from White River, Vermont who recently won an award for a letter he wrote regarding the protection of the United States flag. Not only do I have deeply held, personal feelings on this subject, but I have also introduced a Constitutional amendment (H.J. Res. 36) to prohibit the desecration of the American Flag. Millions of American men and women have died in defense of this nation and the flag that represents the history of our nation. The American flag is a national treasure and the ultimate symbol of freedom, equal opportunity and religious tolerance.

Brian's letter to his Congressman reflects these feelings and I was pleased to see a young person have such strongly held values and pride in America. Brian's value system and convictions are commendable at any age, but all the more impressive for this 8th grader. I had the opportunity to meet this young man and judging from this encounter, I know his parents must be proud of this fine young American.

I commend his letter to my colleagues. Knowing students such as Brian assures me that this country's future is in good hands.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SANDERS: Two hundred and twenty-five years ago, the great nation of the United States was formed. This country has had its share of wars and protests, but one act of violence that offends most Americans is flag burning. Flag burning is a way of protesting, but it is at the expense of the country's unity and it needs to be stopped.

An unfathomable number of men and women have fought and died to defend the red, white, and blue. To see not only young, but also older Americans burning flags literally makes me ashamed that these people are Americans. Former POWs have created the American flag out of dead bugs while imprisoned. For many Americans, our flag has lifted their spirits through the darkest hours of our nation's history. The American flag is not only our nation's emblem, it's a part of our everyday life.

Flag burning was not just a fad of the sixties but many people still burn flags in protest today. People defend their despicable acts by insisting that flag burning is practicing their freedom of speech. Does anyone really believe that is what Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson intended when they wrote the constitution of the United States of America and included the article for freedom of speech? Did they want to create one nation under God that would spit on and burn the American flag, the symbol that our forefathers died to defend? No. These acts of burning our flag have divided our country and some of the ramifications still divide Americans today.

I am writing lawmakers to bring flag burning to their attention and ask them to consider passing a new law to prosecute any person unlawfully burning or desecrating to flag of the United States. I urge you to strongly consider supporting this type of law. Burning of the American flag is an act perpetrated against both our country and government, and should be prosecuted as a federal offense. Every unjustifiable burning of the American flag is a mockery of the patriots who first died for ''liberty and justice for all.''

Sincerely,

BRIAN KENT.

IN HONOR OF FATHER WILLIAM GULAS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate St. Stanislaus pastor William Gulas on his 40th anniversary of his ordination of priesthood on this 27th day of May.

Father Gulas was born in 1934 in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. His first priestly assignment was with the editorial staff of Franciscan Publishers of Pulaski, Wisconsin, as editor of ''Franciscan Message.'' While with Franciscan Publishers, he assisted on weekends at parishes and edited other religious publications. He attended Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was awarded a Master of Arts Degree in Journalism. He later taught at St. Mary's High School in Burlington, Wisconsin, and served as the Catholic Chaplain at Southern Wisconsin Colony at Union Town. His accomplishments did not go unnoticed; he soon served as President of the English-speaking Provincial Ministers of the Order of Friars Minor. In 1992, he was appointed General delegate of the Lithuanian Franciscans. His accomplishments are countless.

In 1993, Father Gulas assumed the pastorship of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Southeast Cleveland. One of his primary objectives was to restore the historic century-old church in Slavic Village. Father Gulas raised over $1.3 million for the church and successfully completed the restoration on the church's 125th anniversary. St. Stanislaus was blessed and dedicated on November 22, 1998 by Cleveland Bishop Anthony Pilla.

St. Stanislaus now thrives under the leadership and direction of Father William Gulas. We as a community are grateful for his time and dedication to St. Stanislaus and Cleveland. Please join me in honoring Father William Gulas on this very special day.

SLAVERY REPARATIONS

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following editorials for the RECORD.

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, May 20, 2001]

FORWARD ON RACE—TOGETHER

Try this sometime: Say the words reparations for slavery in a crowded room.

Then watch the stereotypes and anxieties roll in like thunderheads: Hands move protectively over wallets or extend to receive a check; eyes scan the floor for an escape hatch or roll back in exasperation.

For 136 years, stereotypes and anxieties have stifled the conversation. But change is coming—and it's long overdue.

Recent investigations into race riots in places such as Rosewood, Fla., and Tulsa, Okla., have brought reparations to the fore. Businesses have apologized for slavery-era practices. The writings of people such as Randall Robinson, author of The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks, and conservative columnist David Horowitz have broadened and energized the debate. A class-action lawsuit is possible. The issue will arise at a United Nations conference on racism this summer in South Africa.

