

12th class of the Eules Citizens Police Academy. Additionally, he is a charter member of the Eules Citizens Fire Alumni Association. He has represented the City of Eules in the National League of Cities where he served on the Program Committee in 2005 and the Community Development Policy and Advocacy Committee in 2006. He has also represented the City of Eules in the Texas Municipal League, serving on the Resolutions Committee in 2004 and 2005, and the Legislative Policy Committee on General Government in 2006.

In 2003, Mayor Pro Tem Hogg was inducted into the Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD Sports Hall of Fame. The recognition was in honor of his positive impact on the community and HEB ISD students.

Mayor Pro Tem Leon Hogg is a retired businessman who has owned several businesses over his lifetime. He and his wife, Jan, have been married for over 55 years. They have 3 children, 8 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in thanking the Honorable Leon Hogg for his years of service on the Eules City Council.

INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE  
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

**HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 2, 2014*

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today we find ourselves five decades since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as well as the onset of the War on Poverty and still, race and economic empowerment remain entangled in stark and distinctive ways throughout the nation. Not only has income inequality persisted over the years, but perhaps even more daunting is the wide and growing gulf in wealth inequity between Black and White America. Wealth, that is what one owns minus what one owes, anchors families. It provides a layer of stability in times of economic distress, and serves as an intergenerational stepping stone to prosperity. It is wealth that families often rely on to provide a critical means of support for higher education, downpayments for home purchases, capital for starting a business, or direct wealth transfers to heirs via cash inheritances. So while income is vital for meeting daily needs, wealth moves families beyond survival mode and opens up critical doors of opportunity that are necessary to thrive economically over the long haul.

Historically, discriminatory practices have played a significant hand in manifesting wealth differentials within Black and White communities. Everything from housing policies and practices that made it more difficult for communities of color and particularly African Americans to gain access to homeownership as early as their White peers, to tax policy which overwhelmingly favor affluent households, much of the gap in wealth acquisition that we've witnessed over the long haul is not reflective of a natural order of responsible and irresponsible money management, but instead, is the result of centuries of policy actions that have advantaged some, while simultaneously

disadvantaging others. The fallout from these practices remain, providing perpetual advantages and disadvantages relating to wealth acquisition, transfer, and growth.

In recent years, however, the Great Recession took a heavy toll on most. But while few families escaped the sting of wealth loss following this world-wide economic disruption, even fewer were more strikingly impacted than African Americans. In fact, according to the Pew Research Center, over half of the wealth amassed among African Americans was lost in just four years as a direct result of this historic recession. After which, the already tremendous racial wealth gap actually widened. In fact, as it stands today, for every dollar in wealth held by Whites, Blacks hold a shockingly meager 5 cents.

Recent research has examined the reasons behind the widening of the racial wealth gap. After tracing the same households over 25 years, including the most recent period in which we've witnessed the widening of this gap, it was determined that primarily five factors are at play: (1) Years of homeownership; (2) Household Income; (3) Exposure to Unemployment; (4) Higher Education Acquisition; and (5) Inheritances or other sources of financial support from family or friends.

In briefly examining each of these issues we know that historical residential segregation starkly limited opportunity for home equity acquisition among African Americans. We know too, that Whites are more likely than Blacks to receive inheritances or receive large financial gifts from family members that can then be used for home downpayments, and thus, create a situation where Whites are perpetually better positioned to transition into homeownership. And finally, we know that Blacks were disproportionately impacted by subprime mortgage vehicles during the run up to the housing crisis, thus increasing their risk of foreclosure, and limiting their equity acquisition potential.

Further Blacks have historically and continue to suffer wage gaps as compared to Whites across both genders and every level of education. Blacks are also more likely to experience unemployment at some time during their working lives and when unemployed, are more likely to experience longer bouts of joblessness than their White counterparts. As a result, Blacks are more apt to tap into any available wealth reserves they may have at their disposal in order to meet survival needs during disruptions in their income stream.

While home ownership, income and unemployment greatly influenced the wealth differentials, so too did access to higher education. As we all know, post-secondary education provides a pathway to higher income, and ultimately more substantial wealth portfolios. According to this research, just as impactful as higher education is access to inheritance. Together, these five factors alone accounted for fully  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the wealth gap increase we've seen between these two populations in recent years.

In correcting this unfortunate trend, it then becomes clear, that strong policy action is needed in order to address the wide and growing wealth gap that continues to disadvantage the Black community. Moving forward, there must be a concerted emphasis on expanding access to homeownership within the Black community. While the nation and the world was rocked by the mortgage crisis that intricately interconnected with the Great Re-

cession, few were impacted more profoundly than the Black community. Moving forward we know that home ownership is still a key conduit to wealth acquisition for most Americans. As such, special efforts need to be put in place to ensure more Black families have access to this key wealth building tool.

Additionally, policies which expand employment opportunities for jobs that pay good wages are especially important to the Black community. Such a focus can help to alleviate both the persistent wage disadvantage experienced by this community as well as the lingering problem of elevated unemployment rates. Finally, making college affordable and improving elementary and secondary education so that Black children are both prepared for college and can afford to stay there through degree completion is key for providing a foundation for success that could later result in greater access to wealth building vehicles.

Beyond these measures, protecting and strengthening Social Security remains a key need for the Black community as this program is especially important to a population that is disadvantaged when it comes to access to employer provided retirement plans and is less likely than Whites to hold other assets from which they can draw upon to meet their needs in their retirement years.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, the persistent economic wealth disadvantage that continues to plague the Black community did not come about as mere accident of circumstance or broad scale pathologies as it relates to financial mismanagement. Instead, these differences came about from centuries of policy action that served in the interest of some and to the disadvantage of others. Despite this nation's bold attempt to correct this injustice decades before, the lingering effects of these policies remain. Moving forward, it is our responsibility to fulfill the promise of the historic Acts, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act, put in place fifty years prior by taking bold and substantive action today to finally make real the promise of an America that truly provides equal opportunity for all.

HONORING JUDY CREMER'S 50  
YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

**HON. ADAM KINZINGER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, May 2, 2014*

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Judy Cremer, Livingston County Circuit Clerk, and to recognize her many years of devoted service to the citizens of Livingston County and the State of Illinois.

Mrs. Cremer has worked in Livingston County government for 50 years. Judy started her service in the State Attorney's office in 1964 and later moved over to the Circuit Clerk's office where she has been a dutiful employee since 1980. She has been a constant presence in Livingston County and helped make countless improvements in the Circuit Clerk's office throughout her years of service.

I would like to thank Judy for all she has done for the residents of Livingston County. She has been a leader and an integral part of Livingston County government these past 50