

It's exactly these kinds of things that our Founding Fathers were alarmed about—commissions that would show up and tell you what you had to believe, what you had to profess. Catholics are afraid they're going to have to provide contraceptives from a government of the same mind. Doctors who are opposed to abortion fear that this government is going to tell them what they must do in violation of their consciences.

Are we, the American people, supposed to stand by? I think not. I think it's time for us all—not just Congress, not just your Representatives, but all—to raise their voices and speak out against a government that is too strong and that has forgotten its limitations written into that Constitution, especially under the First Amendment—protecting our free exercise of religion. Speak with us. Stand up and speak with us.

Mr. FORBES. I thank the gentleman for his words tonight.

My dear friend from Virginia, Congressman GRIFFITH, we are glad to have you with us tonight for your comments.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. I am so glad to be with you this evening.

So many people in Washington and in other parts of the country believe that it was the intent of the Founding Fathers to bleach from our society our religious beliefs, and you have heard others speak this evening that that is not the case. In particular, I would like to share with you, in the short time that we have remaining, the words of Thomas Jefferson from that famous letter to the Danbury, Connecticut, Baptists, because everybody focuses on one phrase and not the entire letter.

He opens with salutations to the Danbury, Connecticut, Baptists, and then begins the meat of the letter:

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the Nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

Now, the next paragraph—the closing paragraph—of the letter is very instructive because the man who some now say wanted to bleach religion out ends the letter as President of the United States as follows:

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem.

Obviously, it was never his intent to bleach out of our society religion, and

the Statute for Religious Freedom today still stands on the wall of the House of Delegates where you and I both served.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, we thank you for the time tonight.

Over your head stands the phrase "In God We Trust." A few years ago, when they opened the Visitors Center, they tried to take that phrase out of it. Members of the Prayer Caucus came here and stood, and because of that it's now written and engraved in the walls over there. We believe that, if you can engrave it there and if you can engrave it here, we can engrave it once again in the hearts of the people in this country.

I want to thank you for the time that you've allowed us today. I want to thank the majority leader for yielding us this time. I want to thank our Founders for giving us this great right of freedom of religion, and my prayer and our prayer tonight is that the American people will be wise enough to keep it.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS—AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. It is an honor and a privilege, Mr. Speaker, to once again have this opportunity to stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives and to anchor the CBC Special Order where, for the next 60 minutes, members of the Congressional Black Caucus have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people on an issue of great significance to us, which is the future of the organized labor movement and how that relates to the economic viability of the African American community and to America as a whole.

Now, today, we've all just returned from the August recess. We are here back at the Capitol, and of course we're in the midst of a very robust period of deliberation as it relates to the administration's request for us to grant authorization for this country to strike militarily against Syria for what appears to be the use of chemical weapons, which is in violation of international law, against the Syrian people. That debate will play itself out over the next few days and, perhaps, even the next few weeks; but while we

undertake that solemn obligation to make the best decision for this country and for our constituents as it relates to such a critical issue of war and peace and possible military engagement, we also have a similar responsibility to deal with the domestic issues that continue to impact our constituents as well as the American people.

We know that we are still in the midst of a very sluggish economic recovery and that the American worker has fallen behind relative to the position that that worker was in coming out of World War II and through the sixties and the seventies, into the eighties and the nineties. This is a matter of urgent concern to the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and it should be a matter of urgent concern to everyone who is a Member of this august body. Part of the deterioration of the American worker, I believe, empirically can be shown to be directly related to the deterioration of unionized membership here in this great country. So we will explore those topics.

We are a week removed from the Labor Day celebration, and we are also a few weeks removed from the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, a march that was projected as one both for jobs and for freedom. We often focus on the civil rights aspect of the march—and it produced some tremendous pieces of legislation—but the March on Washington was also about jobs and economic opportunity, and it was put together with the significant assistance of the organized labor movement here in America.

I've been joined by several distinguished colleagues, Members of the House of Representatives, but also of members of the class of 2012—this wonderful freshman class. I believe the first speaker will be the distinguished gentleman—my good friend from the other side of the Hudson River, the always nattily dressed—Representative Donald Payne, Jr.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York for that kind introduction and for his consistent leadership on the CBC's Special Order hours. Tonight's topic is "African Americans and the Labor Movement." It is an American story.

Historically, union members have played a critical role in the civil rights struggles of the past, and the involvement continues today. When Dr. Martin Luther King was jailed for civil disobedience, it was unions and union members who came to the legal and financial aid of Dr. King. African American workers have played a pivotal role in strengthening our unions and our economy. The path to the middle class for African Americans has always been through union jobs. What we see is an erosion of that dream. People's ways of life—what they're used to, the levels at which they're used to living—are eroding. It is because there is an attack on organized labor in this country, for there are forces within this Nation

that are eroding the quality of life for hundreds and thousands of Americans throughout this Nation.

So I am really here to say and to point out to this august body that labor has been the pathway for many Americans—not just for African Americans, but for people of all walks of life—to live the American Dream. To own a home, to feed their children, to send them to school, to take care of their parents, to have health care, job security has all been through labor. We stand here today and count the countless number of times that the labor movement has been there for us in America. This is a kinship that you can expect from a fellow union member.

I have been in two unions in my lifetime. Yes, I'm a Member of Congress today, but there have been times in my life during which I've worked hourly jobs, and it was because of the unions I was able to get a living wage and have the resources to raise my family. So I don't come to you, preaching to you, not knowing how it is to have to get up every morning and punch a clock and look for overtime and hope that you can get it in order to increase the wages that you bring home. The reasons to support unions are clear. Union workers are more likely to have health insurance and are more likely to have pension plans. Receiving this preventative care now helps lower health care costs later.

Let me also say something about the Affordable Care Act at this point in time. It is a great piece of legislation. It will go down in history just as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid have changed this country, because I can see the goal line. It's going to take some time to get there, and, yes, it will have to be tweaked and looked at and changed in some areas; but it is a monumental piece of legislation that is going to change health care in this Nation for millions of people who have never had health care. To my fellow Americans, that lowers the costs for all of you, because you pay for people who do not have health care.

