

What a great champion for workers in North America. I assure Leo that we are going to carry on his work.

God bless him.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR DEFENSE MANUFACTURING AND MACHINING SITE VISIT

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I had the privilege of returning to Blairsville, Pennsylvania, and the National Center for Defense Manufacturing and Machining site in my district.

Founded in 2003, NCDMM is committed to driving innovation throughout the defense manufacturing industry. They are helping revitalize our Nation's manufacturing industry by implementing solutions, cutting commercial and defense customer costs, increasing productivity, improving quality, decreasing lead times, and reducing waste. NCDMM works to leverage the expertise of their team to deliver innovative manufacturing solutions that produce real results.

My recent visit highlighted their efforts to create a 2-year curriculum, partnering with local institutions to train veterans for additive manufacturing placement following their service. This project addresses two critical issues: opportunities for veterans and strategic workforce shortages.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the leadership and the work of the dedicated staff at the NCDMM site. I wish them all the best as they continue to bring innovation and efficiency to our Nation's manufacturing industries.

HONORING OKLAHOMA ASTRONAUT JOHN HERRINGTON

(Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor another Oklahoma trailblazer in space.

Astronaut John Herrington is a retired United States naval aviator and former NASA astronaut. Born in Wetumka, Oklahoma, Herrington made history in 2002 as the first Native American to fly in space.

A citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Herrington earned a bachelor's of science degree in applied mathematics from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, a master's of science degree in aeronautical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School, and a Ph.D. from the University of Idaho.

As a mission specialist on the STS-113 Endeavour mission, it was the 11th American assembly mission to the International Space Station. Dr. Herrington spent more than 330 hours in space and conducted three space walks, totaling nearly 20 hours.

Dr. Herrington then served as a capsule communicator, supporting shuttle and space station training and operations, and he was later chosen to become the chief engineer for safety and mission assurance at the Johnson Space Center.

I am proud of Dr. Herrington's achievements and barriers broken for Tribal citizens in space exploration.

HONORING WORLD WAR II VETERAN RANDALL EDWARDS

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Randall Edwards, a veteran of World War II, who this month turns 102 years old.

Edwards enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1935, at 18 years old, and served as a first class radioman for the USS *Canoopus* in the Philippines. He then joined Allied ground forces, where he and his unit were captured and sent to a Japanese prison camp.

He spent 3 years as a prisoner of war, and despite being forced to work 7 days a week in appalling conditions and becoming nearly deaf due to abuse, he never allowed his spirit to be broken. In fact, after the war, he reenlisted in the Navy and was sent to Japan to serve in the U.S. occupying force. Edwards later became a national service officer for the American Ex-Prisoners of War organization, helping other veterans reintegrate.

Warrant Officer Edwards survived some of the worst of World War II, and he persevered through captivity and returned to bring democracy to his captors. Mr. Edwards represents the greatest of our Greatest Generation, and on behalf of a grateful nation, I say thank you.

COMING TO AMERICA

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the remarks made this weekend about the squad "going back to where they came from," it reminded me of some lyrics by Neil Diamond.

Far,
We've been traveling far,
Without a home,
But not without a star.
Free,
Only want to be free,
We huddle close,
Hang on to a dream.
On the boats and on the planes,
They're coming to America.
Never looking back again,
They're coming to America.

And it ends with:

They're coming to America.
They're coming to America.
They're coming to America.
They're coming to America.

Today, today, today, today, today.

My country 'tis of thee,

Today,

Sweet land of liberty,

Today,

Of thee I sing,

Today,

Of thee I sing,

Today.

That is the America that we know, and we are all here contributing to what makes America America, and I thank the body for listening.

THANKING HOUSTON FOR OPENING ITS DOORS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, on this past Saturday, Houstonians gathered together at the Living Water International Apostolic Ministries in Houston with Pastor Stearns and about 10 other churches. I convened the press conference in the warehouse of this church filled with goods and necessities to respond to the most objectionable national order that I have ever heard from any President of the United States: to manipulate law enforcement and calling for national predawn raids across America.

Now, no one in America wants open borders, and Democrats do not, but we do believe in due process, the Constitution, and the justness of the phraseology on the Statue of Liberty to bring our forlorn and worn to this country.

We are the greatest experiment, and people in my constituency were frightened. I came home to say we must do something about it.

And how powerful it was for the churches in our community to say: We will open our doors to those who are frightened about the fact that they will be separated from their children or their children separated from them.

What a horrible image, internationally; how the United Nations has condemned it.

And so on that day, we opened the churches of Houston for those migrants who were frightened by these predawn raids. One even occurred today.

I finish my remarks by saying the 16th President of the United States really said what America is all about: "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

That is Abraham Lincoln. That is who we are.

I thank Houston for opening its doors for those who are in fear.

REFLECTING ON PRIORITIES
FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAYNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague and coanchor for the Congressional Black Caucus, Delegate STACEY PLASKETT, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus for this Special Order hour where we can reflect on the priorities facing the American public.

This week, this body will be voting on the topic of raising the minimum wage and giving Americans a well-deserved raise and the impact that that would have not only on the workforce at large but, specifically, for Black workers and families across the United States.

