

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. THOMAS MASSIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 28, 2020

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 77 and NAY on Roll Call No. 78.

REBUILD AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

HON. ANDY LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 28, 2020

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, every student should have access to a high-quality public education in a safe environment, regardless of area code. But right now, many students are educated in outdated and crumbling buildings.

Take the Mt. Clemens Consolidated Schools District in Macomb County, Michigan. The student body is majority-black, and 84 percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Mt. Clemens educators and students work extremely hard to be successful in the classroom, but they are doing so in a nearly 100 year-old building, with the newest addition over 50 years old.

Wealthy districts and those serving predominantly white students can spend much more on capital improvements than their high-poverty counterparts. What if Mt. Clemens could make the infrastructure and technological updates that the wealthy school districts in Metro Detroit can afford?

This Public School's Week, I urge my colleagues to pass the Rebuild America's Schools Act so that every school can make 21st century updates to their buildings and ensure America's children can learn in the best environments.

HONORING RABBI ADIN EVEN-ISRAEL STEINSALTZ

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 28, 2020

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the completion of the English-edition Koren Talmud Bavli series by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz.

Born in 1937, Rabbi Steinsaltz has authored more than 60 books, and hundreds of articles on Jewish mysticism, religious thought, sociology, and philosophy. His most famous work is his interpretation of the Talmud, the formative piece of Jewish culture, and he is the first person since medieval times to have completed a full translation and commentary on the Babylonian Talmud.

As of last year, all 46 volumes of the Koren Talmud Bavli, an English edition of the definitive Steinsaltz Hebrew Talmud, have been

published. The debut volumes of the Steinsaltz Talmud gained critical acclaim, and by the end of last year, the final two volumes have been published.

I was pleased to join Rabbi Steinsaltz's son, Rabbi Meni Even-Israel, and members of the Aleph Society to mark the complete series entering the Library of Congress. As the nation's preeminent library, it is truly an honor for Rabbi Steinsaltz's work to be housed in the Library of Congress.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ESSAY CONTEST 2020 GRADES 9 THROUGH 12

HON. A. DONALD MCEACHIN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 28, 2020

Mr. MCEACHIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize exemplary middle and high school students from Virginia's Fourth Congressional District who were selected as winners of the Black History Month essay contest I hosted earlier this month. I am inspired by the words of these students, and I encourage young people across our country to reflect on what this month means to them personally.

Since its creation less than 50 years ago, Black History Month has been a time to honor and recognize the remarkable achievements of the African-American community. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing these distinguished students and their accomplishments in celebration of Black History Month.

I include in the RECORD JyMir Starks' winning essay:

(By JyMir Starks)

Black History Month was an extension upon Negro History Week, which was created in 1926 by notable historian, Carter G. Woodson; President Gerald Ford recognized February as the designated month for the celebration of Black people in 1976. Nearly six years shy of the centennial anniversary of Black History Week and the semi-centennial anniversary of Black History Month, the goals of both Carter G. Woodson and Gerald Ford have been accomplished to an extent. I say all this because for twenty-eight or twenty-nine days out of the year there is a new depth added to the Black experience within America.

There is a common misconception among many that Black History Month is in February because it is the shortest month. When I was younger, I was one of the many. This led me to do my own research when I saw someone make this claim, and I found the true history of the month. This month was chosen to honor Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, more commonly known as Frederick Douglass, and President Abraham Lincoln. This began my delve into the rich history and culture of Black Americans; my ignorance had developed into an insatiable thirst for the knowledge of my people. Understanding, analyzing, and researching Black history is not something that I do for the second month of the year, only to

wait another eleven months before I repeat the cycle. It is the month of February that is used to spread what I have learned throughout my life in order to instill a sense of pride and admiration within my fellow Black Americans. The last few Februaries I have shared whatever trinket of knowledge that I've collected over the course of the year, with a fact regarding a certain historical figure or event pertaining to Black or African history for each day of the month. This year I've taken to sharing and learning with my potential classmates, who will be attending Howard University, in the upcoming fall of 2020. This has been beneficial because the ideals of community are placed on full display by this continuous exchange of information because each fact is more gratifying than the last.

Along with the sense of community that is established through the exchange of information and knowledge, there is the joy that comes from Black enterprise. Social media has made connecting with others the easiest it has ever been in human history. This allows for Black-owned businesses to reach consumers across the globe. Black entrepreneurs and other enterprising individuals have used platforms like Twitter to expand their brands and network with other businessmen and women. In February there is an explosion of Black enterprise with a myriad of products being placed on sale. This further strengthens the idea of community because investing in the business of another Black American allows for one to help aid in the quest to establish Black wealth or at least financial security. This also sparks immense joy because supporting Black-owned businesses fills me with a deep sense of pride. I enjoy Black History Month because it has been the setting that has taught me about the history of Black enterprise; I enjoy Black History Month in the twenty-first century because I am able to participate in Black enterprise efficiently and effectively.

Black History Month also opens up the doors of Hampton Roads. Hampton Roads is a region with many historical Black locations from Hampton down to Suffolk. Luckily for me, I am able to visit these cities and attend the events that they are planning to host. I love the ability to share a laugh and create a memory with my family as we adventure out into Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Newport News, or Chesapeake. There is never a shortage of things to do to honor, celebrate, recognize, or appreciate one's heritage during February, and for that I am truly grateful because it is vital that Black people of all ages and walks of life are able to love themselves and love others.

The main joy that comes to me during Black History Month is the feeling of community that accompanies the month. I am truly able to be around friends and family and enjoy their presence. During the month of February, Black people are energized, and their communities give them the chance to appreciate their backgrounds. This month is more than a few names from a history textbook, but is essential to reaffirming the idea that Blackness is not only acceptable, but also Beautiful.