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THE AMERICAN DREAM

With nearly 750,000 pregnancies a year, teen pregnancy is a critical public health issue that costs our country \$10.9 billion annually. Contributing to the seriousness of this issue is that 82 percent of these pregnancies are unplanned.

While it is true our Nation has made progress in reducing the rate of teen pregnancy, the fact remains that many minority communities still have disproportionately high rates. For example, among all Latina and African American girls, over half will get pregnant at least once before age 20, compared to 19 percent of Caucasian non-Hispanic girls.

Giving birth during these teenage years increases the risk of infant mortality, premature birth, complications, and low birth weight. Also of great concern is the fact that teen pregnancies can lead to significant social, educational, and financial burdens to families and to our country.

Research tells us that girls who become pregnant during adolescence are less likely to finish school, have higher rates of unemployment, and a greater dependence on public assistance. In addition to these tragic consequences, many young girls in physically abusive relationships are three times more likely to become pregnant than non-abused girls.

While there is no simple solution to address teen sexual behavior, it is possible to reduce teen pregnancy with a strategy of sexual health education that takes into account cultural and linguistic differences.

My bill is designed to do just that.

The Communities of Color Teen Pregnancy Prevention Act will help reduce the disturbing rates of teen pregnancy in minority communities by supporting new and existing teen pregnancy prevention program interventions with a focus on strengthening community-based organizations, by reinforcing our multimedia campaigns to provide public health education, by increasing awareness about teen pregnancy prevention and healthy relationships, by enhancing research in communities of color that examine factors contributing to disproportionate high rates of teenage and unintended pregnancy, and by examining the role violence and abuse play in the decisions young people make about relationships, sex, pregnancy and childbearing.

Mr. Speaker, our daughters deserve equal opportunities to build a bright future. By preventing teen pregnancies and promoting healthy relationships, we can pave the way for our teenage girls to blossom into women and mothers who have realized their full potential.

I strongly urge my colleagues to co-sponsor and help pass the Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act of 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. I think I share the embarrassment of all of the Members of this great legislative body when it appears as though in our hands we have the ability to tell people, our creditors all over the country and the world, that for the first time in our Republic's history we are prepared to say we are not going to pay our debts.

We're not doing this because of some pledges that we've signed or because of some commitment that some Members have made that they will never, never, never do anything in support of our President. They would never talk about raising revenue; that they will never vote for a bill, whether it's a health bill, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, education. If the President supports it, they just don't want it.

I don't know how many Americans are really waking up this morning wondering exactly what would happen if we hold our country and our President hostage in order to reach just short political gain by people who have been recently elected and believe that compromise is unpatriotic instead of the legislative objective. But more important than the jobs that we would lose, the money that we would lose, the fact that government would have to be expanded and larger than it's ever been, what I'm really afraid of is that we lose the American Dream and create a scenario where that dream becomes a nightmare.

I don't know what it is that made America so great. I can't imagine what kind of dream that someone could have in Europe or a foreign country and just believe that making it to America would be better than staying in their own country with their own language and with their own race of people. Yet these tens of thousands of people were prepared, in many cases to risk their lives, to come to participate in that American Dream. I can't imagine how people who have been snatched from Africa and brought in chains in the bottom of vessels and were actually sold as property, and yet, instead of saying that they want to go back to Africa, they adopted our Bible, they adopted American customs. But most importantly, with all of the obstacles that they had to overcome, they adopted the American Dream.

What makes America so different is that we're one of the few countries that no matter what you look like or what your last name is, you can become an American. It's absolutely amazing the attractiveness that this dream has. Does it mean that a part of that dream is getting rich inheriting or getting property, having yachts and cars? No. It's having hope and dreams that you would be able to do better for yourself, your family, your kids, your grandkids, your community, and yes,

our great country. It means that you're willing to make sacrifices to help others because even though you never fulfill that dream, the dream never, never stops. There's always the ability to say that even though I didn't make it, my kid is going to go to school. Even though I didn't make it, there's going to be the possibility that I'll be living in a better world—a world of peace, a world of harmony, a world that makes no difference where you came from, that you have a dream that can be fulfilled in this country.

In other countries, you can't dream. How you're born is how you die. That's going to be your legacy. But in America, all of this is going to be placed in jeopardy because we don't have the guts to call out these people that obviously would rather have this dream shattered, not just for those people that are here but for people all over the world that watch us, and maybe they don't have the ability to come here and become a part of that American Dream still. Throughout the Middle East you see other people saying, I too can dream. I can be somebody.

Don't let that dream become a nightmare. Support our President, support our fiscal system, and support that dream.

IN MEMORY OF ED BELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor to remember a great friend of mine who passed away last Tuesday. Thomaston City Councilman Ed Bell was a huge presence in Georgia and a devoted cheerleader for both Upson County, the city of Thomaston, and me.

Ed's life of tireless service started when he entered the U.S. Navy as an aviation ordnance man for 4 years during the Korean conflict. He continued with a sense of duty as an agent with State Farm Insurance, where he worked for 33 years and became a mentor for every State Farm agent under his direction. He was an agent's agent. The people that he insured knew that Ed was their agent and that he was there to protect their interest.

Ed was serving his fourth term on the Thomaston City Council and was truly dedicated to improving the lives of those in his community. If I ever found myself within 25 miles of Thomaston and made the mistake of not calling Ed, you can bet that he would somehow find out, and I would get an earful over the phone for not coming by to see him. And when you came to visit, you had to be sure to set enough time for Ed to introduce you to everyone in town, even though he had already done it many times before.

Even in the years later, Ed could wear a much younger man out with his enthusiasm for showing visitors around his beloved city, taking them through