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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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caught playing political games on multiple occasions. Every day, Democrats echo those same fatigued talking points, and you can't help but wonder if they realize that, in fact, they are the ones who have been wasting time all along.

Denial is a powerful thing, Mr. Speaker. At a time when the American people demand leadership and accountability from Congress, Democrats have leaned on their political playbook for answers.

At this point, are we really surprised? Let's recap what the Democrats have done to date.

They have passed the so-called HEROES Act, a \$3 trillion socialist wish list that was crafted behind closed doors without bipartisan collaboration.

They have undermined 200 years of precedent by implementing proxy voting.

They have held virtual hearings where their Members are not physically present in the Capitol, and even one of their Members decided to phone in his vote to the committee while he was on his boat.

Now, juxtapose that with the work we have taken up.

Republicans have fought for schools to reopen safely. We have placed a high priority on strengthening our Nation's economic recovery, and we have worked tirelessly to support frontline workers.

Let President Trump and the administration be an example as well.

Secretary Scalia of the Department of Labor recently came to my district to meet with frontline workers, educators, and members of the private sector to learn about North Carolina's progress.

Deputy Secretary Hargan of HHS visited Wake Forest Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem to see the work being done by medical professionals to treat and protect North Carolinians.

This week, President Trump traveled to North Carolina to meet with representatives of a biotechnology company that is currently manufacturing a promising coronavirus vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, the differences between the Republican approach and the Democrat approach are night and day. I have said this before, and I will say it again: Democrats are choosing posturing over progress. They have ample opportunities to work with us, but they are more interested in creating the newest media sound bite, further inflating the Federal bureaucracy and appeasing their far-left base.

This isn't an observation. This is a fact. When you think of progress, you think of frontline workers; you think of private-sector innovation; you think about the millions of children around the country safely returning to school; and you think of businesses reopening their doors to the public.

When Republicans think of progress, that is what we envision. Sadly, Democrats have become so entrenched in their own political narrative that they

have failed to recognize the true priorities of the American people. Republicans will continue to work on the pressing needs of our Nation without delay. We can only hope that our Democrat colleagues will come to their senses eventually.

THANKING CRAIG ROBERTS FOR HIS SERVICE AS CHIEF OF STAFF

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it said that being a chief of staff to a Member of Congress is one of the best jobs on the Hill.

It takes a special person to keep the staff performing at the high level required of them. Burnout could easily occur because of long hours, high stress, and low pay.

That is why I come to the floor to thank my chief of staff, Craig Roberts, for his 24 years of service to me, the people of Illinois, and the people of this country. Yes, you heard me right, Craig has been with me for 24 straight years. It really has to be some kind of record.

Craig was born and raised in the Alton-Godfrey area of Madison County. He was one of those kids who was drawn to politics as a young kid, volunteering for campaigns in high school.

While attending Western Illinois University, he continued his studies and political activities. He graduated with a degree in political science and was an active member of the College Republicans.

Craig easily was hired by the Republican House staff in Illinois. I may have met him then, but my first direct and consistent contact with Craig was back in 1991 when he worked for the secretary of state. He volunteered to take on the task of running my first congressional campaign against an entrenched incumbent.

Running for Congress is difficult. Running against an incumbent is even more difficult. Running against a powerful, well-entrenched incumbent is crazy. Well, I was a little crazy, and I am glad Craig was, too, as he started the task to win the race.

The district consisted of 19 counties. Neither of us had personal money, but we put a little bit of our own in. I paid for gas and my food. He ate the last month of his salary cost.

We lost in the Clinton landslide in Illinois, but Craig's involvement helped provide immediate legitimacy to the campaign and made it competitive.

In 1996, I ran again, and this time, Craig was involved as an unpaid adviser. This race, I won narrowly. Once I won, I knew I had to ask Craig to join me in D.C. and run my office.

I made many local Republicans mad by taking Craig away from Springfield. In his time there, he had become highly respected. That respect would be easily duplicated in D.C.

Craig's leadership style is uplifting and empowering. He softened my big-

hammer style and calmed the seas when storm Shimkus was billowing.

He is a mentor and a friend to all who come through his door. Team Shimkus staff members can be found all over D.C., from the executive branch to the Senate and the chief of staff of offices. They all stay in touch and reach out to Craig for advice.

I left the D.C. hiring decisions to Craig. My theory is, if you hire someone and it doesn't work out, you have to be the one to fire that person.

My office staff is known for being open, accessible, friendly—most of the time—hardworking, and knowledgeable. This is a tribute to Craig. Our limited turnover is also a tribute to him.

Craig is a father figure to a bipartisan group of chiefs of staff. Active in the Chief of Staff Association, he has helped Congress and Members work together. In the heat of Member battles, chiefs talking to chiefs can help work things out.

He is also a proud and active Republican. He is known for his knowledge, organization, and planning. He volunteers and is an active member of the Capitol Hill Club, which is a Republican club up here on the Hill.

But a good chief of staff has to be a confidential adviser to the Member. Members of Congress live in the governmental and the political worlds simultaneously. So does the chief of staff.

The chief of staff has to ensure that the ethical boundaries are known and obeyed. Action people take action and, many times, cross the line. Chiefs, and particularly Craig, pulls a Member—and that would be me—aside and keeps me away from the brink of doing something really stupid.

Craig was and is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Maybe upon my retirement, he can get some rest, but I doubt he will.

We both carry the political and governmental scars of 24 years of service. Some can be seen while others cannot be seen. It is those scars that will forever bind us together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Craig for joining me in D.C., thank him for staying with me, and thank him for being the best chief of staff on the Hill.

DO NOT LET DEATH OF ENRIQUE ROMAN-MARTINEZ GO UNSOLVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to decry a tragedy that has pierced the heart of my community, a tragedy that continues to cut deeper with each passing day because we still don't know what happened. We still have no answers.

All we know is that one of our very best, one of our brightest, is dead. Our hearts are broken, and we demand answers. Army specialist Enrique Roman-Martinez was a Chino native who makes the whole Inland Empire proud.