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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,
July 29, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLER 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.

REALIZING AMERICA'S RACIST PAST

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation we just passed, the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys that was sponsored by my fellow Floridian, Congresswoman WILSON.

Slavery lasted for over 246 years in America, from 1619 to 1865. It is one of America's original sins. People think of the Civil War as ancient history, but

there are actually still even children of slaves alive today. They may be in their late eighties, early nineties, but it makes you realize it wasn't that long ago.

In the 13th through 15th Amendments, we saw a great change prohibiting slavery, creating citizenship, due process, and the right to vote for African Americans.

Then, you had the Reconstruction Era. It started out with promising potential. Federal troops helped ensure votes throughout the Nation. We elected African Americans to the House and Senate, and according to Sherman's promise, everyone would get 40 acres and a mule.

It all came tumbling down, though, starting with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and President Johnson began to dismantle Reconstruction. Then, President Hayes ended Reconstruction in 1877 as part of a corrupt deal to ensure his Presidency.

Those in the South, African Americans, were arrested and put on chain gangs, among other ways, to force them into indentured servitude. Those in the North and West faced discrimination, discrimination in jobs, housing, justice, education, healthcare, marriage. Even facilities became segregated.

It reached a fevered pitch with "The Birth of a Nation" in 1915, restarting the KKK and lynchings and renewed interest in the Confederacy, its leaders, and its symbols. It played upon every terrible stereotype of African-American men on the silver screen for an impressionable public to see.

But it didn't stop there. Financial segregation was generationally punishing. African-American troops fought in World War I and World War II in segregated units for a country that discriminated against them. Then, they came home and were shut out of the New Deal programs during the Great

Depression, shut out of VA student loans and home loans.

They missed out on the greatest expansion of the middle class during the 1950s, and it was then that their renewed civil rights fight was just beginning.

With the success of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act of the 1960s, we saw some improvement, victories fought hard by JOHN LEWIS, who we just lost.

Even with these advances, discrimination persisted in the systems of justice, finance, business, and other foundations of our society.

Add in the 1980 war on drugs and the 1994 crime bill, and the list of laws and rules to systematically break up Black families, especially the arrest of Black men, reverberates today as our Nation looks inward after the murder of George Floyd about our country's racist past and institutional bias against Black men and boys, as well as Black women and girls.

This is why the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, as well as the Justice in Policing Act, are so important.

There must be an investigation, a realization, and reckoning in America about the racist past of this country and generational theft. We must develop lasting solutions if we are to progress as one Nation where every American is created equal.

DEMOCRAT INACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues across the aisle have developed a habit of harping about how Republicans are incorrectly addressing the priorities of the American people during the pandemic.

This is a bold claim coming from them, seeing as they are the ones being

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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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