

Paul's Episcopal Church and Emmanuel Church on the Hill Episcopal Church in Alexandria.

As we remember Dr. Johnson, with his family present today in the Well of the House Chamber, it was this humble member of the Greatest Generation and his contributions that made the American Century possible. He is survived by his wife of 63 years Margaret Ann (Emhardt); three children Thomas Emhardt (Julianne Mueller), William Harrison (Tracy Schario), and the Rev. Sarah Nelson; and seven grandchildren—Gaelen, Caleb, Eliza, Keegan, and Maren Nelson and Natalie and Garrett Johnson.

We owe Dr. Johnson and his peers deep gratitude for their achievements and their courage—facing down incredible challenges. We live in the greatest country in the world because of men like Dr. Johnson—ones that always believed in America's promise for the future.

ECONOMIC CLIMATE IN BLACK AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus will present eight or nine speakers on the Democratic side in just a few minutes. I am the first of many who will be speaking.

We come to the floor today to express our deepest sympathy and support to the family of Freddie Gray and to the citizens of Baltimore, Maryland.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, the events in Baltimore are not just about police misconduct. It is about pervasive poverty. It is about unemployment, lack of opportunity, hopelessness, and despair.

Since the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson nearly 9 months ago, more than 25 bills have been introduced by members of the CBC that address the need for law enforcement accountability. Today, I call on my House and Senate colleagues to put aside partisanship and take up some or all of these bills. This issue has an impact on all of us.

We must address economic disparities that face Black communities all across the Nation. Baltimore, Mr. Speaker, is not unique.

The economic climate in Black America and the divide that has persisted for generations is due largely to our country's history of disparate treatment of African Americans and lack of opportunity.

While much of the country has experienced an economic recovery over the last 6 years, it has not reached the African American community.

Recently, the CBC and the Joint Economic Committee released a report on the economic challenges facing African Americans. African Americans are struggling and continue to face high rates of persistent poverty, unemployment, long-term unemployment, as

well as significantly lower incomes and slower wealth accumulation.

More than 400 counties in the United States suffer poverty rates greater than 20 percent. These rates have persisted now for more than 30 years. The median income of African American households is \$34,000, \$24,000 less than the median income of households. The median net worth of White households is 13 times the level for Black households. Black Americans are almost three times more likely to live in poverty.

At 10.1 percent, the current unemployment rate for Black Americans is double the rate for White Americans. Black Americans currently face an unemployment rate higher than the national unemployment rate reached during the recession.

African Americans are less likely to obtain education beyond high school than White students. They are less likely to earn a college degree. Even among college graduates, Blacks face worse job prospects than Whites. The unemployment rate for Black workers with at least a bachelor's degree is 5.2 percent, compared to 2.9 percent for White workers.

Forty-four percent of Black Americans own a home, compared to 74 percent of Whites.

In my home State of North Carolina, the unemployment rate for African Americans is 9.9 percent, based on an unemployment rate of 3.2 percent for Whites. The poverty rate for African Americans is 27.5 percent, while for Whites it is 12.6.

Right here, Mr. Speaker, in the District of Columbia, the median household income for African Americans is \$38,300 for Blacks and \$115,900 for Whites, a gap of \$77,000. The D.C. poverty rate is 27.4 percent for African Americans, compared to 7.6 percent for Whites.

Colleagues, these statistics tell the story. These numbers are staggering, troubling, and problematic. It is time for a renewed focus on Blacks in America and a need for real solutions on issues that have persistently plagued our communities.

I will end, Mr. Speaker, by quoting some excerpts from President Johnson's 1964 State of the Union Speech. And he said: "Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity."

"This administration today," he said, "here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort," he said.

"It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won."

President Johnson said: "The richest Nation on Earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it. One thou-

sand dollars invested in salvaging an unemployable youth today can return \$40,000 or more in his lifetime."

President Johnson said: "Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the State and local level and must be supported and directed by State and local efforts."

He said: "For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House."

"The program I shall propose," he said, "will emphasize this cooperative approach to help that one-fifth of all American families with incomes too small to even meet their basic needs."

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, January 8, 1964, from this Chamber.

IT IS SILLY SEASON IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, it is silly season again in Washington. It is that time of year when we have our annual budget debates and when we realize that only in Washington can an increase actually be considered a decrease.

Later today, we will vote on a bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs. That bill increases the Department's funding in real dollars from last year by 5.6 percent, and yet, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle claim it is a decrease, when, in fact, it is the highest level of VA funding ever provided to the Department.

But even worse, we have a Secretary of Veterans Affairs who is peddling this same intellectually dishonest line as well, the Secretary of a department in which negligence in the past year contributed to the deaths of veterans. Those are the words confirmed by the Office of the Inspector General.

And yet, despite the failure of the Department, the Secretary, earlier this week, had the audacity to go behind closed doors with members of only one party and claim that somehow the 6 percent increase being provided by our committee will, in fact, further the VA's failures of the past.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary has exhibited a level of audacity only seen in Washington. If we are honest, it is an audacity that reflects a style of leadership likely to fail—fail the VA, but most importantly, it is going to fail veterans across the United States because, you see, here is the real story.

We still have hundreds of thousands of veterans waiting for health care and for benefits. We know there is malfeasance in VA construction, and we know the VA continues to declare veterans and dependents dead when they are, in fact, alive. But here is the most important and the most offensive part of the