But the reparations issue is too weighty, too unsettling to be left to individual communities or businesses. Books, conferences or lawsuits by themselves won't be enough.

Slavery and the century of government-sanctioned discrimination that followed were national policies that denied fundamental rights—justice, equality, freedom—to African Americans. It will take a national effort to answer for that.

An excellent starting point is a bill that U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D., Mich.) has introduced annually since 1989. It would ''acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery in the United States.''

And it would create a commission to study the impact of slavery and post-Civil War discrimination and to recommend remedies.

Mr. Conyers' colleagues and President Bush, who has eloquently spoken of taking on the mantle of Abraham Lincoln, should rise to the moment and turn this bill into law.

A reparations commission, handled fairly, could give America an honest grasp of the past that would help it seize a better future. It would show how by-products of the past—stereotypes, demagoguery, denial—block the path to progress. It would allow an open airing of wrongs, not to define the country by its sins but to help Americans see history through each other's eyes.

Most of all, it would remind America that the idea of reparations is not about who gets a check. It is about justice. But if Washington can't stir itself to pass the Conyers bill on its merits, America may be forced to have this conversation anyway.

In court.

Last year, a powerhouse team of lawyers and advocates formed the Reparations Coordinating Committee. It is considering strategies to address the legacy of slavery and discrimination, including lawsuits. The group includes Randall Robinson; Harvard professor Charles J. Ogletree; attorney Johnnie Cochran; Alexander J. Pires Jr., who won a $1 billion settlement for black farmers in a discrimination suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Mississippian Richard F. Scruggs, who helped win the $368.5 billion tobacco settlement.

Mr. Ogletree says the committee is hoping ''for a serious examination of the issues that provides some sense of healing and an ability to move forward.''

Who can blame advocates for thinking of lawsuits? In the nation's civil-rights history, courts have often been the place where minorities finally got action after appeals to community conscience or legislatures failed.

But while lawsuits can further justice, they are not designed to promote healing. The best approach to reparations is one that manages to serve both those goals.

What's more, if you put the words lawsuit and reparations together, most Americans will focus on one thing: money. How much? Who gets paid? Who has to pay? Those questions get sticky in a hurry. Critics of the idea have a field day.

That's why the courts, with their adversarial tone and necessary focus on legalistic details, aren't the best venue.

It is in Congress, elected by the people to talk through America's challenges, where the nation could best begin the moral process it urgently needs.

That process has three steps—acknowledgment, atonement and reconciliation.

The idea of atonement is as delicate a part of this discussion as money. Similar questions swiftly arise. Who should atone? To

whom? Are you exempt if your ancestors came to America after 1865? If they lived in a ''free state'' before the Civil War? If your black ancestors ''crossed over'' to live as whites?

Ten seconds into such a discussion, you risk confusion, anger and defensiveness. That's why many Americans argue the nation should just duck this question and ''move on.''

And that is why it should be made clear from the start that a national initiative to study reparations must not be a festival of finger-pointing.

White Americans should not be required to apologize individually for benefits that they or theirs received from the exploitation of African Americans. Regardless of station or ancestry, no one person should be expected to shoulder all the years of moral, political, economic and social exploitation. Besides, words alone won't be enough.

No, atonement must come through actions—actions by the federal government. That government, acting for white people, allowed slavery for the first 76 years of its existence. That government, acting for white people, stood aside for almost 100 years as atrocities were committed against freed slaves and their descendants. That government now must act for the sake of all the people and take the lead in making amends.

As for acknowledgment, Americans need to grasp certain hard truths about their country.

First and foremost is that horrible wrongs were done to African Americans during the years of slavery and the century of government-sanctioned discrimination that followed.

But not just that. Those wrongs weren't done by just one evil region or contingent while the rest of white America innocently went about its business. Those wrongs were a major part of America's business. The unpaid labor of millions—even the slave trade itself—helped set in motion the U.S. economic juggernaut and fueled world trade. In 1790, the value of America's slaves was estimated at $140 million, twice the national debt, and 20 times the budget of the federal government.

So this truth may come as a surprise: The race that has been so vilified throughout U.S. history, that has often been depicted as a drain on the country's resources, worked side by side with white people in building America, in war and peace, right from the start.

