Arizona—innocent—who was exposed to the measles.

I ask that we take this seriously, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee, and find a way to alert parents to make the right decision for their children. I will be continuing to work with my colleagues to change the way we communicate to send out an alert to help save those children and the others who are vulnerable to the measles outbreak.

SITES RESERVOIR PROJECT

(Mr. LaMalfa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LaMalfa. Mr. Speaker, as California enters what looks like its fourth year of a severe drought, we need to take action so that when we do finally get rain once again, we will be able to store it.

Sites Reservoir is a project that has been talked about for many, many years in northern California that would store nearly 2 million acre-feet of water in its best possible configuration. So we need to take that action. A little bit later on in this session, we will be introducing legislation to authorize that.

We also need help from the Bureau of Reclamation in putting the funding forward to finish the feasibility studies that are necessary to go from talk, from dream, to getting construction going and having the water reservoirs that we need for California to stave off drought in the future years.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Payne) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. Payne. 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 Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. Payne. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by welcoming our new members and by thanking the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, for her leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus during the 113th Congress. Thanks to her dedication and tireless work, this caucus is better positioned to address the diverse challenges of the African American community.

I also want to thank the new CBC chair, the Honorable Congressman G.K. Butterfield of North Carolina. I am confident that he will do a great job, leading this caucus with steadfast commitment to justice and to building an America that works for everyone.

Let me also thank my counterpart, the Honorable Congresswoman Robin Kelly, for joining me in leading the CBC Special Orders this year. I am truly honored to take on this new role, and I look forward to working with her as we help carry out the critical mission of the CBC.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, in the midst of the civil rights movement, hundreds of brave men and women gathered in Selma, Alabama, to begin a long, arduous march to Montgomery in support of the fundamental truth that every American, regardless of what they look like, has the right to vote.

As Dr. King said, “Selma produced a generation.”

In 1965, Selma became the focal point of voter registration efforts in the South. At the time, only 2 percent of the city’s eligible African American voters had been able to register. The impact of Selma to the Montgomery march was profound.

On March 7, 1965, 600 men and women set out from Selma following the death of 26-year-old Jimmie Lee Jackson, a deacon from Marion, Alabama, who died from gunshot wounds inflicted by a State trooper at a nonviolent demonstration.

Their was a peaceful, nonviolent march, but it was met with fierce brutality. It would take the marchers two more attempts to arrive at Montgomery; but on March 25, after a 12-day journey, they arrived at the end of the recession, people still struggle to find work, and the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow. For African Americans, this situation is severe, given the disproportionate effect of unemployment on our communities.

At the same time, there remains widespread poverty, a defining challenge of our time. This persistent economic inequality threatens to undercut the gains that African American communities have made, and it undermines the idea of economic mobility, the idea that if you work hard in this country and have ambition, you can get ahead. The economic crisis is not only facing African American communities.

The CBC also remains committed to fighting against efforts to dismantle the social safety net. We are determined to restore section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and to make sure everyone, regardless of what they look like or where they come from, has equal access to the polls and resolve to ensure that increasing diversity in this Nation is reflected in American corporations.

Together, these policies will bring us closer as a nation while we are empowering the communities of African Americans, and they will benefit from the full equality and live the American Dream. There is no doubt that we are in difficult times in this Nation.

Injustices are widespread and threaten some of our most fundamental rights, but we will find no answers in apathy, no comfort in complacency. As we always have, we will continue the march for progress, for freedom, for justice, and for equality for all.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege now that I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois, Ms. Robin Kelly.

Ms. Kelly of Illinois. Thank you, my friend from New Jersey. It is an honor to host with you this year. I am excited about the work ahead for the CBC in the 114th Congress. I also want to acknowledge the great job that Congressman Horsford and Congressman Jeffries did in hosting the Special Order hour in the 113th Congress. I also want to honor our past chair, Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, for all of her great work.

Discussing 50 years from Selma, where we were, where we are, and where we are headed, I expect this to be very stimulating, frustrating, and rewarding all at the same time. It remains that we have a lot of work to do.

