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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 25, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

MAKING OUR COUNTRY SAFER FOR BLACK AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I am a Black man living in America, and that puts me at greater risk while living in America.

The fact that I served 30 years in the United States Army, an institution that prides itself on being colorblind, doesn't change the fact that I am Black and at greater risk.

The fact that I graduated from a good school with honors doesn't change

the color of my skin and the risk of living in America.

That I attended Harvard Law School and practiced law at a blue-chip firm in Washington, D.C., doesn't change the fact that my family is from Africa and that we are at greater risk, even today, in America.

Even being a Member of this august institution, the United States Congress, doesn't shield me from the risks of being Black in America.

Mr. Speaker, 401 years after we arrived in bondage, a Black man in America is more likely to be stopped by the police than a White man. Mr. Speaker, 155 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, a Black man is more likely to be arrested than a White man.

Mr. Speaker, within my own lifetime of witnessing the first Black man appointed to the Supreme Court; the first Black woman elected to the United States Senate; the first Black man appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and, yes, the Black first man elected President of the United States, a Black man is still much more likely than a White man to die at the hands of police.

Every day for the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker, I, like every parent of a Black child, remind my Black boys, my sons, to be careful: Put your hands in plain sight if approached by an officer. Don't move suddenly when being questioned by the police. Be sure to ask permission before reaching for your wallet. And always respond to police rudeness with respect.

I do that because I don't want my children, anyone's Black child, to be harmed by the use of excessive force. I don't want them to be the victim of a police-involved shooting. They are good boys, and too many good boys, too many good men, Black men living in America, have died at the hands of police in America.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to say: Enough. We have endured too much, and the Congress has done too little.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Justice in Policing Act. I thank my colleagues on the Congressional Black Caucus, former and present, who have worked on these issues for far too long. I thank House leadership for bringing the bill to the floor so that we can once and for all bring an end to the injustice that is inflicted by those who we look to as the first line of justice.

Mr. Speaker, systemic racism pervades our society, and the criminal system, from police encounters to punishment, is racially biased.

This requires structural and transformational change in policing in America: reducing militarization; removing bad officers; holding them accountable for illegal behavior and gross misconduct; improving training so officers are guardians and protectors of our communities, not warriors acting aggressively toward our communities; increasing transparency and the ability to investigate and prosecute, where necessary; banning the chokehold; and outlawing racial profiling. But that is not enough.

As we work in these days, weeks, and months ahead, we have to acknowledge that, for far too long, we have neglected policies and programs that meet the needs of our communities, and we need to address the structural disparities heard in Black and Brown families. Instead of criminalizing homelessness, addiction, poverty, and, yes, being Black, we need to make the investments that will keep us safe and address the inequities that exist in our country.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we will pass the Justice in Policing Act. But tomorrow, we must take on other challenges: economic opportunity, mental health, housing, pre-K, health disparities.

In this moment, we have a chance to not just transform policing but make

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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