

respectful of those with whom he served, perhaps differing with them, but, nevertheless, deeply respectful of his colleagues. He and Tip O'Neill were good friends. They could argue their side and their policies vigorously but be the best of friends after we adjourned that day.

I thank my colleague from Illinois for leading this tribute, and I rise to join in remembering this great man, a great American leader, Bob Michel.

Mr. Speaker, Bob's entire life was given to service to his country. From his time in the Army as an infantryman on the front lines of the fight for democracy in the Second World War to his long career in government, Leader Michel sought to make America and the world safer and to protect the American Dream for all of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I did not want to lose the majority in 1994, but when we lost, I lamented the fact that Bob Michel did not become the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In my opinion, if he had, America would be a more civil place today and this body would be a more collegial body than it is.

I want to congratulate the gentleman who represents Bob Michel's district now, succeeding in that office, his father, who is a very dear and close friend of mine. All three of them represented the best of that which America hopes would serve it well.

Bob Michel and I didn't always agree on policy, Mr. Speaker, but as colleagues, we worked together to reach consensus and achieve results. I remember in 1989 when Tony Coelho and I were working to pass the House's version of what would become the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. It was Bob Michel who saw how important this legislation would be and asked my friend, Steve Bartlett from Texas to work with me, from the Republican side of the aisle, to achieve a bipartisan version that could become law. That is how Bob Michel operated.

This House would be a better House if we followed the example of Bob Michel. He saw a problem and looked for a way we could come together around a compromised solution, not focused first on confrontation. His decency and friendliness were as evident as his seriousness as a legislator.

As Republican whip and leader, he set an example of how to lead an effective opposition based not on obstruction, but on identifying ways to work together to achieve common goals. To that extent, and in so many other ways, as I have said, Bob Michel represented the best of us.

Now, Bob, Mr. Speaker, could be tough. He could be really tough. He knew how to defend his party's interests and advance its goals in the minority. But Bob believed strongly that we who are sent here by our constituents have, first and foremost, a responsibility to make policy, not to play politics. And that is how Bob Michel served—by always, always, always putting country first. Mr. Speaker, I hope

his example will be an inspiration to all who serve today.

I join in extending my condolences to Bob's children—Scott, Bruce, Robin, and Laurie—and the entire Michel family. I join the people of Illinois' 18th District in mourning the man who was their champion for so many years. Illinois, this House, and our country lost a great light, but one, I hope, that will continue to shine through its reflection in those whom Bob Michel inspired. I was one of those. We will miss him. There aren't enough Bob Michels.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Leader Hoyer for those warm words and inspiring words and heartfelt words for Leader Michel. It means so much for his family, for all of us in Peoria, and for all of his colleagues.

I want to thank everybody here tonight from the Illinois delegation that spoke so fondly about Mr. Michel. When we think about the traits that he exemplified—integrity, sincerity, humility, genuineness, and civility—that everybody talked about here tonight, I think it is also important to remember where he came from in Illinois.

The congressional district that he represented, the 18th Congressional District, was the same district that Congressman Abraham Lincoln represented from 1847 to 1849. It is also the same congressional district that Everett Dirksen represented and that Bob Michel represented for 38 years, and you think about the values that they all exemplified, those strong midwestern values they never forgot.

The other thing that is unique about all three is they were all buried within 1 hour of each other. Oak Ridge Cemetery, President Lincoln; Pekin Cemetery, Everett Dirksen; and this last weekend, Leader Michel in Peoria, Illinois. Bob Michel could have been buried in Arlington Cemetery in a beautiful grave, but he chose to be buried next to the love of his life in Peoria, Illinois. That says a lot about the person that he was. I think it is unique that, within an hour's drive, you can go see all three of their graves, but I think it reflects the midwestern values that he had and those traits.

□ 2015

The other thing that I just want to mention here in closing is that he served his 14 years as the Republican leader, the longest of anyone in this institution as a leader of the minority party. But he also had a number of people that he mentored and tutored: from Jack Kemp, to Trent Lott, to Dick Cheney, to Newt Gingrich; people that served under him, and he mentored in their positions, and that should not be lost.