□ 2045

So now you will have millions of Americans paying into their own system which lowers the cost for you.

Today, labor unions are still at the forefront of improving equality in the workplace. Right now in New Jersey, we're fighting to raise the minimum wage. Despite overwhelming support by the people of New Jersey, the Governor of New Jersey vetoed a bill that would have raised the minimum wage to \$8.25. But our workers will not be deterred. This November, New Jerseyans will have the chance to right that ship at the ballot box and raise the minimum wage for millions of workers.

In Jersey City, the second largest city in the State, in my district, it is expected the city will require paid sick leave to all workers. This is important to our workers and to our economy be-

cause it has been proven that paid sick leave reduces turnover, increases productivity, and lowers health care costs for all.

I spoke about my experience in labor. I worked for a manufacturing firm as a young man of 20 or so. It was a business that manufactured computer forms. It was the only African American company of its kind in the United States of America at that time, and I was proud to work there because my vocation was printing in school. So I was very glad to go there and work in that atmosphere.

But as a 20-year-old does sometimes when you're young and you make mistakes, I was fired by that company. The owner of the company that fired me was my uncle. My father was the hearing officer against me, and my grandfather was a witness against me.

Let me say that no one knows how important it is to be represented, because the union got my job back. In spite of everything that I was up against, the union got my job back. I stand here to let you know I understand what it is to be represented firsthand.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this country and this great State of New Jersey deserve a wage that they can live on.

Several months ago, colleagues of mine in the Congressional Black Caucus took the SNAP challenge and we lived on what a person would have to live on for a day and try to make ends meet and eat. It was an eye-opening experience. I had two bottles of water, a microwave macaroni and cheese, and a half a can of tuna fish is what I had for a day. So if we think people are living well on \$4.17 a day, then you have another thought coming.

People need to have a living wage. We know what it costs to live in this Nation. We will continue as the CBC, as a group, to voice our opinion and be heard on these issues that impact our districts, our States, and our Nation.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend from New Jersey for those very insightful and thoughtful observations.

I think the organized labor movement has a pretty simple objective in that a hard day's work should be compensated by a good day's pay; and anybody that works hard to provide for their family should be able to take care of their family, possibly even with a solidly middle class existence. That seems like that is consistent with the idea of who we are as a country. We, of course, right now have a minimum wage that is so low—\$7.25 an hour—that you can work 40 hours a week and a family of four will still fall below the poverty line.

We've seen income inequality reach levels that are as bad as they were during the Great Depression. Part of the reason for these economic phenomena clearly have to do with the decline of Americans and their participation in the workforce as union members. It's something that we just have to confront here in this country in deciding

what type of America we're going to become as we move forward into the future.

I've been joined by another extremely distinguished, eloquent, thoughtful colleague from the great State of Ohio, and I'm pleased to yield the floor now to Representative JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to join and thank my colleague, Mr. JEFFRIES, for leading the Congressional Black Caucus' important discussion on achieving economic security through the labor movement.

Labor unions played an important role in the civil rights movement. Today, the labor movement continues to be an important issue for African Americans, just as important as it was 50 years ago during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

The labor unions and civil rights groups share the struggles of fighting for better pay and equal rights. The overall goal of this movement remains the same. We must invest in education, fair wages, and workers' rights. We must continue to fight for those in our community who are denied economic opportunity and equality. Labor unions are at the forefront of these endeavors. They ensure the gains that workers have made in the past are maintained and that workers' rights will be protected in the future. Union members have played a critical role in the civil rights movement, and their involvement continues today.

Historically, the path of the middle class for African Americans was through a union job, and today unions continue to provide African Americans with economic security. You see, 13.3 percent of all union jobs in the United States are African American, despite African Americans only making up 11.4 percent of the overall domestic workforce. African American union jobs earn up to \$10,000, or 31 percent, more per year than nonunion workers.

If we really want to rebuild America's middle class, we need strong unions. Labor unions play a major role in our economy and on behalf of workers. The essence of what labor unions do is to provide workers with a strong voice so they receive a fair share of the economic growth that they help create. They have always been an important player in making sure that the economy works for all Americans.

Labor unions have paved the way for middle class people, for millions of American workers, and pioneered benefits such as paid health care and pensions along the way. Even today, union workers still maintain more benefits and job protection than nonunion workers.

Union jobs continue to offer higher salaries, pensions, health care, and benefits that give families the economic security that they deserve, the security to be able to send their children to college or trade schools. I know this firsthand because my dad was a

union worker. Oftentimes I say that I was able to go to college because of union dollars. This is the American Dream, and unions have helped ensure that more Americans have a chance to live it.

In central Ohio, the Third Congressional District of Ohio that I represent, labor unions are strong and a significant part of the community. During my August recess, I had the opportunity to visit the Sheet Metal Workers Union, Local 24, located in Columbus, Ohio. I also had the opportunity to have a labor town hall meeting where I had the opportunity to speak. Whether it's a teacher educating our children, a skilled tradesman improving our infrastructure, police and first responders keeping us safe, electric workers, those working in transportation, the Postal Service, nurses, automotive workers, local, State, Federal, and municipal government employees, these individuals assist us every day and their work improves our communities and our local economy.

It is so important for us to come here today as Members of Congress and, yes, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Let me tell you why. In our current economic climate, unions are more important than ever before. We need fair wages. We need a higher minimum wage. As our economy continues to recover from the worst recession in 80 years, many workers are experiencing decreased wages, forcing them to spend their savings or try to figure out how to make ends meet.

Yes, unions are a vital part of our society and so important as we continue to rebuild America. We must ensure that workers can retire with dignity. We must preserve the ideals and the principles of the middle class. We must make sure that we preserve the values of that civil rights movement 50 years ago and that labor movement that defines our country. When unions are strong and able to provide a voice to American workers, our communities, our States, and our Nation grows.