Mr. Payne. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, it is my honor and privilege for the first time in the 114th Congress to have the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, G.K. Butterfield, address us, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. Butterfield. I thank the gentleman for yielding.
The Congressional Black Caucus is delighted to come to the floor this evening to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

At the end of slavery, Mr. Speaker, in 1865, which was 150 years ago, the State of North Carolina had a slave population of 331,000 slaves. After the passage of the 13th Amendment and ratification of it by 27 States, these slaves became free. They became American citizens, and males 21 years old or older would soon be entitled to vote.

Among those 331,000 slaves gaining freedom, 128,000 of them resided in my congressional district. In some of the counties, their former population exceeded the white population.

In 1870, African American citizens gained the right to vote by the enactment of the 15th Amendment. For the next 30 years, Mr. Speaker, African American men voted in large numbers and became a political force in State politics.

Four African Americans were elected to Congress in North Carolina, eight in South Carolina, three in Alabama, one each in Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Virginia, and Louisiana. Many more were elected to State and local office.

In 1900, after KKK violence and lynching had not deterred Black political participation, most Southern States passed disfranchisement laws requiring a literacy test and the payment of a poll tax. These laws had the intent and effect of disenfranchising Black people from voting, and it worked. For the next half century, African Americans were effectively denied the right to vote with a few exceptions.

Following his 1964 acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., approached President Lyndon Johnson about advocating for a strong voting rights law that would enforce the 15th Amendment. President Johnson was uncomfortable in advancing this cause. Dr. King persuaded thousands of Black people to march to demand a voting rights law.

Mr. PAYNE, thank you very much for yielding to me. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I opened up Black History Month with a speech at Congress, where I lineaged that the poem Street in Columbia, South Carolina. They had an interesting topic for me to develop. It was all about remembering our past and preparing for the future.

Chairman BUTTERFIELD has talked a little bit about the past that many of us remember, but 50 years after Selma, we must turn to the question that Martin Luther King, Jr., asked in one of his great books: Where do we go from here, chaos or community?

Statistics show that there are nearly 500 counties and thousands of communities in the United States that are classified by the United States Census Bureau as persistent poverty areas. They are so defined because 20 percent or more of their populations have lived below the poverty level for the past 30 years or more.

They are diverse, including Caucasian communities in States like West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; Native American communities in States like South Dakota, Alaska, and Oklahoma; Latino communities in States like New Mexico and Texas; and African American communities in States like South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. They are urban communities in States like New York and heartland communities in States like Missouri. 139 of these counties are represented by Democrats; 331 of these counties are represented in this body by Republicans; and of these counties are split between the two parties. Combating persistent poverty should matter to all of us, regardless of party, geography, or race.

In early 2009, when we were putting together the Recovery Act, I proposed language to require that at least 10 percent of funds in three rural development accounts be directed to efforts in these persistent-poverty counties. This requirement was enacted into law. In light of the definition of persistent-poverty counties as having at least 20 percent poverty rates over 30 years, the proviso became known as the 10–20–30 initiative.

This initiative bore dividends as economic development projects proliferated in persistent poverty communities across the country. Using the 10–20–30 formula, the Recovery Act funded 4,855 projects in persistent-poverty counties, totaling nearly $1.7 billion. I saw firsthand the positive effects of these projects in my district.
We were able to undertake projects to create jobs that would have otherwise languished. Among those investments was a $5.8 million grant and a $2 million loan to construct 51 miles of water lines in the little community of Brittlebank in Marion County, South Carolina. There are many other success stories.

In Lowndes County, Mississippi, $17.5 million was spent to install a water line, elevated tank, and two wastewater pump stations, providing potable water to Mississippians and creating badly needed construction jobs.

The Wellborn Special Utility District in Brazos County, Texas, received a $538,000 loan to construct more than 9 miles of new water distribution lines and connect over 60 households to a new water system.

In 2011, I joined with our former Republican colleague, Representative Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri, to introduce an amendment to the continuing resolution that would have continued 10-20-30 for rural development and expanded it to 11 additional accounts throughout the Federal Government affecting economic development, education, job training, health, justice, the environment, and more.

I want to make one thing clear about the 10-20-30 approach. It does not—repeat, it does not—add one dime to the deficit. It simply targets resources from funds already authorized or appropriated.