Bob Michel was a conservative Republican, but the way that he went about the work that he did, his style of civility and treating friend and foe alike, and being able to work across party lines when he needed to make this institution a better place. We need more people like Bob Michel in public

service. He is a shining example of what public service should be. I couldn't be prouder to serve in the same congressional district that he represented for 38 years.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, he made us proud to be from Peoria, Illinois. He made this institution a better place. He made this country a better place by his service of over 50 years.

Tonight we say: Mr. Leader, rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former Congressman, respected mentor, and good friend Bob Michel.

Bob was a war hero earning two Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and four battle stars. He was also one of the most respected members of Congress of all time. His 38 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives and the incredible footprint he left on Central Illinois and this country will never be forgotten.

Bob's ability to reach across the aisle to make a divided government work for the people he represented was second to none, a trait we should all strive to emulate each day. Bob taught me that bipartisanship matters and working together to get things done is even more important in the polarized environment we have today. That's where Bob Michel excelled and that's the legacy I'm going to remember.

Finally, Bob taught me to be myself, to always do what I think is right for my constituents, and to not be afraid to go home and explain why I voted the way I did. I was honored to attend Bob's funeral this past Saturday, along with many others who knew and loved him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family. He will truly be missed.

CBC/SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, the CBC chair, Mr. CEDRIC RICHMOND, and myself have a great honor that I rise today as one of the anchors of the CBC, the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour.

For the next 60 minutes I have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

During this hour, as Black History Month ends in the next day, we believe it is important for this Congress and

for the people of America to hear about the great importance of grassroots movements, which have been the fortifying effect of the civil rights movements and other movements here in this country, and have made this country very great.

At this time I would yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND), the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, who will speak on this subject matter here on the floor.

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, STACEY PLASKETT from the Virgin Islands, for taking this assignment and making sure that the Congressional Black Caucus continues its conversation with America, and to inform people on issues that are important to us, and also reflecting on how important African-American history is, not just to us, but to this country.

It is African-American history that made this country great in the first place. How our civil rights groups and people of the same kind, not necessarily the same color, came together to make this a more perfect union.

So today what I wanted to do was actually talk about some of the civil rights organizations that changed this country, made it better, made it possible for me to be here, and compare and talk about some of the movements that we see today that are making some of the same differences for the next generation. It is just a shame that in 2017 we are still fighting the same fights we fought 50 years ago for voting rights, for equality, and all of those things.

So when I say I want to talk about some of those organizations, I want to talk about organizations like SCLC, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; or CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality; or SNCC, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. They all played an important role in launching grassroots movements that succeeded in ensuring more equality for African Americans.

Sit-ins, bus boycotts, marches, voter registration drives, and other protests—these grassroots movements spread across the South, including my home State of Louisiana.

Let's just talk about one specific incident. September 9, 1960, the Woolworth store lunch counter in New Orleans closed early.

What was the reason?

Seven members of the Congress of Racial Equality, five Black students and two White students, decided to hold a sit-in demonstration to protest Jim Crow. This was the first-ever sit-in in the city.

The seven students were like so many other students across the South at the time who were using nonviolent action to change the country. In fact, let me read their names because many of them I knew.

In fact, one, Jerome Smith, who was a Southern University student the year before, is actually still on the battlefield in Louisiana not only coaching

Little League, but fighting for criminal justice reform and financial and economic equality.

You also had Rudy Lombard from Xavier University, a freedom fighter; Archie Allen from Dillard University; Bill Harrell from Tulane; William Harper, who was at LSU; Hugh Murray, who was also at Tulane; and Joyce Taylor, who intended to enroll at Southern University.

Fortunately, unlike others who held sit-ins, these seven Southern students didn't have milkshakes thrown on them. They were not beaten or bloodied. The seven students sat down at 10:30. Six police officers were on hand to keep the peace and did not try to remove the students. The students sat there determined for 2 hours.

Because of the demonstration, Woolworth blinked first. They decided to close early that day and they closed at 12:30, after the students had sat there for 2 hours.