So tonight I say "thank you" to all my friends in labor, because you are making us have a better America.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you, Congresswoman BEATTY, for those very comprehensive, thoughtful, and insightful remarks, and for pointing out, of course, the historic connection between the struggle for civil rights here in America and the organized labor movement.

Of course we know that A. Philip Randolph was very central in the 1963 March on Washington, that great labor leader who, in 1937, formed the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. A. Philip Randolph once made this observation:

The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement traditionally has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, and the poor.

He echoed those words several decades ago, but I think they ring true

today in America in 2013, and we're thankful for that.

I've been joined by another distinguished colleague, a member of the freshman class, my colleague from the Lone Star State. It's now my honor and my privilege to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas, MARC VEASEY.

□ 2100

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, Mr. JEFFRIES, thank you very much for having us here to talk about the importance of wages and labor unions in our country. I want to thank my friend from the Empire State of New York for putting this together. This is very important and very timely as we try to pull our country out of the economic glut that it was in, as we are turning things around and we're getting job numbers back and things seem to be getting better slowly but surely. But we want to make sure, as things get better, people have a living wage, one where they can earn a good salary and have dignity and respect and be able to feed their families and take care of them.

I was listening to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) talk about his life when he was growing up and the importance that labor unions played in his life. I can tell you, when I was in high school, that I worked at a grocery store and it was a union grocery store, probably the only one in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area. I remember, we had benefits. We had time and a half. We were paid extra on holidays. We were young people, but we were allowed to make a little extra money. No one got rich off it, but at least when we were working extra on those days that people would normally have off, when we worked those extra hours during the summer and when school was out, we were compensated for it and compensated for it fairly. I am really proud of that.

Also, thinking back to my childhood, I often think about the people who would come over to our house and play dominoes and cards on Friday and Saturday night, and when the men would talk about trying to uplift themselves and getting that better job and better salary, and the companies that they often talked about.

How do you get on there? That was a saying back then: Do you have a friend that can get me on over there? When people were talking about getting on someplace that had a good salary, it was a place that had a union. It was a place that had one of our labor forces fighting for good wages, fighting so your family could have health care insurance, fighting so your family could have dental insurance, and just basic things like that that so many people take for granted every day, but it certainly helped shape the person that I am today.

A strong labor force is the key to economic security. Labor unions have historically sought to fight for work-

ers' rights—to increase wages, raise the standard of living for the middle class, ensure safe working conditions, and increase benefits for both workers and their families.

Unionized workers are more likely to receive paid leave, have employer-provided health insurance, and to participate in employer-provided pension plans. They reduce wage inequality by raising wages for low- and middle-wage workers and blue-collar workers without a college degree. And they raise wages of unionized workers by roughly 20 percent and raise compensation, including both wages and benefits, by about 28 percent.

Today, the labor movement is an important tool for African Americans and, as unions, continue to play a pivotal role in both securing legislative labor protections, such as safety and health, overtime, family and medical leave, and making sure that those rights are enforced on the job.

Labor unions are critically vital to the African American community's economic security. They have been historically and will continue to be in the future. African American union workers' earnings are nearly 24 percent higher than nonunion counterparts, and labor unions provide key bargaining power by organizing the workers to negotiate an agreement with management. This agreement covers things such as a safe place to work, decent wages, and fringe benefits.

Unionized workers are 28 percent more likely to be covered by employer-provided health insurance and are almost 54 percent more likely to have employer-provided pensions and are more likely to receive paid leave.

Fifty years ago, the March on Washington was led with a labor message to increase economic security. Today we must work together to continue that charge. Working people need the collective voice and bargaining power unions provide to keep employers from making the workplace look as it did in the past.

Unions are vital in ensuring that corporations do not focus on creating profits at the expense of their employees.

African Americans are serving in key leadership roles in the larger labor movement. Arlene Holt Baker currently serves as the AFL-CIO's executive vice president, and Lee A. Saunders serves as the president of AFSCME.

Today, labor unions are still on the forefront of efforts to ensure that the gains of the past are maintained and that those who fight for our dignity and equality continue to march on.

I encourage my colleagues in Congress to continue to honor the traditions of the Davis-Bacon wage protections that have helped cement labor agreements and other fair practices that have helped the African American community and all Americans achieve prosperity and economic security.

And as we think about what transpired last month with the March on

Washington and as we commemorated 50 years, we think about all of the great things that Dr. King did in his service to our country while God allowed him to live on this Earth, and one of my favorite quotes by Dr. King is, and I'll close out with this:

As I've said many times and believe with all my heart, the coalition that can have the greatest impact in the circle for human dignity here in America is that of the Negro and the forces of labor because their forces are so closely intertwined.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. JEFFRIES, thank you very much for this time. Let's continue to march on.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Thank you, Representative VEASEY, for your very eloquent thoughts and observations.

Of course, we understood that Dr. King was very close with organized labor, with 1199 in New York, with the retail workers, and a variety of other unions. And of course on that tragic day down in Memphis, Tennessee, when he was assassinated in 1968, he was there in support of striking Black sanitation workers, so he leaves behind a tremendous legacy. Part of that legacy, of course, includes standing up for the rights of workers to organize and fight for decent wages and health care and a pension. These are all things that Dr. King would advocate for were he around today.

We have been joined by one of the leaders of the CBC, someone who was a distinguished civil rights attorney prior to his arrival here in the Congress and a judge, and now he serves as vice chair in the Congressional Black Caucus, one of the most eloquent voices in the CBC, and I am pleased to yield the floor to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, very much, Mr. JEFFRIES, for those very kind words and thank you for yielding me time this evening to talk about this very important subject. Mr. JEFFRIES, your leadership on this issue, the issue involving strong labor unions and bringing American jobs back to American workers is so critically important, and for that we appreciate your leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the economic success of the United States is something that other nations every day try to emulate. The success of our country is not because of us here in Congress, the policymakers, but it is because of the hard work of so many Americans who helped build a strong and resilient Nation.

