

Gentrification has forced many long-term residents of color to leave their neighborhoods due to increased housing costs.

It is essential that this Congress ensures that neighborhood development does not force out those families who have often called these very same neighborhoods home for many past generations.

Madam Speaker, that is why I am so proud to have joined with Congressman HANK JOHNSON in introducing H.R. 4999, the Opportunity Zone Fairness and Inclusion Act. This bill seeks to mitigate the inequities that are often brought on by rapid neighborhood development.

The opportunity zone program was intended to incentivize investment in underserved communities. Currently, Madam Speaker, this same investment program, this same opportunity zone program, lacks mechanisms to ensure that the residents of these neighborhoods benefit from this increased investment.

By mandating that opportunity zone funds establish investment and advisory boards that include members of targeted communities, H.R. 4999 would ensure greater local involvement in opportunity zone projects.

H.R. 4999 would also establish requirements for small and minority business involvement in those very same critical opportunity zone funds. I encourage all of my colleagues in this Congress to join me in supporting H.R. 4999.

Madam Speaker, going forward, we must develop policies with an eye on rectifying the prejudices and the injustices of the past. That means bringing affordable housing, stable and well-paying jobs, and vibrant and robust businesses to communities that have been denied these opportunities for far too long, including my beloved hometown, the city of Chicago.

Merely pushing development without a firm focus on equity would only perpetuate the discriminatory policies of the past.

In partnership with State and local governments, this Congress and future Congresses can help preserve and strengthen the vibrant, pioneering, and groundbreaking Black communities in places like Chicago, Illinois, and, more broadly, in urban areas throughout our great Nation.

Madam Speaker, this Congress can do nothing more or nothing less than help American citizens regain a footing in their communities, in their neighborhoods, by ensuring that fair housing is available, affordable housing is available, economic viability and vitality with increased businesses are available, and that jobs are created in these communities.

Let us turn this page to a more productive and progressive future and close the book on the precedential and bad disinvesting past.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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E-VERIFY IS THE SOLUTION TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. YOHO. Madam Speaker, I want to talk about immigration, more importantly, a guest worker program for agriculture that will solve this dilemma.

The reason we have an immigration issue in this country is because this body has failed to act in the last 30 years. It is something that the American population shouldn't have to go through and the immigrants shouldn't have to go through because there are simple solutions out there. But, unfortunately, in this body, politics gets played and prevents that from happening.

E-Verify is the solution to illegal immigration. E-Verify stands for an electronic verification system that verifies one's legal identification.

The ID number most commonly used for employment is a person's Social Security number. This ID number is used at an employee's place of employment, and the employer uses this number to validate the identification number of the employee.

There are some major concerns and shortfalls with relying on a Social Security number for identification, as we will explain below.

Using a Social Security number sets the system up for fraud and does nothing to verify the legal status of an individual.

Other numbers can be used for identification purposes for employment, but there does not yet exist a universally accepted ID number or an adequate program for a non-U.S. citizen to use or to enroll into a national E-Verify system.

The problem with using a Social Security number is often they are used by multiple persons fraudulently at the same time and do not provide positive identification of the person using that specific number.

For instance, in my discussions with DHS E-Verify personnel, the people who run that program say they can verify a Social Security number as legitimate within seconds. This is something that is free to the employer. So they can run a Social Security number and verify it within seconds, but they cannot verify if the person using that number is, in fact, the actual person that the unique Social Security number was assigned to.

DHS has said that, in many instances, a Social Security number will be verified as real, yet it will show up in 10 different locations around the country at the same time. Therefore, all E-Verify is doing is verifying a legitimate Social Security number, not whether an individual is permitted to

work here legally or if that person is the legitimate holder of that Social Security number.

Another issue with using a Social Security number for non-U.S. citizens is that somehow it denotes citizenship, and so people think, if they have a Social Security number, that the person using it is a U.S. citizen.

A Social Security number, in what we are promoting and advocating for, should be reserved for and used only by U.S. citizens. All others should receive a different form of identification.

There is a solution. What I propose is to create a standardized E-Verify system used universally around the country so all employers can verify the legal status and identity of an employee. This protects the employer from hiring illegal individuals, as well as providing the migrant employee legal documentation, identification, and permission to be in the country to work.

The solution is a guest worker identification card. This card can be referred to as the GWIC. The GWIC will have a unique 15-digit identification number issued to each unique individual. The GWIC, or guest worker identification card, will also have a photo of the individual on the front and a smart chip embedded in it.

The smart chip will have embedded within it biosecurity information belonging to that cardholder. The recommended biosecurity information would be facial recognition, fingerprints, retinal scans, possibly blood type and DNA. Other things that have been proposed are personal questions only the cardholder would know, and they could customize their individual, unique card to have this information included in the encrypted technology.

This information would only be available to DHS or government agencies. An employer could not get into this because they would be locked out of that information.

The current sectors being proposed in the U.S. Congress to be able to use this program are agriculture, hospitality, and construction. These designations would be at the end of the unique 15-digit identification card.

So, for instance, there would be the 15-digit number, and at the end of that would be the initials AG for agriculture, HP for hospitality, or CS for construction.

The way this program is set up would allow a person to apply, prior to coming into the United States, to work in a specific sector. For example, if the person applies to the agricultural sector, they don't come into the country until there is a job.

So, at the beginning of the process, they are what we would call an applicant. When the person applies and goes through the process and gets accepted into the guest worker program for agriculture, that individual also agrees that they will work only in the agriculture sector. Or if they want to work construction, they are agreeing to work only in the construction sector.

Therefore, they get accepted into a program based on a need for that job, and they get issued a GWIC card, a guest worker identification card, that the individual's personal information is embedded in. The GWIC card, again, would have a unique 15-digit number with the initials AG for agriculture. This worker has agreed only to work in the agriculture sector.