These seven students and so many other civil rights activists are the shoulders on which we all stand. Unfortunately, the fight for equality is not over. We see this most clearly when we look at our criminal justice system. To date, the organization Black Lives Matter has launched a grassroots movement that has succeeded in exposing police brutality and making it front-page news.

The movement began in 2012, after the death of Trayvon Martin, who was killed by a neighborhood watchman on February 26, 2012. I would be remiss if I did not mention that yesterday was the fifth anniversary of Trayvon Martin's death.

Black Lives Matter is focused on all of the ways Black people are disempowered by the State, including police brutality. In addition to exposing police brutality and making it front-page news, Black Lives Matter, like the organizations during the civil rights movement, has attracted a diverse coalition of supporters.

The reality is not lost on African Americans. As I mentioned before, two of the protesters who sat in at the Woolworth store in Louisiana were White. If you go back to Philadelphia, Mississippi, where they found the three bodies of the civil rights workers who were registering people to vote, you saw Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner—one African American and two White Americans—who stuck together fighting in justice.

Dr. King said so eloquently: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

So as we talk about our organizations like SNCC, CORE, and SCLC, and we talk about Black Lives Matter, it reminds me of the time when Dr. King was sitting in the Birmingham jail, and seven—eight White religious leaders in the South criticized Dr. King, asking: Why he couldn't wait. Why did he have to force the issue? And why, as an outsider, he was down in Birmingham?

Dr. King responded and initially said: "I don't usually answer criticism be-

cause I would be doing it all day, but because I believe you to be eight men of goodwill, I will take the time to answer."

I just want to read you an excerpt of his answer because I think it is so appropriate when we think of our groups that are coming up now.

He said: "I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of 'outsiders coming in.' I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every Southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia."

It then goes on to say: "So I am here, along with several members of my staff, because we were invited here. I am here because I have basic organizational ties here."

Then he goes on to say: "Beyond this, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their 'thus saith the Lord' far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Greco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my particular hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid."

So when you think of Black Lives Matter and other protests, the first comment is: We are outside agitators; why are they here?

They are here because injustice is here. So all marginalized groups must stand together in the fight against injustice. This was important during the civil rights movement and it is important now.

In that spirit, African Americans fully recognize the importance of not only joining movements in support of their rights, but also joining movements in support of the rights of others.

Standing Rock: Most recently, African Americans and others have stood with Native Americans at Standing Rock to protest the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Muslim ban: We have stood with the Muslim community to protest the Trump administration's controversial Muslim ban.

Then there was the Women's March, which was led by a diverse coalition of organizers and attracted millions of protesters across the Nation and the world to protest sexism and other gender issues. African Americans participated in the march, including several members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Then we can talk about indivisible. African Americans and others have stood with their fellow constituents at recent townhalls to make sure that their Congressman or Congresswoman hears their voices on the Affordable Care Act and other issues. Some of

these exercises in civic participation have been inspired by the guidebook "Indivisible," which, as the authors state, provides best practices on getting elected officials to listen.

Then there is Moral Mondays with Reverend William Barber. It began in 2013 after the Republicans took over the Governor's mansion and State legislature in the Tar Heel State for the first time in more than a century. On what was supposed to be the first and only Monday protest, Barber led a small group of clergy and activists to the State legislature to protest the State Republicans' efforts to block Medicaid expansion, cut unemployment benefits, and roll back voting rights. The next Monday, hundreds of protesters showed up, and hundreds soon became thousands. These protests became known as Moral Mondays, and they eventually spread across the South.

So let me just say that from SCLC to SNCC, to CORE, to "Indivisible," to Moral Mondays and Reverend Barber, to Black Lives Matter, people of like mind that fight for justice come together. And that, we learned from the civil rights movement, and that is our contribution to date to Black History Month and celebrating that civil protests and civil disobedience can change and make this a more perfect union.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I really was moved by the portion that Mr. RICHMOND talked about concerning outsiders coming to organizations and coming to protests, and saying possibly that they are outsiders.

No. We are all American, and we will join with other individuals in other areas that need our support and feel oppressed, and feel that justice has not been on our side. That has been the Black American experience. That is the American experience of civil protests and working for a more perfect union.