The role of African Americans has been particularly important over the years. The role African Americans played in the early economic success of our country is one that is not well known to some people, but it was so vital to building the world power that we are today. Even before the Civil War, Black Americans were critical in helping to build ships and other seagoing vessels that were used to move agricultural goods and equipment to the growing Nation by serving as caulkers, a job that was dominated by African Americans.

Those same shipbuilders formed the Caulker's Association back in 1838 to protect African American caulkers by negotiating for higher wages and safer working conditions from their employers. The Caulker's Association counted Frederick Douglass, who worked as a caulker in Baltimore, as one of its members.

After the end of the Civil War, 4 million former slaves were set free. African Americans who were freed found it very difficult to find work because of racial tension. They were often used by White employers as strikebreakers so that their businesses could continue to operate while White employees were on strike.

Well, as time went on, by 1902, at the turn of the century, more than 40 national unions didn't have any members, not a single one, who were African American. But as the quest for civil rights began in earnest, African Americans would soon find a home—a good home—with labor unions all across the country.

By the 1930s, the Congress of Industrial Organizations welcomed everyone and counted both Blacks and Whites as members and was among the most integrated organizations in the United States at that time. By 1945, more than half a million African Americans were members of unions that comprised the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Labor unions played a critical role—we've heard that tonight—in the civil rights movement, and served as one means by which African Americans could fight for civil rights and fair pay and safe working conditions.

Mr. Speaker, we recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. On August 28, 1963, more than 300,000 people, including myself, witnessed the call for civil and economic rights for African Americans. And on that hot day in August, we heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., deliver his historic "I Have a Dream" speech. The march was one of the largest rallies for civil rights in the history of our country, and it was organized in large part—I want to make this point—it was organized in large part by labor unions, including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the United Auto Workers.

The large role labor unions played in organizing the March on Washington cemented their place in history in providing for racial and economic equality.

In 2012, more than 14 million people were members of a labor union. But you know what? That is down from almost 18 million 30 years ago. That is very sad. Why is that?

The U.S. economy and Federal and State laws have changed since the heyday of industrial manufacturing where unions could organize with relative ease. Jobs that once required a human being are now being performed by a machine. Good paying American jobs have been relocated overseas where labor is cheap and working conditions

are not as heavily regulated. And, perhaps most damaging, have been the onslaught of disgraceful antiunion policies that we have sadly seen on television that have been signed into law in States all across the country.

For African Americans, labor unions continue to be vitally important because they are committed to maintaining the hard-fought gains of opportunity and equality. Since their inception, labor unions have helped African Americans fight for equal rights and equal pay and safe working conditions. Now, African Americans are more likely than any other group to be a union member and earn more than 30 percent more than their nonunion counterparts. Labor unions will continue to be a vital part of our economy, and we must do all that we can to ensure that the labor movement thrives with the same intensity as it did 60 years ago.

I urge my friends in labor to continue their work. It is appreciated. I recently visited the A. Philip Randolph Institute. Ms. Clayola Brown is the president. I went to their dinner just a few days ago here in Washington, and I wanted to commend them publicly for the work they are doing. I thank them for invoking the name of A. Philip Randolph who, as Mr. JEFFRIES said earlier, founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Let me also recognize the important work of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, headed by my good friend Bill Lucy, who was secretary-treasurer of AFSCME for many years. And now the Reverend Terry Melvin is carrying on the work of Bill Lucy. So I thank my friends in labor and urge them to continue the great work that they are doing in this country.

Mr. JEFFRIES, I thank you for yielding me this time and for your leadership.

□ 2115

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina for those observations and for your continued leadership here in the Congress.

I would ask the Speaker how much time is remaining on this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's been troubling to me and to many of the people that I represent back home in Brooklyn and parts of Queens has been to witness the attack on organized labor, on unions all across the country. Particularly in 2011, 2012, we witnessed it in Wisconsin, we witnessed it in Ohio, taking place in other parts of the country.

And I think that it's unfortunate that there are some forces out here in the country determined to crush the ability of the American worker to organize and fight collectively for a decent way of life.

And I think it's important to point out some of the reasons why all Americans should be thankful for unions and

for the organized labor movement. I'm just going to highlight quickly 10.

We should be thankful to organized labor because of overtime pay.

We should be thankful because of child labor laws.

We should be thankful because we now have the 40-hour workweek. We should be thankful because of workers' compensation, there to provide a safety net for folks who are injured on the job.

We should be thankful because we now have the presence, as a result, in significant part, of the organized labor movement, for unemployment insurance.

We should of course be thankful because many Americans, as a result of the efforts of organized labor, enjoy pensions, increasingly under assault, increasingly being taken away, but pensions have provided a vehicle for retirement security important to the American way of life and standard of living.

We should be thankful to organized labor because it fought for employer health care insurance coverage, something that many folks in this country still don't have, and that's one of the reasons why I strongly support the Affordable Care Act, an effort to correct that inequity that exists in America. But the fact that many employers do provide health insurance is an outgrowth that resulted from, in large measure, the effort of organized labor.

We should be thankful to organized labor because of the presence of whistleblower protection laws that give, in many instances, workers the capacity to identify something that's wrong, and to be able to move forward and reveal it, often, in some instances, when public funds are being squandered or the law is being broken; to reveal a wrong without having to have the same level of fear that retaliation would take place as a result of simply doing the right thing.

We should be thankful to organized labor because it fought for sexual harassment laws designed to allow the workforce to be an environment where men and women could exist without fear of inappropriate behavior poisoning the atmosphere. We still have a long way to go in that regard, but we've got some good laws on the books designed to protect against repulsive behavior in the workforce.