Here is another necessary acknowledgment: Other ethnic groups in the United States have suffered. American Indians endured unspeakable atrocities. Many immigrants were cheated of fair pay for their labors and felt the sting of bias. Race hatred has claimed victims of all colors. All these stories should be heard and a reparations commission should be prepared to hear other requests for compensation.

But the African American experience is unique. As hard as other groups' roads may have been, none of them suffered chattel slavery and zero compensation for their labor and a hundred years of racebased discrimination.

A national dialogue on reparations will also have to acknowledge that America has made down payments on its debt.

Not every young man who went off to battle in the Civil War did so to free the slaves, but many on the Union side did. And, at the end of the war, the slaves were free. Not equal, but free.

The hundreds of thousands of war dead—black and white—the millions wounded, maimed, widowed and orphaned, can't be denied. The post-Civil War amendments to the Constitution, however imperfectly enforced, must be placed into the ledger.

The war on poverty will have to be counted as well. Yes, that war was waged on behalf of all poor people. But high rates of black poverty were part of the legacy of slavery and segregation, and many see the trillions spent to alleviate poverty from the New Deal onward as a good-faith attempt to address that legacy. The effort known as affirmative action also must be counted.

So, while America hasn't wholly atoned, it hasn't been wholly coldhearted either. Acknowledging that fact might help Americans see reparations not as an out-of-the-blue demand, but a logical, useful next step.

After acknowledgment and atonement, the final goal is reconciliation.

A national reparations commission would not make distrust over race disappear. It would, however, lift the veil of secrecy.

It would allow whites to see more clearly how race does impact today's public-policy issues. It would assuage blacks who feel that white America's constant refrain of ''Let's move on'' negates their experiences. It might, in the very best case, build enough trust that Americans of all races could begin to curb harmful reflexes ingrained by culture and experience.

Of course, there is more to reconciliation than government policy. Here's where individuals would play the largest role, as described by Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in his book No Future Without Forgiveness:

''Reconciliation . . . has to be a national project to which all earnestly strive to make their particular contribution—by learning the language and culture of others; by being willing to make amends; by refusing to deal in stereotypes by making racial or other jokes that ridicule a particular group; by contributing to a culture of respect for human rights, and seeking to enhance tolerance—with zero tolerance for intolerance; by working for a more inclusive society where most, if not all, can feel they belong—that they are insiders and not aliens and strangers on the outside, relegated to the edges of society.''

Acknowledgment. Atonement. Reconciliation. A good-faith, national effort dedicated to those goals could make this the last turn of a century in which America is haunted by this intractable problem.

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, May 20, 2001]

JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

What is the scariest thing about a discussion of reparations for slavery?

Is it the money? No. The country would have a long and loud argument over this, but, at heart, Americans are a generous people. Convince them of a genuine need or wrong, confront them with an emergency, and they'll dig deep to make things right.

Is it the fear of dividing the country? Only for those who don't recognize the divisions already there. Look at the black-white fault lines on issues such as affirmative action, the criminal justice system, support for political parties.

Is it that even reparations might not be enough to eliminate racism or demagoguery? Well, they won't. They won't fully make up for the horrors of slavery and segregation, either. They'll be a step, as much symbol as substance, to acknowledge wrong and atone in some way in hope of reconciliation.

No, the thing that is scariest is also what will have the greatest long-term benefit.

Knowledge.

Knowledge, above all, is what America would gain if Congress moved ahead on U.S. Rep. John Conyers' bill calling for a commission to study the impact of slavery and discrimination and to make recommendations on remedies.

And knowledge can heal, even as the gaining of it causes some pain.

A national study will reveal some truths about race in America—maybe more than many want to know, but much that the nation needs to know.

The challenge will be keeping this knowledge in perspective, in remembering that this racial history is one truth about America, but not the sole defining truth. That the seeking of this knowledge is itself part of the process of atonement. That acknowledging these truths is a necessary step to true reconciliation.

How can the past teach about race in America today?

Consider, for example, the charges about black disenfranchisement in Florida last November. How different do those events look when viewed not in isolation, but from the perspective of America's tradition of turn-of-the-century disenfranchisement?

In the 1790s, as the revolutionary principle ''all men are created equal'' waned, free blacks were disenfranchised in Delaware, Maryland and Kentucky. In the early 1800s, many Northern states followed suit (New Jersey in 1807; Pennsylvania in the 1830s).

At the turn of the next century, despite civil rights gained by blacks after the Civil War, Southern states enshrined disenfranchisement in law, with such things as poll taxes and literacy tests. Consider the political impact in just one state: In Louisiana, the number of African American voters dropped from more than 130,000 in 1896 to 1,342 in 1904.

