

I'd also like to congratulate coaches Mr. Chris Kielsmeier and Ms. Lindy Hatfield, who coached this year's team. This season belongs to them as well. While a coach's devotion to their team is often displayed simply in the wins column, this perfect season speaks volumes about Mr. Kielsmeier and Ms. Hatfield's ability to bring out the very best of their players and nurture the talents of their team.

Mr. Speaker, hallowed as these walls that we work in are, we rarely have an opportunity to witness perfection, that which cannot be improved upon. Let us forget what such accomplishments look like, the women of the Lady Jackets have reminded us that there are rare moments in time when imperfect individuals can work together to achieve perfect results. I hope that by taking time to celebrate these small moments we can remind ourselves the importance of working together to achieve success.

And, again, Lady Jackets, congratulations on a very unforgettable season.

#### REMEMBERING THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I joined a bipartisan group of Members of the House and Senate just a few short hours ago here in the Capitol where we were accompanied by Martin Luther King III, and we gathered to remember a day that tens of millions of Americans will pause to remember tomorrow. That was the day that saw the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 40 years ago.

I rise today as someone who, as a 9-year-old boy, was deeply inspired by the example of Dr. King and as a 9-year-old boy who was shaped by those tragic events.

But I also rise today as a Hoosier and as a congressman representing Muncie, Indiana, because it may not be known to many, Mr. Speaker, but both Indiana, and Muncie, Indiana, in particular, played a small role in the unfolding drama of that day, April 4, 1968. And I will borrow generously from an article written by Nick Werner recently in the Muncie Star Press as I reflect on that connection.

Muncie helped shape history after the King assassination because it was in Muncie and at Ball State University where Senator Robert Kennedy was speaking. He was speaking at the men's gym, which is now Irving gym. He was running for President of the United States. And it was there after his speech, as he was moving through the crowd, that historians recall and record that he had first learned of the assassination of Martin Luther King,

Jr. And as he went to the Muncie Airport and traveled from the Muncie Airport to Indianapolis, Robert Kennedy would prepare what for all the world appeared to be an impromptu speech but one that perhaps he had been writing all of his life. A speech that he would deliver to a stunned crowd in Indianapolis that night, and it was a speech that I rise today to remember.

It was humbling to me, despite our differences on philosophy and politics, to sit today on the same row with Senator TED KENNEDY as we remembered the tragic events of that day.

Robert Kennedy stood before a largely black audience in an outside park in Indianapolis, and he spoke these words:

"I have some very sad news for all of you and I think sad news for all our fellow citizens and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee."

As Nick Werner wrote: "The crowd gasped and screamed, but they remained fixed on Kennedy as he continued speaking, words that condemned violence and lawlessness.

He said, and I add, "For those of you who are black, considering the evidence evidently that there were white people who were responsible, you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge. But," he added, "what we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred. What we need is not violence and lawlessness, but love and wisdom, compassion toward one another. He asked those gathered to "return home tonight to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King. Yeah, that's true, but more importantly, say a prayer for our country, which all of us love; a prayer for understanding and the compassion of which I spoke."

□ 1400

After he spoke those words, rioting would break out in more than 100 cities across the United States. But Indianapolis was peaceful. Robert Kennedy would go on to a tragic end of his own.

But I rise today as an American shaped by the courage in the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and I will remember tomorrow with gratitude his example. I will also say very humbly that the words of Robert Kennedy are as true today as ever, and that Muncie, Indiana, and the State of Indiana, will always be proud of the small role we played as a backdrop to those historic and tragic events.

May the words of Robert Kennedy, may the example of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., continue to inspire our Nation to aspire to a more perfect union.

#### UNITY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). Under a previous order of

the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I discuss the topic upon which I arise to speak, I do want to join my colleagues in celebrating the reauthorization of the United States Fire Administration Act. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee since its origin after 2001, I am a direct witness of the work of our first responders around the Nation. It is important that we recognize the elements of this bill and the funding that is necessary to ensure a system of first responders that works.

Yesterday, I met with the chiefs of the fire departments of departments in my State of Texas. I salute them. Through their efforts, we were able to pass this bill. I congratulate the sponsor, and I believe that the National Fire Incident Reporting System improvements that will come about are important; the fire technology assistance and dissemination will be important that is reauthorized; the encouraging of the adoption of standards for firefighter health and safety, one of the ills that we are still dealing with after 9/11, people who have gotten sick after 9/11 and still not addressed; and the coordination on fire service-based emergency medical services is important; and as well, the funding that will come about, upwards of \$100 million.

Certainly, I encourage them to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the work that we can do together. Congratulations on the reauthorization of this bill. I stand as a strong supporter.

I rise today, as my colleagues have done, to acknowledge the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King. That will be tomorrow. I head to Memphis to commemorate that. I just got through speaking to a number of constituents from Texas Southern University and from Prairie View A&M. I asked them about presidential politics. They were thoughtful and discussed with me the balance that they saw in the candidates that happened to be running in the Democratic primary.

What I have seen as we watched this debate is really a call on the sensitivities of America, race and gender, and we have seen the tensions and the divisiveness; rather than focus on the message and mission of an American hero like Dr. King, who talked about unity and talked about, as was said by his son today, the horrible evil of racism and poverty and militarism. But even in that voice, he spoke of unity.

Today, I rise to call upon the candidates themselves, that whoever will run to the mike first and call upon unity in America may find a surprising response from all the voters, wherever they might be. For Americans are good people. They extend themselves to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq so

that others might have freedom and democracy.