Lastly, we should be thankful, and this in no way is an exhaustive list, just a representative sample, but we should be thankful for holiday pay, thankful that organized labor fought for the opportunity for many Americans to be able to enjoy Thanksgiving or Christmas or New Year's or other holidays with their families, still have an opportunity to be compensated as a result of the ability to get certain holidays, perhaps most significantly, the Fourth of July, where we celebrate the birthday of this great Nation—off in remembrance of who we are and where we need to go in this country.

We've got a lot of reasons to be thankful to organized labor. Several of my colleagues earlier today referenced their own personal experiences as it relates to the labor movement. And as I was listening to those experiences, from Representative DONALD PAYNE and Representative MARC VEASEY, I thought about the experience of myself and my own family, growing up in Brooklyn to two parents in a working class neighborhood in Crown Heights.

My parents were married in April of 1967. At the time they got married, they were both members of the Social Service Employees Union, SSEU, which subsequently became Local 371 and DC 37. But they were both SSEU members. They got married in April of 1967.

And just a short while thereafter, the union decided to go out on strike because they were fighting for improved conditions, both for the workers and for the clients that Social Service workers served.

My parents, newlyweds at the time, confronted what I imagine was an extremely difficult decision: Do we strike with our union brothers and sisters, even though we'll have no possible means of providing for ourselves, and we don't know how long we'll be out of work, or do we cross that picket line in defiance of the collective action of the SSEU workers who went out on strike?

I'm proud that my parents joined with their union brothers and sisters and went out on strike. And as I look back at that decision, it's a lot of reason for me and for my brother and for our family to be thankful, because when I think about it, in 1973, my younger brother was born with some heart difficulty, and I'm confident, looking back on it, that it was that union-negotiated health care that helped our family get through what was otherwise a very difficult time. And my brother's alive and well and doing wonderful things as a professor at Ohio State University right now.

And then in 1980, my parents bought their first and only home in Crown Heights, the home that my brother and I grew up in, the home that they still live in back in Brooklyn right now. And it was that union-negotiated salary that helped them put together the money to make the down payment and to pay the mortgage all of these years.

Then in 1988, it was time for me to go off to college. And one of the reasons why I was able to come out of college relatively debt-free is because my mother borrowed against her union-negotiated pension in order to send her children to college.

And so the organized labor movement never has to worry about whether I'm going to stand up for them because they've always stood up for me and so many others just like me, as we heard from my colleagues in the freshman class here in the Congress. And that's simply representative of stories that so many folks across America could share.

Now, unfortunately, we know that organized labor is under attack. About

60 years ago, in 1953, about 35 percent of the American workforce had collective bargaining coverage. But as of 2010, we went from about 35 percent in the 1950s to just under 7 percent in 2010.

Where has that gotten us?

I think it's put us, not in a better position, as middle class America or working families; it's put us in a worse position.

And we saw the attacks in Wisconsin, and we saw the attacks on collective bargaining in Ohio that the folks had to roll back after the people of Ohio rose up in opposition.

I was proud, as a member of the State legislature at the time, in 2012, to support the effort to unionize by a group of very courageous cable workers in Brooklyn. Organized by the Communication Workers of America, they voted, in the face of significant pressure to the contrary, to join the union and to organize a chapter in order to fight for better wages and for stronger health care and the possibility of a better retirement.

Unfortunately, the courageous nature of those workers has not been met with a negotiated contract. The collective bargaining process has failed them to date. In fact, more than 20 of them were unceremoniously terminated earlier this year, and they were only brought back in the face of tremendous pressure by public servants at all levels of government.

But more than 18 months later, from the moment in which they voted to join the union, they still are in limbo. They have no contract, and in many ways, their lives have been turned upside down. In fact, every other worker in the company that employed these cable workers has been granted a substantial raise, while these individuals remain in limbo.

We're hopeful that we can do better, that we can bring the NLRB back to life, that it can serve as an objective entity to regulate the relationship between the workforce and employers across America.

There are a lot of employers who want to do the right thing. We should encourage that because it's good for America. And in this economic recovery that we have right now, there are a lot of companies that are doing pretty well. But there are a lot of workers who are still struggling.

One of the things that I think we have to confront here in the Congress is the fact that we have a very schizophrenic economic recovery. The stock market is way up, corporate profit's way up, the productivity of the American worker is way up, yet, unemployment remains stubbornly high, and wages remain stagnant.

How can that be when corporate America is doing so well, when investors in the stock market are doing so well, when objective measures show that the productivity of the American worker has increased significantly?

But the American worker, in terms of their ability to live and pursue the

middle class dream, has, in many ways, been left behind.

These are questions that I'm hopeful this Congress will confront. As we fight our way through sequestration and deal with the debt ceiling and the potential default, God forbid, that we have to confront next month, and we work our way, deliberately, through the question of whether a military strike in Syria is appropriate, let's not forget the fact that what makes America great is the capacity for people to work hard, to purchase a home, to raise their family in safety, in security, with the ability to live a life where they provide for themselves and for their families and are able to hand to a generation of Americans that come behind them, hopefully, an America that is more prosperous, not less prosperous.

□ 2130

We in the CBC believe that the best way to get there is not to continue to attack organized labor but to recognize what it has done for this country and to strengthen organized labor as we move forward.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues Congressmen JEFFRIES and HORSFORD for once again leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour.

African Americans have had a long history with the labor movement.

Within the labor community, African Americans joined with individuals of other races to advance efforts to create ladders to prosperity in an environment of economic and racial discrimination.

In the 1800s, such efforts led to African American union visionaries, such as Isaac Myers, who realized the collective power of African Americans within the Trade Union movement.

Under Myers, an organized group of ship caulkers purchased and operated the Chesapeake Marine Railway and Dry Dock Company in Baltimore.

Within months, the cooperative employed 300 African American caulkers and received several government contracts.

Nearly 100 years later, A. Phillip Randolph would organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Randolph was instrumental in uniting the African American Civil Rights community and the labor movement with the shared ideals of collective prosperity and economic security.