Over the past 30 years, the national economy has risen and fallen multiple times. During each economic downturn, while we have been rightly focused on getting the economy as a whole back on track, we have not given adequate attention to these communities that are suffering from chronic distress and Depression-era levels of joblessness.

As a result, they have suffered even in good economic times. The 10-20-30 approach would provide a mechanism to address this deprivation in times of want and in times of plenty, in times of Federal investment and in times of fiscal austerity.

Last year, I wrote an essay on 10-20-30 which was published in the Harvard Journal on Legislation. I discussed the history of our Nation’s efforts to address chronic poverty and more fully laid out the case for broadly implementing 10-20-30 in a bipartisan fashion.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin to put our 2016 budget together, I look forward to working with all Members in this body on both sides of the aisle irrespective of what State or county you may represent. I look forward to working together so that we can make a real productive legacy for Selma and we can move forward and answer Dr. King’s question “Chaos or community?” with a resounding: We are building communities.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CLYBURN. As in the past, the Congressional Black Caucus will work to continue to reduce the epidemic of poverty in this country. When over 45 million Americans live below the poverty line, we are failing as a nation. As Congressman BUTTERFIELD said earlier this month, the CBC will advocate the Clyburn 10-20-30 plan, which redirects at least 10 percent of Federal investment and at least 20 percent of the funds in its discretionary budget to communities where at least 20 percent of the population has lived below the poverty line for the past 30 years. These are the issues that we will continue to work on with our dear friend and colleague, Mr. RANGEL.

As a kid who grew up on the streets of Lenox Avenue and dropped out of high school, I didn’t have the benefit of having anything to attach a dream to that would allow me to believe that one day I could be sitting in the United States House of Representatives. But after returning from the war in Korea and after being the beneficiary of the GI Bill and graduating from law school, I was able to see and hear atrocities that have been committed on Black folks in this country the likes of which I had not seen except during wartime. And even though my mother’s family came from Virginia, in the city of New York even today I don’t ever remember meeting any White people from the South. I don’t know what that is. Perhaps Congressman BUTTERFIELD may be able to do some historical research about why they had said they didn’t come to New York City, where racism had a sugar coating to it. They didn’t use dogs and bombs and things of that nature. But I recall so vividly seeing people like Andy Young and especially our dear friend and colleague, JOHN LEWIS, be prepared to put their lives on the line for our country, not for themselves.

In Korea and in most wars, people fight to stay alive and they don’t voluntarily put their life on the line, as JOHN LEWIS and others have done. But what happened was, when they had the first Selma march, what we refer to as Bloody Sunday, years before our beloved Congresswoman was born, I saw something that really affected me as an American rather than as a human being. And then they had the second march from Selma to Montgomery and Dr. King pulled that back, and then we had the plea for people from all over the country to come down for the third one and it was a different story and wasn’t thinking about going to Selma to do 54 miles, but the inspiration to see people that had been prepared to put their life on the line for me and others like me could not allow me to return to New York.

It is very interesting that I have to admit publicly that when I heard the voice of Lyndon Johnson coming across on radio and television saying, “We can’t stop the bully,” I kind of thought, TERRI, that those were our words. And if a White person was to say it, I never expected to find that accent of the very people that sounded as though they were part of a conspiracy to keep children of slaves from assimilating into the constitutional beliefs that we had since learned to live by and enjoy and hope for.

What an historic moment that was. What a revolutionary period that was, because as we review that and look at the picture “Selma,” we wonder where did all of the people that represented this hatred go, the people who stood in the way of people registering voters; the people who took advantage of the situation because of their complexion they were superior; the people that belonged to the Ku Klux Klan; the people who used religion as a sword instead of a shield? Did they disappear? What happened to the so-called Dixiecrats?

But then I am reminded that as a result of the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act that they didn’t go very far, that they threw down their party label but they stayed in the same places, and many of them are doing the same thing—trying to continue to prevent people of color from enjoying their full constitutional voting rights.

