

My bill, the Taylor Force Act, was signed into law by President Trump on March 23, 2018. This law was meant to disincentivize these awful payments, end the senseless war of terror against Israel, and advance the cause of peace by ending the cycle of violence perpetuated by the Palestinian political leadership.

Unfortunately, Palestinian Authority leaders have publicly rejected the terms of the Taylor Force Act. We have seen documented evidence that the “pay for slay” payments are now continuing in 2020, something which Palestinian leadership has brazenly praised without fear of consequences from the United States.

The appropriate next step is to personally sanction the Palestinian officials involved in this incentivizing of terror.

The Palestinian Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs and its Director, Qadri Abu Bakr, must be designated as sponsors of terror, as the administration committed itself to in Executive Order 13224.

President Trump’s Peace to Prosperity plan for ending the Israel-Palestinian conflict specifically addresses the ‘Prisoner and Martyr Payments’ and calls for their immediate termination. This position has received long-standing bipartisan support at home and abroad.

It is time we let the enemies of peace know in no uncertain terms that the United States will not stand idly by and allow the Palestinian Authority to promote and pay for the murder of innocents through pay-for-slay.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEVIN of Michigan). The Chair announces that the Speaker’s announced policy of April 7, 2020, will remain in effect during the pendency of a covered period pursuant to House Resolution 965.

AND STILL I RISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. And still I rise, Mr. Speaker.

It is my honor to stand here in the House of Representatives. It is my honor to be a Member of this Congress, and I am grateful to the many persons who made great sacrifices so that I would have this opportunity.

Today I would like to use this opportunity to make an appeal to my colleagues, to my friends, and to people who are within the sound of my voice. I want to make an appeal to persons to please take the coronavirus seriously. I ask that you take it seriously because it is not a joke. It is not a laughing matter. People are dying. We have had over 150,000 deaths in this country. It is not a laughing matter. We have had over 4 million cases in this country. It is not a hoax. It is real.

I am asking my friends, my colleagues, and those who are within the

sound of my voice, please, let’s do what we can to protect ourselves and others. I beg that we would please wear the face mask. Let us wash our hands. Let us maintain the distancing.

I know that it won’t happen all of the time. We can have a memory lapse. We might just rush out of the house and not have our mask on. But let’s not, with intentionality, leave home without it. Let’s not, with intentionality, mix and mingle with the persons around us without a mask on. Let us, with intentionality, do all that we can to protect ourselves and others.

This virus is not relenting at this time. It is relentless. Hospital ICU beds in many places in hot spots around the country are at capacity.

We see evidence that this virus is going to continue for a while longer. I don’t know how long. I am not sure anybody does. But I do know that we ought not take it lightly, that we ought not allow persons who are within our space, our personal space, if you will, to catch it from us. I don’t want to give it to someone, and I would trust that no one would want to give it to me.

So let’s be sensible. Let’s be responsible. Let’s honor the protocols that we have set here in the House of Representatives. Let’s honor the protocols to social distance.

I know it is difficult. I won’t pretend that I keep the social distancing as properly as I should. I understand. I make mistakes. But I don’t do it intentionally. I am not going to intentionally take off my mask and communicate with persons.

I am not going to try in any way to demonstrate that somehow I am invulnerable, I am invincible, this is a joke, this is a hoax, and that we need not try to protect ourselves from this virus. I am not going to do it, and I am going to ask that others would not do it.

Let’s love each other and protect each other. This is a matter of life and death.

Finally, on this topic of the virus, we have had some persons who contract the virus who are associated with the House. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that I care about them. I pray for them. And I want you to know that I am asking that we all make sure that this doesn’t become a means by which we distance ourselves from other people simply because they have had the virus.

My hope is that persons who contract it will heal and they will be back at work and we will treat them with the same love and respect that we have always treated them, show them that they are welcome back to the House of Representatives. This is something that we can do to show each other how much we appreciate the persons who have survived this virus.

I hope that every person who contracts it will survive it. I don’t want to see anybody lose life or become chronically injured in some way because of this virus. It ought not be that way,

and my hope is that we won’t allow it to happen in the sense that people will contract it and we will find ourselves distancing ourselves from them.

As I am about to leave now, I want to mention one additional item that is important. I am still concerned about invidious discrimination, and I am concerned that we are reaching a plateau now as it relates to the movement that had as a part of its genesis the death of George Floyd.

I am concerned that I don’t see the movement continuing with the amount of momentum that it richly and justly deserves. I am concerned that we are slowly getting back to bigotry as usual, we are slowly getting back to a point where we will do more talking about bigotry and discrimination than acting on the elimination of bigotry and discrimination.

It really is a major issue in the country, and we should not allow ourselves to slip back into making it more about what we think ought to happen than doing what we can do to prevent this sort of discrimination from continuing to happen.

So I am concerned, and because I am concerned, when we return, I hope to take some measures, some steps, if you will, to help us to remember that it doesn’t just go away because we don’t have a front-page issue. The front-page issues heighten our awareness, but it is still there after it is no longer on the front page, this invidious discrimination, this homophobia, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, all of the various phobias that harm people—that other people produce to harm people, I might add. So I am concerned, and I refuse to allow this issue to simply become another incident and we get back to bigotry as usual.

At some point, we do need a department of reconciliation in this country so that people can depend on our government doing all that it can to eliminate discrimination and hate in the country.

At some point, we need to have this department functioning at the highest level, with a secretary who reports to the President of the United States and that is funded properly so that we don’t find ourselves siloing each circumstance that involves invidious discrimination and dealing with each one individually as opposed to dealing with all of this collectively.

We have come a long way in this country, no question about it, but we dearly and truly have a long way that we have to go. What better way to get there than to say to the world that we are drawing this line, a bright line, and that we are going to have a department that is dedicated to the elimination of segregation to the extent that it exists—and it does exist in some places in our country—but also to eliminate this invidious discrimination wherever it exists in our country and against whomever it is perpetrated.

Is it systemic? Yes, it is systemic.