will be denied to thousands of minorities. This is truly a watershed case, and I am disappointed that the President has come out publicly against the school's affirmative action plan. The University of Michigan established a sound and well thought through admissions plan both in the undergraduate school and the law school. This

was clearly a solid use of affirmative action. The school followed the spirit of the law and considered a range of variables in admitting students, including unique talents, interests, experiences, leadership qualities and under-represented minority status.

We do not live in a colorblind society. The 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

When affirmative action works, qualified women and minorities have a fair chance at employment, education, and business opportunities.

The 1968 Kerner Commission found that the extent of underlying socio-economic problems caused racial strife. While I believe that African Americans have made tremendous strides, we still have a long way to go to reach true equality. African Americans on a daily basis face prejudice, police brutality, and racial profiling. Unfortunately, we are not often in the position to seek redress through the judicial system. The judicial nominees to our nation's courts are becoming more and more conservative. I opposed the Pickering nomination and I oppose the Estrada nomination.

Socio-economic barriers still exist in the African American community. There are 36.4 million African Americans in the country, according to the latest census. This is 12.9 percent of the total population, yet the poverty rate for African Americans is 22.7 percent.

African American History Month is a celebration of people who have gone before us and on whose shoulders we stand, of people who stand among us today transfixed on a goal to achieve even more. It is a time to pause and renew our commitment to realize the progress and achievements of our people and to go much further as we write our own chapter. A time to continue the legacy of African American History.

President John F. Kennedy said in 1963 that "Every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would like to be treated, as one would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated." I believe those words ring true today 40 years later.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Mr. CUMMINGS for reserving this special order to celebrate Black History Month, a commemoration that dates back to 1926 when Black Americans celebrated Negro History Week.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the citizens of the United States, especially young African-Americans, recognize how we've grown and developed since then. And also realize and appreciate the important contributions of their forebears and contemporaries to the development of this nation and American society.

I am proud to stand before you today to salute two outstanding citizens from my childhood home to Waco and congressional district of Dallas. James Andrew Harris was born on March 26, 1932 in Waco, Texas. As a graduate of Houston-Tillotson College in Austin with a chemistry degree, Mr. Harris worked in the Nuclear Chemistry Division of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at the University of California. There he was part of the team that discovered and identified elements 104-Rutherfordium and 105-Dubnium on the Periodic Table of Elements.

Dr. Otis Boykin was born in 1920 and raised in Dallas. His mother was a homemaker and

his father a carpenter. Dr. Otis attended Fisk University and the Illinois Institute of Technology. Unfortunately, his parents could not afford his tuition and he dropped out of college after two years. Thereafter, Dr. Boykin built electrical devices used today in all guided missiles and IBM computers. He also developed a control unit for an artificial heart simulator (pacemaker) that helps millions of cardiovascular patients. Otis Boykin will be remembered as one of the greatest inventors of the twentieth century.

Mr. Speaker, today I am worried that given the current educational settings of our country, future Otis Boykins and James Andrew HARRISES will not have the opportunity to pursue their dreams or realize their talents.

I want to focus briefly on what is going to happen in my State of Texas. It is reported that at least \$2.7 billion must be cut from Texas public education over the next two years to balance the state budget without a major increase in taxes or fees. The University of Texas at Austin will hire fewer professors, forcing students to scramble for the classes they want. At Texas Women's University, fewer police officers may patrol the campus. Some intercollegiate sports may disappear from Collin County Community College. Tuition will probably rise at Dallas County Community Colleges. Universities, medical schools, community colleges and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board collectively must slash \$343.8 million in the middle of the school year.

Mr. Speaker, one University of North Texas official summarized the current situation very clearly: "The monster came through our door, and now he's sitting on our lap."

I am further concerned as I read new stories, such as a Washington Post article which recently indicated that Oregon is on the verge of cutting as many as 24 days from its school year. The United States ranks 18th among the industrial nations in school year length. How can we expect American schoolchildren to learn in 180 days as much as Korean children learn in 220? They cannot!

Just a couple of weeks ago we listened to President Bush's well-written, well-delivered State of the Union address. Yes, it was nice to hear words about diversity, higher education, making college more affordable, and leaving no child behind. But words are cheap! What has been done to increase the diversity of our populations in higher education? What is being done to make higher education more affordable? And how will we ensure that no child is really left behind in our elementary and secondary public school education system?

Mr. Speaker we should invest in the education of under-privileged young people here at home. It will improve not only our educational system, but our society as a whole. So many Otis Boykins and James Andrew HARRISES will have the opportunity to revolutionize technology that affects people's everyday lives.

Again, thank you to Congressman CUMMINGS for organizing tonight's special orders.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within