Then when I was honored enough to come down here in 1971 with half a dozen Congressional Black Caucus members, nine, who joined with four of us who had decided to form the Congressional Black Caucus, you could not believe, Congressman PAYNE, how it was never our dream that that small group would go from 13 to 26 to 40 to 46 to 53 and reach that great impact on our policy and on our Nation, a group that had no intention of doing anything except to introduce, create, and support policies that could make this great country even stronger for all of us. And true, we have a lot of obstacles to overcome, but I don’t think any group of people have been as successful as we have in coming from the pits of slavery in such a short period of time as we are now, and to see how much more work we have to do so that one day our children and our grandchildren will say: Why did they have to have a Congressional Black Caucus? Why wasn’t it just a Democratic caucus? Why did we need it? 2000

Well, because of the intellect of the individual members of the Black Caucus, like the rest of the Congress, that come from all walks of life and they got here to make this a better country, a more effective Congress, soon and very soon, we may hear those words: Why were we needed?
Until we accomplish these lofty goals, thank God that we have had it. I think that the Democrats appreciate the work that we are trying to do, and one day, as so many people who got rid of their sheets, their children and their grandparents would have said, we only were trying to eliminate the pain for all people, regardless of color, to make the red, white, and blue, rather than just whether you are Black or White, become the theme that the fathers of this Constitution should have been living for.

There is no question in my mind that the things we stand for really and what the country is committed to do, and I am so proud of these last couple of years, that there is not a group of people I would rather spend my time with than with my friends and my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. PAYNE. I thank the gentleman from New York. His kind thoughts and perspective is always, always needed in this House.

Now, I have the honor and the privilege of yielding to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), who represents the city, the town, that is on everybody’s breath over the last couple of months.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the CBC for this Special Order hour, and I commend my colleagues from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and elsewhere (from Illinois Ms. KELLY) for choosing such a great topic for tonight’s Special Order hour.

Selma, Lord, Selma. I have the great pleasure of standing before you not only as a Representative who represents the great city of Selma but as a native of Selma, Alabama, and a lifelong member of the historic Brown Chapel AME Church.

I know that the journey I now take, the journey that many others who are here this day, have only made possible because of the courage, fortitude, and determination of those brave men and women on that bridge, Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965.

We who have the privilege and honor of taking this journey must ask ourselves: What will we do to extend the legacy? What will we do to protect the legacy?

Selma is the soul of America. It is the place where the struggle for civil rights and voting rights began, the epicenter, if you will, of the voting rights movement.

It deserves to be more than just a footnote in the history books. It deserves to take up chapters in the history books, the tactical and strategic voice of Martin Luther King and those brave men and women of SCLC and SNCC that had the fortitude and had the intellect to see this as a strategy, to know that they were speaking not only for themselves and their children, but for future generations.

Only a true visionary could defeat such opposition with little more than a dream, and Dr. King held so tightly to his that it forced our country to become a more equal and just nation.

Some want to forget the painful past. I know many in my district and many in my city would like to forget our painful past, but we cannot turn the pages as if certain chapters were never written; nor can we celebrate how far we have come without first acknowledging where we have been. Bloody Sunday forced America to confront its own inhumanity. Our painful past has ushered in a different world. If we don’t write our own history, others will tell it for us, and they may not be so kind, they may not tell our history the way we would tell our history.

My father grew up in Selma, as did I, and the Selma I grew up in was very, very different than the Selma of my father’s childhood. There has been progress. My father went to segregated schools in Selma. My father drank from colored only fountains in Selma. My father never got the chance to vote, though she tried to register several times.

The Selma that I grew up in had an integrated public high school, a public high school that was 55 percent African American and 45 percent White. Yes, across town, there was an all-White private school.

I want you to know that the Selma I grew up in, in the seventies and eighties, it was as the first Black valedictorian of Selma High School. I know that Selma and the journey that we all take now because of Selma was only made possible because of the bravery of others.

As I stood up for my speech as a valedictorian in 1982 at Selma High School, I remember standing up and saying: "Maybe one day I could join the likes of a Charlie Rangel and a John Lewis, in the House of Congress."

I said it as a pious, overly confident teenager probably, but I said it with every vigor because I believed in my heart that I could be and do anything. Why? Because the people of that community nurtured me. Black and White, my teachers, my Girl Scout troop leaders, my Sunday school teachers.

Yes, I had proud parents who were educators, educated at Alabama State University. And of their education at this wonderful quality institution of higher learning, I had a chance to go to Princeton—but I had more than that. I had an obligation to give back, to make sure that others had that opportunity to walk through those same doors. It wasn't enough to be the first.

