

the Congressional Black Caucus, for joining me in sponsoring this Special Order. We gather today to mark the congressional observance of Black History Month. The occasion affords us the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of African American men and women to the building and shaping of this great nation.

We gather in the House Chamber 71 years after the late Dr. Carter G. Woodson proposed the observance of Negro History Week. In 1926, Dr. Woodson understood that African Americans were not receiving proper recognition in history for their contributions. Woodson proposed setting aside one week during the month of February to commemorate the achievements of African Americans. In 1976, the observance was changed to Black History Month. Our theme for the 1997 observance of Black History Month is "African Americans and Civil Rights: A Reappraisal." I am proud to join my colleagues as we reflect upon this theme. It causes us to examine how far we have come in the struggle for civil rights.

The civil rights movement of our time set its roots in the field of education, with assistance from the United States Supreme Court. In 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court announced its ruling that segregation in the Nation's public schools was unconstitutional. A year later on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, AL, Mrs. Rosa Parks was told by the driver on the bus on which she was riding to get up and give her seat to a white man. This seamstress, who was tired from a long day's work refused this order and was arrested.

In protest, black leaders organized a boycott that lasted for 382 days. It ended with the courts ordering integration and the abolishment of a legal requirement that black people had to stand up and let white people sit down whenever both races were riding on public transportation.

The Montgomery bus boycott brought to the helm of the Civil Rights Movement a 27-year old black baptist minister whose name is forever etched in the annals of history. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi to preach a doctrine of love and nonviolence. During his lifetime, Dr. King's faith, perseverance and determination served as a symbol of the hope for equality for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, history records that on September 9, 1957, President Eisenhower signed a new Civil Rights Act which markedly enlarged the federal role in race relations. It established a Civil Rights Commission and a Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. It also gave the Attorney General authority to seek injunctions against obstruction of voting rights.

One of the most climatic point in the campaign for equality came on August 28, 1963, when over 200,000 demonstrators of all races and religious denominations assembled in Washington, DC, in the largest civil rights march in the history of this Nation. It was at that march that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

The civil rights movement of this century has passed through three phases, each one

distinct in character. The first, desegregation, was an effort to break down the barriers of an old and corrupt social order. The second phase, integration, was concentrated on the opening up of opportunities—as in the case of the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which guaranteed the right to vote, access to public accommodations, mandated non-discrimination in federal programs, and required equal employment opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we gather today to reflect upon our civil rights gain and to measure our progress. What I have outlined is a glimpse of our Nation's civil rights history. Let us turn for a moment to the challenges we face. Two of the greatest challenges to continued progress of the civil rights movement are in the areas of redistricting and affirmative action. Since its enactment over 30 years ago, the Voting Rights Act has altered the face of American government. In 1965, the south had only 72 African American elected officials; by 1976, there were 1,944. Today there are nearly 5,000—68 times as many as when the Voting Rights Act was passed. Then, on the last day of its 1993 term, the Supreme Court again lowered the boom on years of progress with its decision in *Shaw versus Reno* and *Hays versus Louisiana*, and *Johnson versus Miller* in 1995. Each of these cases called into question the constitutionality of remedial race-conscious districting. Against this backdrop, on June 13, 1996, the Supreme Court rendered two more opinions that turned back the clock on voting rights. In *Shaw versus Hunt* and *Bush versus Vera* the Court simply nullified four congressional districts held by African Americans.

Despite these setbacks, the struggle continues. My colleagues and I will continue to fight for equal opportunity and equal access for all minorities in the electoral process.

The issue of affirmative action also impacts our civil rights progress. Within the last 2 decades, affirmative action has been the primary tool that has allowed minorities and women to break through the many barriers of discrimination that have contributed to keeping them unemployed, underpaid, and in positions of limited opportunity for advancement.

Unfortunately, despite 3 decades of progress in this area, we are now faced with a new threat. We now face legislative and court initiatives that attempt to turn back the clock by attacking equal opportunity in America.

The Rehnquist Supreme Court struck down a minority set-aside program requiring Richmond, VA contractors to hire minority-owned subcontractors for 30 percent of its contracts in *City of Richmond versus J.A. Croson Co.* The Court ruled in the Croson case that set-asides by State and local governments were allowed only in cases of past discrimination. On June 12, 1995, the United States Supreme Court decision in *Adarand Constructors versus Pena*, established radical new standards for evaluating affirmative action programs. While the court does require "strict scrutiny" be applied to the review of affirmative action laws, the vast majority of affirmative action programs will easily survive such close examination. The court's opinion clearly acknowledges

the value of well-tailored affirmative action programs as an important tool to end discrimination.

On June 19, 1995, in response to questions raised about affirmative action, President Clinton presented a clear, unequivocal statement and plan to support and improve our Nation's efforts to promote equal opportunity and justice through the affirmative action laws of the United States. This support is particularly important because of the confusion and misinformation that is currently being circulated about the status, mission, and future of affirmative action programs.