So what does this tradition tell us? First, that ''Let's move on'' will never be an adequate response to concerns about political disempowerment of African Americans. History demands vigilance in protecting fundamental rights. Second, though, it also suggests how much has changed for the better. However you judge the unproven charges in Florida, they hardly resemble the wholesale, deliberate disenfranchisement that occurred in Jim Crow or slavery-era America.

That's the scary thing about knowledge. It leads to new places. Instead of giving either side the trump card in the ongoing racial debate, it might challenge old assumptions and raise new questions.

But running away from knowledge poses even greater risks in the long run.

Studying the impact of slavery and segregation is not just a task for historians. A reparations commission could provide an opportunity for Americans of all descriptions to come forward and tell their stories and the stories of their families; to fill in the gaps, to give voice to those who were silenced.

This education process has great potential to heal. There is tremendous power in airing what has been denied for generations. Just by listening, this commission, representing the people of the United States, can acknowledge and honor what has been endured. It can show that America is ready to hear and accept responsibility for the full story of its history.

Then the question arises: How can the living symbolically repay for political, economic and social wrongs stretching back over more than two centuries?

Some argue that the next step is for the government to issue checks to descendants of slaves. Many assume that's all reparations mean.

Not so.

Individual checks would have made sense and been just if given directly to slaves or their immediate descendants.

But today, the complications and logistics of issuing checks to descendants five generations removed boggle the mind. It's hard to see justice in that. It's even harder to envision it leading to any forrn of national reconciliation.

A commission studying slavery and reparations will be besieged with alternatives. It should give any creative, legitimate idea its due. But it must ensure that any recommendations are made with an eye toward balancing the justice that is deserved with the reconciliation that is needed.

What follows is one way to handle reparations.

A commission that has spent so much of its time educating America might consider it appropriate to carry on that theme in three ongoing projects.

The first project would meet the need for broad, symbolic restitution for the 76 years that slavery was legal under the U.S. government.

As an example, what if a national reparations fund—say $500 billion spread over a decade—was devoted to addressing the shortfall in academic resources and expectations facing black children?

One use of the money could be to build, renovate and repair schools in the nation's neediest school districts. The U.S. General Accounting office said in 1996 that it would cost $112 billion ''just to achieve 'good overall condition' '' in the nation's schools. Such a program would benefit minorities primarily, but not exclusively. It would attack the inequality that does the most to turn differences of race into differences of income and opportunity.

Framing a national act of atonement around such a positive agenda would be both spiritually satisfying and pragmatic. It would help poor urban and rural districts do a much better job of preparing young African Americans and other students for work and citizenship; it might help revive urban centers and curb suburban sprawl.

A second project could address the 100 years of unconstitutional discrimination and segregation that followed slavery. It would compensate African American families who could demonstrate, subject to reasonable limits, that they or their ancestors suffered substantial losses because of racial discrimination.

Foremost among these would be the descendants of the almost 5,000 victims of lynchings. But also included could be victims of riots in which whites attacked black communities in places like Wilmington, N.C., in 1898, New Orleans in 1900, Atlanta in 1906, Tulsa in 1921, or dozens of others.

Again, the reparations need not be in the form of individual checks. For example, it could be college tuition credits for a generation of members of that family.

Finally, the nation could begin a third project dedicated to continuing education for everyone. It would include a museum in Washington, equal in stature to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, that would lead an ongoing exploration of issues related to race and ethnicity in America.

Through this project, Americans of all ethnicities could answer the questions that arise often during any reparations discussion: What about us? What about our story, our unhealed wounds?

The point would not be to stage a contest to see who suffered the most. It would be an effort to show the range of experiences—and the similarities. Study them together and maybe America can see more clearly the patterns of hate and discrimination that rise up at certain points in history and damage the nation's soul.

Maybe that knowledge can help the country do right by future immigrants, sparing them some pain and showing that a nation can learn from its mistakes.

A thoughtful study of slavery, discrimination and their aftermath would, no doubt, bring forward other good ideas to handle reparations.

But first, America must accept that it must face this unfinished business. As W.E.B. DuBois wrote,

''We have the somewhat inchoate idea that we are not destined to be harassed with great social questions, and that even if we are, and fail to answer them, the fault is with the question and not with us. . . . Such an attitude is dangerous . . . The riddle of the Sphinx may be postponed, it may be evasively answered now; sometime it must be fully answered.''