So, when the agriculture producer enters the individual's number into a GWIC reading machine, into the E-Verify system, it is promptly verified by the Department of Homeland Security as an approved worker in the agriculture sector. This would also apply for the construction industry and also for the hospitality industry. The producer and the worker have the assurance that they are in compliance with the law.

If a producer or worker hires or works outside of the permitted sector according to the GWIC designation, they are doing so fraudulently and subject to fines and being blocked from the E-Verify system in the future for a period of time. This will limit the producer's availability for labor and also prevent that worker from employment opportunities in the United States.

This proposed solution has already been created in legislation for the agriculture sector. It is called the Agriculture Guest Worker Program. This legislation has been created in a bipartisan fashion in the House and shared with both parties in the Senate. It has also been shared with the White House and with the USDA. It will solve the incentive that we have for the individuals willing to come to the United States illegally to find work.

Most of the individuals who come here are looking to work in the less-skilled fields that exist in the agriculture, hospitality, and construction fields. They will not be able to work legally without the proper permit as designated by the guest worker identification card, nor will employers be able to hire individuals without the proper guest worker identification permit.

In my home State of Florida, Governor DeSantis is pushing to have mandatory E-Verify implemented soon. I commend him for this initiative. In fact, I had a phone call with him today.

However, legislators in the State body are objecting to this program. Even members in his own party are resisting this requirement. Oftentimes, this is what creates the inaction known too well in Washington, D.C., and also at the State level. Therefore, nothing gets solved. This resistance comes from not having a sensible working program for people to apply to the E-Verify system and also having the identification that a worker can get, and so what happens is a stagnation of ideas for things moving forward.

What we are proposing is this program that people can apply to work. Say, if they want to work in the agriculture sector, they can apply before they come into the country. It stops

that need for people having to cross the desert to get into this country illegally because now they can do that before they come into the country.

They come into the country when a job is available. They are already automatically enrolled into the E-Verify system, so our producers in the agriculture sector have a readily predictable, legal workforce that is there that they can pull from and they can verify and be in compliance with the law.

Like I said, what is needed is a workable guest worker program that allows for the worker to enter the E-Verify system prior to entering into the United States as well as allowing workers into the country to enter this program.

Right now in this country, we have between 12 to 15 million people who are in this country illegally. Some of them came legally on a work visa, but then they just kind of drifted off and stayed in this country and did not leave when they were supposed to.

With this program that we are proposing with this legislation, workers could enter into this program and they could become legally accepted into the United States. It is not a pathway to citizenship, but it doesn't prevent somebody from applying for citizenship.

This agriculture guest worker program is incorporating the guest worker identification number in the E-Verify system as I propose. It is a workable solution for our producers that want to be compliant with a workable E-Verify system and have access to a reliable, predictable, and legal labor pool. This program also gives the migrant worker who desires the opportunity to work in this country a legal way to accomplish that.

In the agriculture sector, which I know very well, as we went around the State of Florida and we talked to the migrant workers, they say they can come and work 5 months in this country and make the equivalent of 5 years of income in their country.

And I had one of my producers say, if we don't fix our labor issue in America, we are either going to import our labor or we are going to import our food. If we get to a situation in America where we are importing our food, it is a national security risk.

This is something that Congress can come together and fix. It shouldn't be a partisan issue. This is a solution to a problem that is good for America; and if a solution is good for America, everybody benefits from it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING JOSEPHINE M. HOWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, in honor of Black History Month, I want to recognize Josephine M. Howard.

As part of her life journey, Josephine M. Howard has been achieving goals, setting high standards, teaching, learning, positively impacting lives, and been passionately committed to helping, mentoring, and inspiring the lives of children, adults, and the elderly.

She desired to become a teacher like her mother, Crizell, who, in the 1950s, mentored and tutored her five sisters and neighborhood children.

In the 1960s, Josephine graduated from Douglass High School with high honors and Florida College cum laude, with a BS degree in elementary education, and she subsequently began her career in teaching.

Josephine loved teaching but wanted to have a greater impact on more lives by empowering them with knowledge; therefore, she went back to college and earned her master of education degree magna cum laude at the University of Central Florida, as well as her educational specialist degree summa cum laude at Nova Southeastern University.

Josephine is a servant leader; a lifetime member of the NAACP; has served as a member of the Horizon Housing Board; treasurer, former CEO of Howard's Apparel; former chaplain of the NC100BW; board of trustees, Heart of Florida Hospital; Head Start Policy Council; and Who's Who Among Professional Women.

□ 1815

She continues to serve as the first vice president deaconess at the New Beulah Missionary Baptist Church, where she has been a Sunday school teacher for 34 years and has implemented the Mana Food Pantry.

Her community service and leadership dedication have earned her numerous recognitions, honors, and media coverage. She received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lifetime Achievement Award, Teacher of the Year, and Distinguished Volunteer Service Award.

Josephine is married to her husband, Phillip, of 52 years. They have two children, Jonita and Phillip II; three grandchildren, Philip and twins Phillip III and Kennedy.

For that, we honor you, Ms. Josephine Howard.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND CLIFTON E. DOLLISON

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, in honor of Black History Month, I want to recognize Reverend Clifton E. Dollison.

Reverend Clifton E. Dollison has served the First Missionary Baptist Church of Winter Haven, Florida, for 28 years. As the longest serving pastor in the church's rich 138-year history, his visionary leadership has resulted in the largest building program expansion the church has experienced.

Reverend Dollison has a passion for community service and a fearless commitment to confront justice issues in Polk County. That dedication finds expression in his roles as past co-chair and current board member for the Polk Ecumenical Action Council for Empowerment, otherwise known as