In fact, I was most proud 5 years after I graduated from Princeton that April Williams from Selma High School got to go to Princeton. I must have done something right.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 would have never been possible had it not been for the intellect, the mind of these wonderful leaders, some known. All of us know about the contributions of our colleague, John Lewis; all of us know about the contributions of the SCLC, Andy Young, and Martin Luther King.

Some unknown, like my sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Richie Jean Jackson, she was featured in the movie “Selma” because it was her home, the home that she shared with Dr. Jackson, the first Black dentist in Selma, that housed a Dr. King and Andrew Young and all those leaders every time they came to Selma because they couldn’t stay at the all-White hotel.

Mrs. Jackson was my sixth grade teacher. Mrs. Jackson did not live to see the movie “Selma,” but I am proud that this body is seeking to provide a Congressional Gold Medal to the foot soldiers of the movement, so that the Richie Jacksons, Mrs. Jacksons of the world, who had the bravery to go and stand that bridge on Bloody Sunday or Turnaround Tuesday or the ultimate final march from Selma to Montgomery, that they are acknowledged by this Nation for the sacrifices that they made.

In closing, I want to remind my colleagues of my guest at the State of the Union, January 20, 2015. My special guest was the 103-year-old Amelia Boynton.

Amelia Boynton was characterized in the film “Selma” as the proud African American woman who told Coretta Scott King:

You are prepared. You are the descendants of kings and queens. Your heritage is one that survived slave ships. You are prepared.

Amelia Boynton is known for her bravery that Bloody Sunday when she was bludgeoned, but she came back 2 days later on Turnaround Tuesday and continued to fight in Selma long after that march from Selma to Montgomery.

She honored us with her presence, and as person after person came up to her and kissed her on the cheek and said, “Miss Boynton, I stand on your shoulders today, thank you.” Miss Boynton said something very poignant. She said, “Everybody keeps talking about being on my shoulders. I tell them, Get off my shoulders, do your own work, there is plenty of work to be done.” I want to remind my colleagues that there is plenty of work for us still to do.

I want to honor the legacy of Amelia Boynton, F.D. Reese, John Lewis, and so many; but we cannot honor their legacy without acknowledging that the Voting Rights Act of 1965, major sections of it, have been invalidated.

We owe it to that legacy, the legacy and memory of those who fought so valiantly, that this body should once again work together to make sure that the Federal protections are there because, as we know, progress is always elusive, all battles become new again, and there is a renewed assault on voting.
Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson Lee).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important evening. I thank my colleagues, both Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey and Ms. KELLY, for, first of all, taking up a very important challenge of being able to lead the members of the Congressional Black Caucus through this period of challenge to America.

I am reflective of the number of Members who have had the chance to convey their thoughts, and each one I thank personally: our chairman, Mr. CLYBURN, and his internal knowledge from his historic constituency, and Mr. PAYNE for living and understanding the civil rights journey and conveying it in his legislative journey; Mr. Rangel for his service to this Nation as a Korean war vet and then coming home to be a vet of the civil rights effort; then, of course, the holder of the seat who represents Selma for her life story.

Today, I rise to ask the question. What is our moral standard? And, following the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, why can we wait?

This is a clarion call to my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—that, in fact, this year—of all years—calls for us to act. It calls for us to be able to understand why the Nation cannot wait; who is going to lift up the moral standard.

The walk from Selma to Montgomery turned into Bloody Sunday. It was where a young man by the name of John Lewis stood bravely alongside the congressman who lived and died so that some of us could have these opportunities to serve in the Congress of the United States of America. That is where we were.

We have progressed. We have more Members of Congress, but in a true sense, it is back to the future because we have seen the evisceration of section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which through emasculated section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, meaning you don’t have any States or any territories under section 4 so you cannot preclear them under section 5. We are now back to a point wherein we have to find a way to revitalize and to reinstate section 4 of the Voting Rights Act.

I am sorry that the time has run out, but I do want to say this: if we only the Members of Congress could get a Voting Rights Act passed, one would think that with 48 we can get it reinstated.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus,
to recognize the lasting legacy of the Selma marches. 50 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, Congressman John Lewis, and a number of other fearless fighters, led the historic marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in protest of discriminatory voting laws.