Randolph proposed a 1941 March on Washington that heavily influenced the economic and social themes echoed by Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others who were instrumental in making the 1963 March on Washington a success.

During celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington last month, we recalled the message of social and economic justice that union leaders spoke of in 1963.

Dr. King was noted for saying, "it's not enough to have a right to sit at a lunch counter if you can't afford to buy a meal."

This message echoed the call of labor leaders who asked "what good is it to be able to serve at the counter when you can't afford to buy a meal?"

Sadly, today, we must still ask this question.

As the wealth gap continues to grow, income and food insecurity remain prevalent.

The ladders to prosperity that Myers, Randolph and King spoke of are still inaccessible to many in our society—whether they are African American or another race or ethnicity.

Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle speak of disbanding labor unions and limiting collective bargaining rights.

I proudly stand with our labor allies to fight these efforts because I know weakened organized labor means continued erosion of the middle class.

The Members of the Congressional Black Caucus will continue to oppose devastating cuts to programs that will only increase economic despair.

Together we will continue to propose and support policies that create economic opportunity for all people rather than for a select few.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I join in support of my colleagues Representatives HAKEEM JEFFRIES and STEVEN HORSFORD in leading tonight's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order on the topic of Achieving Economic Security Through the Labor Movement.

I want to offer special recognition for the men and women of labor who are dedicated to the working people of the 18th Congressional District and the Greater Houston area.

I began my remarks with a special tribute to one of the greatest labor leaders that I have known and to honor the memory of Ronnie Raspberry of Houston, Texas. He passed away in April of this year, and he will be remembered as a champion of working people, one of the great community leaders in the cities of Houston and Harris in Texas.

People like Harris Country AFL-CIO Council President E. Dale Wortham, IBEW, Local 716, Secretary-Treasurer Richard C. Shaw, Steven Flores, a member of the Latino Labor Leadership Council, Tawn E. MacDonald, CWA, Local 6222, Houston Chapter and Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Zeph Capps, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and Scott Vinson, with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), and Gayle Fallon, President—Houston Federation of Teachers improve the lives of working people in the city of Houston.

This list is not complete with a special mention of Houston Educational Support Personnel Union President Wretha Thomas who works with local school bus drivers to be sure that their rights are included when district negotiate labor agreements.

I want to say a word about Clyde Fitzgerald who was appointed to the Port of Houston Authority Commission by Harris County in June 2013. I cannot complete the Us of outstanding labor leaders in Houston with mentioning Dean E. Corgey who was appointed to the Port of Houston Authority Commission in January 2013. He represents the City of Houston, and serves on the Community Relations and Pension and Benefits Committees.

John Bland with the Transport Workers Union (AFL-CIO) and leader of Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) is doing outstanding job as well.

My thanks to the unions that represents Houston's First responders. I want to recognize Houston Police Officers Union President Ray Hunt and the Immediate Past President J.J. Berry.

I count the International Association of Fire Fighters Houston Local 341 President Jeff Caynon and General President Harold Schaitberger as friends and I am like all Houstonians proud of how that serve the fire fighting community and our city as true selfless public servants.

The most important thing to remember about unions is wrapped up in the answer to one question—What does labor want? Samuel Gompers—Founder of the American Federation of Labor provided the answer:

More. We want more school houses and less jails; more books and less arsenals; more learning and less vice; more constant work and less crime; more leisure and less greed; more justice and less revenge; in fact, more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures, to make manhood more noble, womanhood more beautiful and childhood more happy and bright. These in brief are the primary demands made by the Trade Unions in the name of labor. These are the demands made by labor upon modern society and in their consideration is involved the fate of civilization. (1893)

Quote: Martin Luther King:

Unless man [and women are] . . . committed to the belief that all mankind are [our sisters and] . . . brothers, then [we] . . . labor . . . in vain and hypocritically in the vineyards of equality.

The right to earn a living wage, to work in safe conditions, to enjoy a forty hour work week, have health care, be free of discrimination, have sick leave, receive overtime pay, have a pension, be free of sexual harassment have holiday pay and enjoy countless other protections comes as direct result of what Unions mean to working men and women of this nation.

Some would have you believe that the working life of men and women is just the way it is—but in truth it is what the blood, sweat and tears of working people made it to be.

Labor Day is celebrated in recognition of the toil and trials that millions of workers endured before they earned the right to collective bargaining and with that right the power to change the fate of working people for generations. The fruits of their effort extended to those in management as well as the poorest of the poor.

Unions are the reason that the basic standard of living in the United States has risen, without the protection of unions advocating the behalf of workers those gains would be completely lost.

During the last Congress I introduced the New Jobs for America Act, that directs the Secretary of Labor to make grants to state and local governments and Indian tribes to carry out employment training programs to aid unemployed individuals in securing employment in a new area of expertise, particularly in emerging markets and industries

I also co-sponsored the American Jobs Act of 2011 which would have provided tax relief for American workers and businesses, to put workers back on the job while rebuilding and modernizing America, and to provide pathways back to work for Americans looking for jobs.

I supported the Job Opportunities Between our Shores Act or JOBS Act that Amends the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to direct the Secretary of Labor to make grants to or enter into contracts with eligible entities to carry out demonstration and pilot projects that provide

education and training programs for jobs in advanced manufacturing.

My heart where Fannie Lou Hamer's was during the civil rights movement—which was really more about economic rights to move up in our nation's socio-economic system. People were held down because they were women, black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or poor.

It is not a crime if you sweat when you work for a living and we should end the practice of dividing how workers are treated based on how they earn a living.

Fannie Lou Hamer Quotes:

To support whatever is right, and to bring in justice where we've had so much injustice.

That is the reason, we are here tonight—to bring justice where we've had so much injustice in the unwillingness of the current Republican controlled Congress to acknowledge the value of your worth to the American economy by securing for your labor a living minimum wage.