Why is this so important as we touch on the issues of the day? According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is no place in America where a full-time worker making the current minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

Additionally, many working people, particularly working women and Black workers, are still facing persistent and even, in some cases, worsening wage gaps since 2000. The wage gap between Black and White workers has grown significantly.

So for this hour, Mr. Speaker, we will discuss the issues affecting American workers and why it is imperative that this House take up the WAGE Act that we will be considering later this week.

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I am honored to have with us here this evening several members of the Congressional Black Caucus who will share their thoughts, concerns, and priorities for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the issue of stagnant wages for African Americans and, as a result, the lack of economic opportunities. The Federal current minimum wage is \$7.25, not enough to sustain an individual's necessary expenses, let alone for those who are an entire American family.

In fact, the purchasing power of the current minimum wage has gradually eroded over the past decade. Since this minimum wage was raised to \$7.25, its purchasing power has declined by 17 percent due to inflation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a staggering thought: A person working 40 hours a week at the current Federal minimum wage earns a gross income of \$15,000 per year before taxes. Even families working full-time earning the Federal minimum wage are below the Federal poverty level.

This is why we need to pass the Raise the Wage Act. Under H.R. 582, 1.3 mil-

lion Americans will be lifted out of poverty. This includes 600,000 children who will finally have a shot at a better life simply because of raising the minimum wage.

The Raise the Wage Act helps women and workers of color the most since women are nearly two-thirds of the American workforce who earn the Federal minimum wage or just above that. In Michigan's 14th District, up to 61,000 women and over 76,000 Black and Hispanic workers in my district alone will receive a wage increase. This bill is way overdue.

Mr. Speaker, let me reference a letter from my colleague, the Honorable EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas: "We have seen a recent epidemic of the working poor, hardworking Americans who each day are forced to choose between food, shelter, clothing, or healthcare for themselves and their families. In the past 40 years, minimum wage increases have not kept pace," causing many families to struggle.

The Honorable EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON says that the current minimum wage in her home State of Texas "is only \$7.25 an hour and even lower for workers in the service industry who instead rely heavily on customer tips for take-home pay. The African American community, which makes up a significant portion of the minimum wage workforce, is disproportionately affected by lower wages.

"According to the Economic Policy Institute, 38.1 percent of all Black workers would receive higher pay as a result of an increased wage, therefore opening up new economic opportunities.

"We must act quickly to ensure that any American willing to work 40 hours a week can afford basic necessities."

That is why, Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON says, she is proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 582, the Raise the Wage Act. The bill will lift millions of Americans out of poverty by gradually increasing the minimum wage over a period of 5 years to \$15.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be on the Record and join my colleague, Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, to say: "The growing racial wealth gap in our country can no longer go unnoticed. We now have an opportunity to take concrete steps to help close the gap."

This bill is way overdue.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for bringing forward her commitment and leadership on these important issues and sharing her support for the Raise the Wage Act, which this body will be considering later this week.

Just before we started this Special Order hour, one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle came up and talked about the negative impact of raising the Federal minimum wage. It is so interesting that CEOs for the 350 largest U.S. companies on average were paid \$18.9 million in 2017, which is a 17 percent increase from the previous

year. Meanwhile, wages for the average U.S. worker grew by 0.2 percent during that time.

How is it okay that CEO pay can go up 17 percent, and the average CEO for the 350 largest U.S. companies can, on average, be paid \$19 million, and we can't afford to give America a raise?

On average, controlling for age, gender, and education, Black workers are paid 16.2 percent less than White workers. According to the Census Bureau—which is why it is so important for people to participate in the Census, so that we have this vital data—in 2016, the average household income for a White family was \$80,720. For a Black family, that number sat at \$38,555, less than half of what an average White family took home.

That affects every aspect of that family's life, from their ability to afford housing to healthcare to being able to put food on the table and put gas in the car so that they can make it to their work.

We believe that one job should be enough and that people should be able to have a livable wage to take care of themselves and their families.

I urge my colleagues throughout this body, particularly those on the other side, that if they are going to come to this floor this week and oppose giving Americans a raise, then they have to be able to explain why they support CEO pay increasing more than 17 percent in one given year while U.S. worker wages grew at less than 0.2 percent during that same time.

Workers deserve a wage increase. Their wages have been stagnant for far too long. That is why we are encouraging this body to bring up the Raise the Wage Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), who is my good friend. He is a gentleman with whom I have the honor of serving on the Ways and Means Committee. The Representative likes to talk about the history of his great city, and I know he is here to also talk about why the constituents of that great city deserve a wage increase.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman and the coleader for leading this event for the Congressional Black Caucus under the leadership of Chairwoman KAREN BASS. The Congressional Black Caucus is the conscience of this Congress.

I don't know if you know, and I am constantly reminding people, Mr. Speaker, that the President, in August 2016, came to Philadelphia and said, "What the hell do you have to lose?" That is what he said.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus in calling for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. I am pleased that the Democratic leadership plans to put the Raise the Wage Act up for a vote in the House.

A raise for these workers is long overdue. Congress has not raised the national minimum wage in 10 years.