

the many contributions that Asian and Pacific Americans make to our great Nation.

I commend Congresswoman JUDY CHU, who is the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and also Congressman MIKE HONDA, the caucus' chair emeritus, for their leadership and for their efforts on behalf of our communities.

Our caucus represents a very large and a diverse community. The cultures that are represented in our caucus highlight many, many unique traditions, languages, and histories. Despite our diverse backgrounds, Asian Pacific Americans are committed to improving our country every single day.

Today, more than 18.5 million Asians and Pacific Islanders call America their home—18.5 million. We have become the fastest growing minority community in the United States, having increased by more than 40 percent in the last 10 years.

Asian Pacific Americans contribute to every aspect of our lives, from business to education, health care to public relations, sports and recreation to the arts, government, and the Armed Services. Our businesses employ more than 2.8 million workers, who generate more than \$512 billion in annual revenues to our economy. Two Cabinet Secretaries, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, are of APA descent, and APAs currently represent 13 congressional districts and serve in 15 State legislatures. Further, in the last 3 years, the number of judges serving in the Federal judiciary has more than doubled, its highest level in our country's entire history.

From the very beginning, the Asian Pacific American community has sought better opportunities or to escape persecution in their homeland. These can be seen with each particular group: in the experiences of the first Chinese laborers who came to build the transcontinental railroads, the first Japanese workers who worked on plantations in Hawaii, and the first Vietnamese refugees who arrived because of war, and countless APA groups with similar stories. Asian Pacific American history is the larger American story of valuing freedom, continuously working to make our Nation great and giving our children a better future than the ones we have.

I represent the people of Guam. I represent the U.S. Territory of Guam. The people are an important part of our Asian Pacific American community and are extremely loyal and proud of their citizenship. Case in point, this year will mark the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Guam from a brutal enemy occupation during World War II and the return of freedom to the island as part of the American family. Guam has one of the highest per capita casualties in the more than a decade that our country has been at war, yet our people continue to enter military service as a calling to serve their country.

And our island is being called upon to sustain one of the most complex and important force posture realignments in the history of the United States. Today, per capita, we also are number one when it comes to people who serve in the National Guard. Guam is number one per capita.

□ 1030

This May, we once again celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Despite the many successes that the APA community has experienced, there is still so very much to be done. APA Heritage Month is a celebration of our diversity, a recognition of the sacrifices and the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans make to our Nation, and an opportunity to educate all Americans of the unique role that our community plays in our country.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, or as we say in Guam, Si Yu'os Ma'ase—thank you, and God be with you.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO BISHOP BARNETT K. THOROUGHGOOD

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize, to honor, and to pay tribute to the life of Bishop Barnett K. Thoroughgood, founder of New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ in Virginia Beach, who passed away too early from this Earth in February. He was a man of God, an inspiring leader, a tremendous, positive influence in our community, and a truly outstanding American.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to please help me welcome his family here today, his wife of 39 years, Ernestine; son, Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; handsome grandson, Caleb—who was just in my office—and many other distinguished guests who have come with the family today.

I think the measure of a man or a woman is the legacy they leave to their children, and the legacy left by Bishop Thoroughgood is exemplary. The good bishop dedicated his life to serving God, his fellow man, and his community. He was a titan in the field of human rights. He was loved by fellow clergy and the community in which he served. He was a truly gifted speaker, and he used that gift to be a blessing to others. This is what was written about the bishop in the *Virginia Pilot*:

Bishop Thoroughgood liked to say he started preaching at the age of five, when he spent many days sharing Jesus with the prison work crews that came to clean ditches in his Seatack neighborhood. At 20 years old, he started the New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ. Across his career, he received many educational honors leading to his doctorate of ministry. He served as the district superintendent to the Virginia Beach district and second administrative assistant to Bishop Samuel L. Greene, Jr.

He was amazingly active in the community and received so many awards

that if I read them out today, I think it would fill the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

He also served as a member of the Virginia Beach Clergy Association and Ministerial Alliance. He was the founder and president of the Hampton Roads Ecumenical Council of Bishops. He led mission trips to Haiti and outreach to the poor.

His sermons were literally broadcast around the world. So many were touched by his words, which I think explains why at the wake the night before his funeral 2,500 people were there, and 4,000 folks showed up to the funeral. I was honored to share just a few words with the family.

I just ask that God would bless the family and watch over them, give them peace, and that the message that the bishop had lived his life conveying would be continued. That truly is the way, I believe, we honor the bishop's life is by continuing his work, his compassion for others, his commitment to making sure that all Americans cross the finish line, always centered on family, always centered on God, and always mindful of his obligations as an American.

Bishop Thoroughgood leaves to cherish his memories, again, his lovely wife, Ernestine Thoroughgood; his sons, Bertram, Emmanuel, and Jonathan; daughter, Mekia; four brothers—large family, wonderful family that we had here this morning—five grandchildren, and many children they've adopted and helped through the social services foster care program; the New Jerusalem Church family; and the members of the Church of God in Christ worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I close as I began, just knowing that it's a high honor to pay tribute to his life. I think it embodies the very best of what it means to be an American, to be part of our Hampton Roads community, and to be a Virginian.

So with that, I ask God's continued grace on the family.

#### ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, this month is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. It is a time for us to take pride in our country's diversity and to celebrate the ways in which Asian Pacific Americans have contributed to the vibrancy of our Nation.

Today, Asian Pacific Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the country and now account for nearly 6 percent of the total population. Asian Pacific Americans are an incredibly diverse group comprised of over 45 distinct ethnicities and speaking over 100 different language dialects. We are represented in every arena of American life, from college presidents to public servants and CEOs, and even to an NBA basketball star, Jeremy Lin.