There is not America without the American worker. This is as true today as it was from the nation's earliest beginnings. At our earliest history workers were indentured servants, bonded persons, or slaves. The sweat of their brow carved a nation out of stone, swamp, and dense wilderness to become one of the greatest nation the world has ever known.

Historically, the path to the middle class for African Americans was through a union job. African-American workers are more likely to be union members because they know that acting as one is stronger than acting alone. This is the message of the civil rights movement and one that African Americans have learned well over the decades of struggle for equal rights.

Equality also requires equal access to education, employment and pay.

Coretta Scott King Quotes:

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, . . . a heart of grace and a soul generated by love.

Unionized workers promote greater income equality and prevent wage discrimination.

African American union workers earn up to \$10,000 or 31% more per year than non-union members.

In 2011, nearly 20 percent of employed African Americans worked for state, local, or federal government compared to 14.2% of Whites and 10.4 percent of Hispanics.

African Americans are less likely than Hispanics and nearly as likely as Whites to work in the private sector, not including the self-employed.

Few African Americans are self-employed—only 3.8 percent reported being self-employed in 2011—making them almost half as likely to be self-employed as Whites (7.2 percent).

Unionized workers are more likely to receive paid leave, more likely to have employer-provided health insurance, and are more likely to be in employer-provided pension plans.

The tools of unions must be part of the landscape for poor working Americans and the way forward for equity and fairness in income and the benefits of the success of our society.

Unions play a pivotal role by ensuring workers has continued educational access for their current roles as well as encourage workers to pursue higher education. Nationally, 77 percent of union employees in 2009 were covered by pension plans that provide a guaran-

teed monthly retirement income. Only 20 percent of non-union workers are covered by guaranteed (defined-benefit) pensions 20 percent.

Union workers are 53.9 percent more likely to have employer-provided pensions. These are not isolated facts, when unions are strong and able to represent the people who want to join them, these gains spread throughout the economy and the overall community.

Unions are not just good for workers. They are the best friend that a successful business can have. When workers form unions they are able to boost wages, which helps attract and retain staff for employers. When non-union companies increase their wages, it gives all workers more purchasing power.

The benefits of unions flow to the entire community with a strong middle class have sufficient tax revenues to support schools, hospitals and roads.

Today, labor unions are still on the forefront of efforts to ensure that the gains of the past are maintained and to fight for those still denied opportunity and equality

Unions are a great community and I will tell you why you should be standing up with them for your rights.

In 1968, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King went to Memphis to help sanitation workers who were fighting for their rights and dignity as people who worked hard for a living, but had no living wage.

In 1968 Memphis the color of the skin of two black workers were prevented by Jim Crow laws from finding shelter from a cold rain sought warmth in the back of a sanitation truck and were crushed to death—Martin Luther King could not keep silent nor turn away.

He was killed in Memphis at the Lorraine Motel because of the power of his message to move the hearts and minds of people so that they would fight for the rights and dignity of working people everywhere.

Talking Points:

The 2013 Federal Poverty guidelines stipulate \$23,550 for a family of four as poverty level. A \$7.25 minimum wage earns \$15,080 a year. Even at the poverty level of \$23,550 for a family of four, families are unable to make ends meet and often have to sacrifice basic necessities.

Fast food jobs used to be considered entry level jobs and often held by teenagers but now, in the new economy, the average age of a fast food worker is 28, many of which have families to support. A family living on \$15,000 a year must sacrifice many basic necessities most of us take for granted—like healthcare, transportation, and food—to say nothing of the luxuries many of us enjoy on a regular basis.

In Houston, nearly 500,000 people make poverty wages or less, or nearly one quarter of all Houstonians. The ripple effects of this amount of people given more spending power would create a tremendous amount of economic activity spurring job creation and new markets for small business. Fast food workers paid a living wage of \$15/hr. not only puts food on their tables but also puts more money into the local economy. This is an economic engine that needs to be started.

With 1.07 million restaurant and food service workers, Texas has the second-largest restaurant workforce in the nation. And it leads the nation in projected restaurant job growth between 2013 and 2023, according to the National Restaurant Association. The trade group

predicts a nearly 16 percent jump in Texas restaurant and food service jobs in 10 years.

Texas also had the nation's largest collection of minimum-wage workers last year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Texas accounted for nearly 13 percent of such workers across the country, the data showed.

My thanks to my colleagues' Representatives HAKEEM JEFFRIES and STEVEN HORSFORD for hosting this important special order.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the working people of this great Nation.

My fellow members of the Congressional Black Caucus and I are here tonight to honor the Labor Movement. We do so one week after our Nation celebrated its 119th Labor Day, and two weeks after we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. It is only appropriate that we pay homage to both tonight, as the Labor Movement and the Civil Rights Movement are sisters in the fight for dignity, freedom, and justice.

Over the years, Labor Day like many holidays has lost much of its meaning. Today, most Americans simply think of it as the end of summer, or the beginning of school. One last moment to enjoy the beach or the backyard with friends and family.

However, Labor Day is also a day during which we should honor those who paid the ultimate price to secure their children a more perfect union. At Bay View in 1885, at Haymarket in 1886, at Pullman in 1894, and in Memphis in 1968, members of the Labor Movement laid down their lives so that others might earn a living.

My own support for collective bargaining rights started early on with my father, John Conyers Sr., who worked with the United Auto Workers to integrate factories in Detroit, before the Civil Rights Movement took that battle to the buses of Alabama and the lunch counters of North Carolina. His battle—Labor's battle—was one which Dr. Martin Luther King would later recognize as the final frontier for the Civil Rights Movement. Specifically, the availability of jobs that paid a fair wage—wage upon which one could raise a family, plan for old age, and live a life beyond mere survival.

Dr. King once spoke of the Labor Movement as the "first and pioneer anti-poverty program." In his last battle, Dr. King went to Memphis, TN, the city that would claim his life, to stand with the sanitation workers of that city who sought what so many of us take for granted and so many of us only dream of: a fair day's pay, for a fair day's work.

