

African Americans: 2,468 per 100,000
 Latinos: 1,038 per 100,000
 Whites: 409 per 100,000

African American offenders receive sentences that are 10 percent longer than white offenders for the same crimes and are 21 percent more likely to receive mandatory-minimum sentences than white defendants according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Looking at males aged 25–29 and by race, you can see what is going on even clearer:

For White males ages 25–29: 1,685 per 100,000.

For Latino males ages 25–29: 3,912 per 100,000.

For African American males ages 25–29: 11,695 per 100,000. (That's 11.7 percent of Black men in their late 20s.)

Overall, one in 50 murders is ruled justified—but when the killer is white and the victim is a black man, the figure climbs to one in six.

A handgun homicide is nine times more likely to be found justified—when the killer is white and the victim is a black man.

Handgun killings with a white shooter and a black male victim exhibit an even more dramatic bias: one in four is found justified.

But then again, we knew these inequities existed because for many Black Americans, these disparities are just a part of daily life.

This is why, in 1989, my predecessor as the most senior African American on this September Judiciary Committee, the honorable John Conyers, a past Chairman of this Committee introduced H.R. 40, legislation that would establish a commission to study and develop proposals attendant to reparations.

Though many thought it a lost cause, John Conyers believed that a day would come when our nation would need to account for the brutal mistreatment of African-Americans during chattel slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the enduring structural racism endemic to our society.

I would like to take this moment to personally thank the estimable John Conyers for his work on this legislation for the last thirty years.

With the rise and normalization of white supremacist expression during the Trump administration, the discussion of H.R. 40 and the concept of restorative justice have gained more urgency, garnering the attention of mainstream commentator, and illustrating the need for a national reckoning.

H.R. 40 is intended to create the framework for a national discussion on the enduring impact of slavery and its complex legacy to begin that necessary process of atonement.

The designation of this legislation as H.R. 40 is intended to memorialize the promise made by General William T. Sherman, in his 1865 Special Field Order No. 15, to redistribute 400,000 acres of formerly Confederate owned coastal land in South Carolina and Florida, subdivided into 40 acre plots.

Since its introduction, H.R. 40 has acted to spur some governmental acknowledgement of the sin of slavery, but most often the response has taken the form of an apology.

However, even the well intentioned commitments to examine the historical and modern day implications of slavery by the Clinton administration fell short of the mark and failed to inspire substantive public discourse.

Since my reintroduction of H.R. 40 at the beginning of this Congress, both the legislation and concept of reparations have become the focus of national debate.

For many, it is apparent that the success of the Obama administration has unleashed a backlash of racism and intolerance that is an echo of America's dark past which has yet to be exorcised from the national consciousness.

Commentators have turned to H.R. 40 as a response to formally begin the process of analyzing, confronting and atoning for these dark chapters of American history.

Even conservative voices, like that of New York Times columnist David Brooks, are starting to give the reparations cause the hearing it deserves, observing that "Reparations are a drastic policy and hard to execute, but the very act of talking and designing them heals a wound and opens a new story."

Similarly, a majority of the Democratic presidential contenders have turned to H.R. 40 as a tool for reconciliation, with 17 cosponsoring or claiming they would sign the bill into law if elected.

Though critics have argued that the idea of reparations is unworkable politically or financially, their focus on money misses the point of the H.R. 40 commission's mandate.

The goal of these historical investigations is to bring American society to a new reckoning with how our past affects the current conditions of African-Americans and to make America a better place by helping the truly disadvantaged.

Consequently, the reparations movement does not focus on payments to individuals, but to remedies that can be created in as many forms necessary to equitably address the many kinds of injuries sustained from chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges.

To merely focus on finance is an empty gesture and betrays a lack of understanding of the depth of the unaddressed moral issues that continue to haunt this nation.

While it might be convenient to assume that we can address the current divisive racial and political climate in our nation through race neutral means, experience shows that we have not escaped our history.

By passing H.R. 40, Congress can start a movement toward the national reckoning we need to bridge racial divides.

Reparations are ultimately about respect and reconciliation—and the hope that one day, all Americans can walk together toward a more just future.

We owe it to those who were ripped from their homes those many years ago an ocean away; we owe it to the millions of Americans—yes they were Americans—who were born into bondage, knew a life of servitude, and died anonymous deaths, as prisoners of this system.

We owe it to the millions of descendants of these slaves, for they are the heirs to a society of inequities and indignities that naturally filled the vacuum after slavery was formally abolished 154 years ago.

And let me end as I began, noting that this year is the 400th commemoration of the 1619 arrival of the first captive Africans in English North America, at Point Comfort, Virginia.

Let us proceed with the cause of this morning with a full heart, with the knowledge that this work will take time and trust.

Let us also do with the spirit of reconciliation and understanding that this bill represents.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to help address the harm that slavery has had on our nation by supporting H.R. 40.

COACH FRANKLIN POST-GAME INTERVIEW

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Penn State Quarterback Michael Shuster, who was highlighted by Head Coach James Franklin in a post-game interview.

A reporter asked, "Coach, you mentioned the reaction when Nick Eury scored the touchdown. Can you talk about the quarterback that engineered the final drive and what you said to him and set up for him?"

Coach Franklin responded by saying, "He's another guy. Michael Shuster has been phenomenal. I'm not sure if this is the right decision or not, but he has started leaning into coaching. He already got a job offer in the real world. He just does a great job for us. He's like having another coach. He takes a lot of pride in it. He's been a fantastic student, a fantastic teammate. I'm a huge Shuster fan. He brings a lot of value to our organization."

Congratulations to Michael Shuster on a great drive in week one of the Penn State football season.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. THELMA ROMBERGER

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, today I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Thelma Romberger, a resident of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who is celebrating 100 years young on Thursday, December 12, 2019.

Mrs. Romberger was born in her grandmother's farmhouse in rural Carlisle and has since claimed Southcentral Pennsylvania as her lifelong home. She married her husband of 53 years, World War II Veteran Chester E. Romberger, in May of 1941. Throughout her life, Mrs. Romberger owned and operated both a grocery store and a mobile home park; she also mowed her own grass with a push lawn mower well into her eighties.

She previously enjoyed camping and is now both an avid salt and pepper shaker collector and Checkers player.

I join Thelma's friends and family in extending my best and warmest wishes to her on this special day, and in celebrating her life and contributions to our great Commonwealth and Country.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Tenth Congressional District, I extend God's blessings and my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Thelma Romberger on her 100th Birthday.