President Bush, Congress and the American people can heed Mr. DuBois' wisdom and take up his challenge. The Conyers bill shows how to take the first step.

SOCIAL SECURITY

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend to my colleagues a new book written by former Social Security Administration Commissioner Robert Ball.

As we in Congress grapple with the future of Social Security, it makes sense to listen to the words of wisdom offered by someone who has spend a lifetime working with the program. Bob Ball began working in the Social Security Administration in 1939 and ran the program for more than 20 years. Clearly, Mr. Ball is one of the country's foremost experts on Social Security.

A collection of Mr. Ball's essays, ''Insuring the Essentials: Bob Ball on Social Security'', has recently been published by the Century Foundation Press. These essays not only chronicle the history of the program, but frame past and current Social Security reform proposals in clear, concise terms. I encourage my colleagues in Congress, and all Americans interested in the subject of Social Security, to read this valuable book.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a review of Mr. Ball's book, which appeared in the May 12 edition of National Journal.

[From the National Journal, May 12, 2001]

IT'S NOT JUST A PENSION PLAN (DAMMIT!)

(By Robert Ourlian)

You may have heard the one about Alf Landon's ill-fated tirade during the 1936 presidential campaign and how it blew up in his face like a prank cigar, leaving him wide-eyed and blinking. This was the attack on the year-old Social Security Act, which he denounced with every overreaching adjective it was his misfortune to muster. ''It is a glaring example of the bungling and waste that have characterized this Administration's attempts to fulfill its benevolent purposes,'' Landon said with Magoo-like chagrin. He called the act ''unjust, unworkable, stupidly drafted and wastefully financed,'' and ''a fraud on the working man.''

Bob Ball includes a hearty mention of Landon's little game of Republican roulette in his new book, Insuring the Essentials: Bob Ball on Social Security. Ball is not unbiased on this subject. He has spent a lifetime helping develop an American form of social insurance and defending it against people like Landon. Now 87, Ball began his work at the federal Social Security Administration in 1939, and he ran the program from 1952–73. He has served as a member of or adviser to nearly all of the many, many, many advisory councils on Social Security (the latest was appointed only last week). He has written, testified, consulted, argued, lectured, and exhorted so profusely that he probably deserves the nickname suggested by his Century Foundation editor—Mr. Social Security.

Ball went so far as to make a pro-Al Gore political advertisement last year, heaping scorn on George W. Bush's plans for retirement accounts (Ball considered the ad muted; Gore's people thought it was powerful). Ball counsels Democrats and openly praises labor unions, his allies in many Social Security battles. He expects no calls from the White House these days.

But even as a combatant, Ball engages, it must be said, graciously. In this book, he deftly—almost slyly—appoints out where the partisan fault lines are in the Social Security debate, and who takes which side. For some in the debate, this is good to know. In one essay, he mentions Landon and other early Republican opponents, and in a later one, hints that Eisenhower Republicans were self-destructively slow to warm to Social Security. In other chapters, he dispassionately discusses the proposals—mainly, though not always, Republican ones, through the decades—to downsize, privatize, outsource, and otherwise rip some of the system from its federal moorings—a goal Ball plainly considers undesirable.

Still, Ball knows what we're dealing with here, and, so do we: the deep-rooted struggle over government's role in America. To his Republican, corporate, and conservative adversaries, Ball is saying, in a polite and sometimes roundabout way, ''Let's rumble.'' Ball obviously believes government has a role in promoting such things as justice, fairness, and equality while respecting individuality.

In his preface, he quotes Abraham Lincoln on the government's job to ''do for a community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all or cannot do so well for themselves.'' Ball includes his own 1986 address to a conference on older people, challenging the rugged Reaganism of that decade on the need for long-term care for the elderly. ''This issue will be a good test,'' he says, ''of whether Americans are really against the use of government for social purposes . . . or whether they like President Reagan more than they like his philosophy.''

In a commencement address delivered at the University of Maryland a year earlier, he lectures: ''Greed is not enough if we are to address successfully the great challenges that face the world. If each of us pursues a life dedicated to getting the most we can for ourselves, it will not automatically follow that the community will be better off. There is a law of reciprocal obligation.''

Now President Bush has created another Social Security advisory council. So this meandering collection of essays, articles, op-eds, and lectures written by Bob Ball over a stretch of nearly 60 years is nothing if not timely. It takes the reader on an interesting, if sometimes challenging, ride through the development of American social insurance.