Speaking to the sanitation workers of Memphis, he acknowledged the threats he had received, but he told them that he stood before them unafraid of any man, for he had been to the mountaintop, and even if he didn't reach the Promised Land, he knew that others would one day.

Today, we are still on that mountaintop, waiting for the Promised Land. Through the sacrifices of labor and civil rights leaders, we were led out of bondage, but we still have not reached the land promised in the American dream. It is my hope that in the 21st Century, we will see the same progress we saw through the middle part of the 20th Century. I hope to see the middle class prosper, I hope to see management work with labor to produce wonders that we could not hope to achieve without cooperation, and I hope to finally see poverty conquered through the

power of fair wages and honest toil. Together, workers can seize the dream that will slip out of any one person's grasp. Together, workers have the power to ford any river, cross any valley, and come down from the mountain where we have been for too long.

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM IN THE FACE OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENTIVOLIO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today as a former soldier. Like many of my colleagues in this room who served, I took an oath to honor and defend the Constitution of the United States against enemies both domestic and abroad. American soldiers do not swear to defend the President; they don't swear to defend Congress or political parties. They swear to defend the Constitution because this document is the bulwark that protects our freedom.

American soldiers swear to protect this document because our Founding Fathers understood that elected officials, from the President to us here in the House of Representatives, are fallible human beings. They swear to protect this document because they know that the principles it defends are true and its wisdom will last long after we're dead, just as it lasted long before we were born.

The Constitution of the United States of America is the key difference between us and other countries. It is what makes our Nation exceptional. Forged on the anvil of liberty, it has protected our Nation as we have grown from a fledgling Republic into a world superpower. The soldier that we ask to fight on our behalf knows that. We must honor our military by looking to the wisdom of the Constitution whenever we discuss sending our troops to war.

The Constitution itself makes clear that we should go to war "for the common defense." This statement, "for the common defense," was so important that it was used twice by our Founding Fathers: once in the preamble, then again in laying out the duties of Congress.

We live in a fallen world. Bad things happen to innocent people every day across the globe. Drug cartels beheading people in central America, Christians being burned alive in Nigeria, human trafficking in Asia—all of these things are heart-wrenching but none of them involve our common defense.

When I see what is happening in Syria and read the intelligence given to us, I do not see how this terrible civil war involves our common defense. I understand the horrors of the Assad regime and it sickens me. It hurts to see the pictures of dead children brutally gassed by a hateful dictator. Yet the actions our President wishes us to take would do little to prevent such a

man from continuing to murder his people, nor would help those our soldiers were sworn to protect—our constituents.

In his farewell address, George Washington said:

We may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by justice shall counsel.

There is nothing just, or in our interest, in lobbing a few bombs into a country and walking away.

The Secretary of State and the President have both stated that we need to go to war because Assad broke a treaty that the entire world supports. The U.N., they say, cannot act. Mr. Speaker, I am asking the same question my constituents are asking: Why do we spend billions of dollars supporting an international organization for peace that cannot enforce a treaty supported by the entire world? If the U.N. is so hamstrung that it cannot rally the world to stop Assad and we have to unilaterally attack Syria, what exactly is the point of having a U.N.?

The Secretary of State also had the gall to tell both the Senate and the House Foreign Relations Committees that bombing Syria is "not a war in the classic sense." Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. If another nation attacked us the way our President wants to attack Syria, everyone in this room would call it war. Let me tell you something else, Mr. Speaker: war has consequences.

The Secretary of State told the House Foreign Relations Committee that the goal of bombing Syria was to "degrade" Assad's chemical weapons and cause a stalemate in the fighting. In other words, Assad will still have the capability of using chemical weapons and could very well use them again to break the stalemate we create. Does anyone really think that we will just stop with the first round of bombings? That's not how war works. Wars are a "yes" or "no" question. You cannot, as Secretary Kerry and the White House suggest, only kind of fight a war. If we break it, we're going to be forced to fix it.

Like I said, I'm an old soldier, and old soldiers need mission plans. When I look at this mission plan, I don't see anything that suggests we will simply be able to walk away after this bombing campaign.

America's role in the world is not to play parent to the rest of the nations, chastising bad actors and picking winners and losers in battles that don't directly threaten us. The point of our Nation is to show the world the wisdom of a free and representative government.

My fellow Members of Congress, we can show that wisdom here today with this vote. We can show the world that our Nation will not plunge itself into war because our President drew an artificial red line and feels embarrassed that a dictator crossed it.

Our military does not belong to the White House. It belongs to the people. I ask you, show the power and wisdom

of our Founding Fathers when they granted the representatives of the people with the decision to go to war.

I strongly urge everyone in this room to vote "no" on attacking Syria and involving ourselves in their civil war.

God bless America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2013, AT PAGE H5408

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
August 8, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Washington, DC.

SPEAKER BOEHNER: I cannot express what a tremendous honor it has been to serve the people of Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District, and from the bottom of my heart, I am eternally grateful and I thank them for the trust they have placed in me.

I write to you today to officially let you know that, effective September 27, 2013, I will be resigning as a Member of the United States Congress.

I am honored that Governor Jindal has given me the opportunity to serve as a member of his cabinet as his Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I am eager to get started and begin reaching out to our state's veterans in order to make sure they know that our state and nation are grateful for their service.

I look forward to continue serving the great state that I love and the men and women who have given us so much.

Sincerely,
RODNEY ALEXANDER.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
August 8, 2013.

Governor BOBBY JINDAL,
State Capitol, 20th Floor, 900 North Third
Street, Baton Rouge, LA.

GOVERNOR JINDAL, I cannot express what a tremendous honor it has been to serve the people of Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District, and from the bottom of my heart, I am eternally grateful and I thank them for the trust they have placed in me.

I write to you today to officially let you know that, effective September 27, 2013, I will be resigning as a Member of the United States Congress.

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I look forward to continue serving this great state that I love and the men and women who have given us so much.

Sincerely,
RODNEY ALEXANDER.