Mr. Speaker, I take pride in joining my colleagues for this special order commemorating Black History Month. I hope that our remarks will help all Americans to remember the important contributions that African Americans have made to this Nation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 581, FAMILY PLANNING FACILITATION AND ABORTION FUNDING RESTRICTION ACT OF 1997

Mr. GOSS (during the Special Order of Mr. MAJOR R. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-3) on the resolution (H.Res. 46) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 581) to amend Public Law 104-208 to provide that the President may make funds appropriated for population planning and other population assistance available on March 1, 1997, subject to restrictions on assistance to foreign organizations that perform or actively promote abortions, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2, CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS AMENDMENT

Mr. GOSS (during the Special Order of Mr. MAJOR R. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-4) on the resolution (H.Res. 47) providing for

consideration of the joint resolution (H.J.Res. 2) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS] and also the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] who continues a long tradition of special orders during African-American History Month. I would like to continue in the same set of rules that they were following, whatever they were. If you have a list of people, I will follow that list. I will make a few opening remarks and then go back to the list as you have come because I think that we want continuity between the two sets of special orders.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to open up by saying I thought that the topic chosen by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] relating to civil rights organizations and their role in history is a good focus in terms of our civil rights organizations ought to be congratulated for what they have done up to now.

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They are to be congratulated. We ought to use history to sort of re-appraise where we are and where we are going.

Ken Burns today, at a speech at the National Press Club related to his forthcoming film on Thomas Jefferson, said that history is a record of everything that has happened up to this moment. Everything is history, whether you are talking about the history of science, the history of technology. So Black History Month is a time when a lot of people are reminded of certain kinds of achievements of individual African-Americans, achievements related to inventions; related to first steps in terms of organizations; first steps related to leadership that has been provided in various ways by African-Americans. All that is in order.

But there is another dimension of black history which I think we have neglected, which I would like to discuss in greater detail later on, and that is our civil rights organizations need some underpinning now and would be greatly strengthened if we were to really decide where we are in history now, what our past history has meant, and how we should use the lessons of our past history.

South Africa has a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is designed to help get the country on a

smooth path toward the future and not have it become bogged down in its past. I think it is most unfortunate that at the end of the Civil War America did not establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, because some of the problems we are facing now are rooted in an unjust history: 235 years of slavery.

What did 235 years of slavery do to a people, and how are the repercussions of 235 years of slavery now impacting upon those same people; and can we go on and really deal with our problems currently if we do not really force America to own up to that history? We need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to get on with the discussion of reparations.

We have had some legislation introduced by JOHN CONYERS and others talking about reparations. That seems like such a radical idea that most people dismiss it right away. We had some steps toward reparations when we voted to try to do something to compensate the victims of internment in Japanese camps during World War II. We made some steps in that direction. I do not want to go into reparations and alienate everybody. Let us just have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which might come to the conclusion that reparations should also be on the agenda.

But in that Truth and Reconciliation Commission we should talk about some other things, like 232 years of slavery. What did that mean in terms of accumulation of wealth? Wealth is accumulated, certain books have told us recently, by passing it from one generation to another. Most wealth is accumulated that way. People do not really work hard and accumulate their wealth; they do get a break from the previous generation. If you have 232 years of slavery, that means there was 232 years where no wealth was passed on from one generation to another.

Is it any wonder then that African-Americans, the middle-class African-Americans are becoming closer and closer to white Americans, mainstream Americans, in income, the money they earn through salaries and wages, but there is a great gap between white mainstream Americans and African-American middle-class people in terms of wealth. There is a great gap. The gap is explained by the fact that there were 235 years where no wealth was accumulated.

We ought to take a look at that. We ought to take a look at what that means to the very poorest people of course; we ought to take a look at what it meant in terms of the impact on a people where their children were denied education and laws were made to make it a crime to teach slaves to read. All that may be examined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Civil rights organizations I think really need underpinning now of, really, where are we? How hard should we fight against laws which take away aid to families with dependent children.

How does that relate to race? Is there a race base for demanding that you do something for the poorest people, especially those who are descendants of slaves. Is there a reason why we should make greater demands for education?

The President says he is going to move Head Start by the year 2000 to the point where Head Start will encompass 1 million children. Well, should not something be done in terms of compensation in recognizing the great need for special treatment for the descendants of slaves. Those children ought to be taken into Head Start right away. There are a number of ideas like that which would grow out of an understanding that the civil rights agenda should be broadened and the civil rights agenda should take into consideration what the history of slavery did to the people who are major victims of denial of those rights.

I am going to come back to this later on, but we have several colleagues here who are waiting to speak, and I would be happy to take them first. I am pleased to have at this point remarks on African-American history month from our colleague from New York, the Honorable CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Black History Month, and I thank my colleagues, Congressman OWENS, Congresswoman WATERS, and Congressman STOKES, for organizing this Special Order.

There are many black Americans who are important to our history, and I am pleased to speak of four African-American women who hail from the great State of New York. These women, ranging from the early 1800's to the present day, have each left their mark on New York and America.

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in Huron, NY. After receiving her freedom, she moved to New York City where she dedicated her life to the abolition of slavery and suffrage for all women. She was the first person to publicly acknowledge the relationship between slavery with the oppression of all women.

After the Civil War she worked tirelessly for women's rights, gaining the support and respect of fellow suffragettes, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. At the Equal Rights Association in 1867 she gave one of the most quoted speeches in feminist history, "Ain't I A Woman".

Lorraine Hansberry was the first African-American female Broadway playwright. Her play, "Raisin in the Sun," opened in 1959 to outstanding reviews. It focused on discrimination and family values. She was the first black and the youngest person to win the Best Play of the Year Award of the New York drama critics. Though she died in New York City at the age of 34, Hansberry opened the door for all future young black playwrights.

Shirley Chisholm has the distinct honor of being the first black woman elected to Congress and the first