In the years prior to the Selma marches, less than 1% of the black voting age population was registered to vote in Dallas County, where Selma is located. However, more than 80% of Dallas County blacks lived below the poverty line. Various efforts to get blacks in Dallas County registered to vote were met with physical violence and economic intimidation. But with the local leadership of the Dallas County Voters League, and the help of two national organizations, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Non-violence Coordinating Committee, the Selma marches were born.

During the first march from Selma to Montgomery, in what would become known as "Bloody Sunday," the nation watched in horror as African Americans were brutally beaten by police officers, attacked by dogs, and sprayed by fire hoses. Their courage, in the face of dehumanizing treatment from law enforcement, thrust the issue of segregation and race relations in the Deep South into the national consciousness. It led to President Lyndon B. Johnson convening a joint session of Congress what would become the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the most important piece of civil rights legislation in the history of this country.

50 years later, the images of "Bloody Sunday" are permanently etched into our Nation's history as a deep and painful reminder of the progress still left to achieve. While the discriminatory voting laws of the 1960s are no longer with us, the problems they pose still exist. Today, we find threats to their basic rights, and there are certainly injustices. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King—and they still ring true today when I think about his words—"injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." When I reflect on my recent trip to Ferguson—where I witnessed firsthand—it seems that we are still re-engaging in our unfortunate history and ongoing challenges with voting rights, voter registration, and injustices associated with new vitality and vigor.

Mr. Speaker, I will stand with my colleagues—those who are here, along with Congressman John Lewis and Congresswoman Terri Sewell—when we march across that bridge and when we stand together to fix voting rights. How long must we wait, Mr. Speaker? How long will it take?

Let me end with these words: it is on all of us here in this body to march for voting rights and to march for having voting rights. To vote is a basic right, a fundamental right, to be able to cast your ballot for the person that you want to represent you. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, Congresswoman Robin Kelly.

Ms. Kelly of Illinois. I would like to thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her remarks. As we come to a close, I thank the distinguished gentleman from the Garden State—my good friend, Representative Donald Payne—for his tremendous leadership and for leading this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, in our hour of power, we have had the opportunity to speak directly to the American people. This is a privilege that I take seriously and responsibly. I think that the CBC cherishes a special place in the hearts of Congressmen and Congresswoman.

Tonight, we strengthen our future by embracing our past. 2015 represents a critical juncture in the advancement of our Nation. Fifty years after the Selma to Montgomery march there are strengthened civil rights and improved access to the ballot. Together, we find ourselves with equally important ground to cover in promoting civil rights, in reducing economic and health disparities, and in strengthening voter rights protection.

As a legislative body, we have made progress, but as Representatives and as men and women who love this country, our work continues. As we look back, we remember the courage we have crossed, by the trails we have blazed, and by the future ahead of us that we envision.

I want to thank the entire Congressional Black Caucus, especially my fellow congressional co-chair, the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman Payne.

Fifty years after Selma, the CBC remembers that it exists to promote the public welfare through legislation that meets the needs of millions of neglected citizens. It is that spirit that guides us and many others in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, speakers of men, women, and children who need help moving forward, we march. When we see obstruction in our path to creating a more perfect Union, we respond. Again, I thank my colleagues.

Mrs. Beatty. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to allow my colleagues—Congresswoman Yvette Clarke from Brooklyn, who is also the vice president of the Congressional Black Caucus, to share her thoughts with us.

Ms. Clarke of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus for hosting this evening's Special Order and this extension this evening.

Today I proudly rise to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic events of the nonviolent protests that took place in Selma, Alabama, and to recognize their importance in igniting and fueling the civil rights movement that brought an end to the practice of Jim Crow racial segregation by law in America and voting rights legislation that guaranteed every American citizen the right to vote.

It is a privilege to represent the New York 13th District of New York. It is an honor to contribute to the historic people of conscience that walked the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965, known as Bloody Sunday. The march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 included more than 600 women and men who walked from the historic Brown Chapel AME Church to the State capital of Alabama.

They marched for the right to vote, the freedom and human dignity that had been denied to them. They marched to end the evil practice of segregation and the violent terror to which they were subjected on an everyday basis, to remove from our society...