

In a 1951 speech to the New York Legal Aid Society, the great jurist Learned Hand challenged his audience: "It is the daily, it is the small, it is the cumulative injuries of little people that we are here to protect. If we are able to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice."

Mr. Speaker, 63 years later, on a street corner in the same city, Eric Garner hauntingly invoked Hand when he pleaded in vain: "Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today. I'm minding my business, officer. I'm minding my business. Please just leave me alone."

Mr. Speaker, it must stop today.

Mr. Speaker, equal justice under law—impartial and uniformly applied—has been for more than two centuries the ideological underlining of American democracy.

But, from the beginning, this noblest aspiration has been intertwined with our struggle with race—a battle that has sometimes come to define our nation, and to divide it in ways that too often cleave us still today.

One hundred fifty years since the Emancipation Proclamation and half a century after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 formally ended Jim Crow, our President, his Attorney General, Secretary of Homeland Security and National Security Advisor are all African-American.

Blacks are now prominent in every facet of American life. And much of this has occurred during my lifetime, because people marched and sat, and voted and demanded greater equality.

But, despite the progress, equal justice under law is not the reality for too many of our fellow citizens and injustice continues to limit their lives and their livelihoods in ways that are difficult for white Americans to comprehend.

Inequality manifests itself at every rung of the criminal justice system, but its most deadly consequences are to be found in the encounters of young men of color with the police.

I have seen the video of the Eric Garner incident in New York and watched the tragedy in Ferguson in the aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown. The agony of their families and the anger of their communities have rightfully moved the nation.

Sadly, they are not alone.

The deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown grabbed national headlines, but decades of strife between police and many poor and minority neighborhoods have resulted in an endemic mistrust of law enforcement there.

One need only consider a phenomenon almost completely foreign to much of America—"the talk."

It is a ritual that plays out in black and brown households across our nation every day—as parents teach their young children about the special dangers they face from law enforcement.

Even the mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, said last week that he and his wife had to prepare their son—"as families have all over this city for decades—how to take special care in any encounter he has with police officers."

As a father, to hear that is heartbreaking. As someone who has long worked with and on behalf of law enforcement, and who has deep respect for the bravery and integrity of so many who wear the uniform, it's a call to action.

First, in the months since the Michael Brown shooting, I have pressed for greater deployment of body-worn cameras to police departments across the country, an idea that the President has now endorsed. Cameras are not a panacea, but they are a first step on a path to greater accountability and transparency.

Second, since cameras alone will not bridge the chasm of mistrust between many communities of color and the police there to protect them; we must invest in 21st Century police departments.

Effective policing requires mutual respect between the public and the police, and a renewed emphasis on community policing strategies. Diversifying police forces so that they are more reflective of the communities they patrol and improving the training of officers to reduce the likelihood of violent confrontations are essential. This cannot be accomplished overnight, however, and generations of injustice have left deep scars.

So the third leg of any law enforcement reform agenda must be enhanced oversight by the Department of Justice, which has a long record of working with state and local police agencies to modernize and improve practices and behavior.

Justice Department intervention, as in the recent release of a report detailing excessive use of force by Cleveland police, can be instrumental in overcoming opposition to reform, and I know that Attorney General Holder's successor will make this a priority.

We ask a lot from our police who have a difficult and often dangerous job, and we grant them enormous power, including the right to take a life under certain circumstances. It is not only proper that we insist this power is used impartially and as a last resort, it is fundamental to a just society.

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Sixty-three years later, on a street corner in the same city, Eric Garner hauntingly invoked Hand when he pleaded in vain: "Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it. It stops today. . . . I'm minding my business, officer. I'm minding my business. Please just leave me alone."

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TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last week, the House passed legislation to extend a number of individual and business tax provisions that expired on December 31, 2013. This legislation would reinstate the provisions retroactively and extend them through the end of 2014.

As a former small business owner, I recognize the tremendous cost that Federal policy can have on American businesses and believe the temporary extension of many of these tax breaks is necessary. However, I have long been a consistent and vocal supporter of

simplifying the Tax Code and decreasing the tax burden of hardworking Americans.

If you listen to the political discussion in our country very long, you will inevitably hear some liberal lawmakers repeat one of their favorite lines: all of our country's budget problems would be solved if only we increased taxes. But our old friend across the pond, Mr. Churchill, once said: "A nation trying to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket trying to lift himself up by the handle." History has shown the truth of this statement: increasing taxes increases government spending and crowds out private sector investment, diminishing our prosperity.

It is ridiculous that Americans labor, on average, 111 days just to make enough to pay the government before starting to keep what they earn for the year.

At 70,000 pages long, the U.S. Tax Code is also far too complicated. It is almost five times wordier than the Bible, minus the grace and mercy. It is so complex and intimidating that the majority of Americans pay good money just to have someone else tell them how much the government is going to take from them.

It is also important that we reduce the number of loopholes in the Tax Code, which is why I have voted for the budget proposals introduced by Chairman RYAN since Republicans regained the majority in the House of Representatives in 2011. These Path to Prosperity budgets provide for comprehensive tax reform, close loopholes, and make our country more economically competitive.

The simple truth is that the United States has the highest corporate tax rates in the developed world. Continuing to make it more expensive to do business in the U.S. than elsewhere in the world will not encourage companies to operate and keep jobs in this country.

As we move forward with comprehensive tax reform in the 114th Congress, it is vital that we enact policies that strengthen and stabilize our economy as well as give individuals and businesses long-term certainty.

RECOGNIZING MINNIE MINOSO

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was a vote by the Major League Baseball committee on who should be inducted into the Hall of Fame from a particular area. One of the players who was up for consideration—and, unfortunately, wasn't chosen—was Minnie Minoso, and it reminded me of the debt I owe Minnie Minoso.

Minnie Minoso was the first African Latin baseball player. And in 1954, in Memphis, Tennessee—a town I was born in and a town in the Southern United States that was especially a