I might imagine that our soldiers would look back on this divisiveness and the name calling and someone castigating one person because they are for one candidate over another, and ask whether or not we truly understand freedom and democracy. It is choice, it is the ability to make your choice. Yet, it is the ability to come together and unify around the goodness of America.

I was glad to hear Majority Whip CLYBURN say today that, "time is neutral." As Martin Luther King said, "It is neutral because it says nothing. It is what you do with it." What he reminded us is that people of ill will seem to use time more effectively than people of good will.

I truly believe that we have outstanding Americans running for this office. I will be pushing for the one that happens to be in my party, strongly and enthusiastically. But what I will come to this floor and this Congress for is to join me in putting together a reconciliation commission in America. Not just because of the candidacy and the campaigns that we have seen, but because Americans are still sensitive about race and about gender, two groups of people that have been disenfranchised in our history. Yet, we are blessed to be in America, recognizing that many of us have made strides. I am proud to stand here as an African American woman. Some might say I have double issues. But I have double benefits, double celebration.

Yet, there are those who I believe would benefit from having this broad discussion, this reconciliation in America about women who were disenfranchised until 1920, woman who suffer from the lack of pay equity, and those who live under a minority umbrella, who themselves still remain discriminated against in schools and jobs and in corporate America.

Mr. Speaker, we can benefit from this wonderful debate and discourse between someone who's an African American male with the potential of being the President of the United States and a woman who has the potential of being President of the United States. Why don't we celebrate in that difference and diversity? Why don't we call for unity, because America is greater than our individual differences. As Martin Luther King said, "It can be the promised land. Why don't we attempt to go there together."

#### BE A PART OF THE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honor

to come before the House once again. I can share with you, as Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE just finished speaking about, the wonderful ceremony that we had today, but sad ceremony, reflecting on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King some 40 years later. To see Democrats and Republicans standing side by side, to have reflection from those that worked beside Dr. King, like our very own JOHN LEWIS and Majority Whip CLYBURN, who talked about his experience and first meeting that he met with him in 1960 in Morehouse University, to Majority Leader REID reflecting on, the Senate reflecting on how he worked here in the Capitol at that time as a part of the crowd outside; and others that shared stories of their time when Dr. King walked the Earth; his son, Martin Luther King, III, who reflected on his father's death and his memory and charged the House and the Senate to carry out efforts against poverty, also to deal with the issue of war and conflict, and also looking at the very issue of making sure that we stand up for the least of these, as many of us are very, very familiar with. Mr. Speaker, I also believe that it's important in that light to have Americans, and as leaders of this great country of ours, have Americans remember the past, but look forward in a forward leaning way to the future.

I had the opportunity to talk to the National Association of Black Realtors or African American Realtors over at Union Station just about 30 minutes ago. It reminded me of a story, and I shared it with them, of when my mother served here in the House of Representatives and I had the opportunity as a State legislator to come up to see her sworn in once again. While I was up here, I had a chance to run into one of my good friends, Reverend Jesse Jackson.

He spoke to a group of folks that were here that day when his son was sworn into Congress for the first time. He said that he could not help but to get emotional. He got emotional when he was sharing with us how that experience was a moving experience for him because he reflected on the story of his father, who fought in World War II, and after World War II was over, came back to the United States. But he was taking the train going south and riding behind the prisoner of wars when they went through Union Station. And his father couldn't help reflect that he saw the United States Capitol, but even though he fought on behalf of his country, felt that he did not move forward because he was behind prisoners of war in his own country. And that God would have him live long enough for his grandson to become a Member of Congress is an example of how this country can correct itself over time. We still have a long way to go and a short time to get there. I shared that with them because many of us are pro-

fessionals and have an opportunity to take part in this democracy and be a part of the change in America.

I can say that tomorrow will be a day for the country to pause and to recognize the contributions of one of the greatest Americans that ever walked the Earth, and that's Dr. King. I look forward to participating in that reflection like I did today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share just a few thoughts with the House, as we have now broken for the week and will be back next week and the business of the people of the United States of America will continue. The New Direction Democratic Congress are about working with some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle about solutions, Mr. Speaker, and not just conversation.

I think it's important for us to look at what has taken place under the Capitol Dome. I was on the floor yesterday evening and I spoke to the Members on how we are going to have to work together to be able to help everyday Americans work through their real life issues that they are facing now. Long ago, we knew of not only predatory lending practices, but we also knew of the fact that there are a number of Americans that are going to hit hard times, and many pieces of legislation passed off of this floor riding on the backs of everyday Americans, individuals that punch in and punch out every day, those that try to carry out the American dream by purchasing a home and getting their piece of the American pie.

For many Americans, that is the only savings they have. A home is a way to be able to allow their blood line, wherever they may be in rural America, urban America, wherever their background may be, if they are a citizen or resident of this country, to be able to educate their children, to be able to borrow money to be able to educate their children, or to be able to allow their children to have something that they can call a piece of the rock or a piece of the American pie.

I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that a number of those families, and I mean they are in the millions, are in jeopardy right now of losing the very thing that they can hold on to. They may not own their car, they may not necessarily have a lot of money. But what they do have are homes. Many of these individuals are up in age. They have fewer tomorrows than they have yesterdays. They are finding themselves in a situation of not having the financial means to be able to protect their home.

□ 1415

One of the cornerstones of public service is to make sure that we come up and we protect those individuals and that we make sure those Americans are not left behind. I do know that