Mr. Speaker, I yield time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), who also wants to speak about, as we close Black History Month, some of the accomplishments of Black Americans, of the Black movement here in the United States as we move to becoming a more perfect union, and how grassroots organizations have played a part in that role.

□ 2030

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for leading this Special Order hour on the topic of Black History Month.

We have been doing this together and doing a really great job. I appreciate everything that the gentlewoman brings and the remarks she has made during this Black History Month time because it really is a time for us to reflect about the gains that have been made, about the progress that has been made. It is also a time to see where we can make some improvements, where we can make our Nation a more perfect

Union, as we really look at things and not pretend that certain things don't exist, to really use history, use present day and see where we can come together, form some public policy to really get the country moving forward and be inclusive for all people. I think that is so important.

For a long time now, one of the areas—it has been talked a lot about when it comes to civil rights—is grassroots and how those grassroots movements within the African-American community, particularly from a Black history perspective, really changed things here in our country.

For a long time, African Americans have long fought for the right for a fair chance of livable wages, improvement of on-the-job conditions, and the ability to provide basic necessities for our families, whether it was wages, fairness in working conditions. That was always one of the rights that we fought very hard for. Access to these basic rights that I just mentioned and privileges would not have been possible without groups of dedicated organizers working together to fight on behalf of larger progress.

The right to organize is not a new theory for change. Since reconstruction, organizing has helped level the playing field for all and continues to drive much of our Nation's progress.

The weekends that we enjoy, a lot of people—particularly when I was growing up in the Black community in Fort Worth, people looked forward to that end of the week. People looked forward to that getting-off time, that 40 hours a week. Those things were fought for. Those were gains that were made by sacrifice, by grassroots organizing. Much of that was done in the African-American community.

We know that even around the issue of progress and labor issues that much of it was tainted by race. Organized labor has been such a big part of the advancement of the African-American community. Early on, there were some issues with some trade organizations that were established by White workers, and African Americans had a hard time gaining their footing in those areas.

As a result of that, Black workers continued to push and organize. I think about one of Dr. King's quotes. It is one of my favorite quotes that he gave that is not mentioned that often. He was speaking to a group of laundry workers in 1962.

Dr. King said this to the laundry workers. He said: "As I have said many times, and believe with all my heart, the coalition that can have the greatest impact in the circle for human dignity here in America is that of the Negro and the forces of labor, because their fortunes are so closely intertwined."

More importantly, when Dr. King gave that speech, he wanted people to know that, not only are professional jobs, white-collar jobs, important, but he wanted the people that worked in

that laundry room to know that their job was important, too. He pushed for people, no matter whether they were garbage workers, sanitation workers, laundry workers, whatever they happened to be in life, to make sure that they had certain basic rights and privileges that other groups in this country enjoyed because he knew that that was going to be the vehicle that was going to provide economic mobility, upward mobility for the African-American community.

The very principle of economic opportunity for African Americans laid the groundwork for the civil rights movement that Dr. King was such a big part of. And we know that that played a big part in Dr. King and what happened during his death in 1968.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) knows that people like he and I would never be here, never have been able to be educated without people who worked in laundry rooms, who were blue-collar workers, policemen, others. Those gains from Dr. King have afforded education and support and home ownership to the first group of Black Americans who moved into the middle class and are here in Congress now.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY).

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, so many people that I have memories of, some are still here and some are gone, but they really laid the foundation for a Black middle class.

Maybe Granddaddy worked at the school and Grandmother worked at someone's house or maybe they were fortunate enough to have two good labor jobs where they made union wages, but it laid that groundwork for the foundation that we have today.

Dr. King was obviously a big part of that. Sadly, on April 4, 1968, he paid his life supporting the sanitation workers in Memphis, trying to push for them to have better wages.

When Dr. King died, it wasn't about trying to open up a restaurant to make sure that all people had access to that restaurant or some other place, to make sure that people could ride on the bus; it was to make sure that people had equal opportunity in this country, again, equal opportunity for upward mobility, equal opportunity to be able to take care of their families. I just really appreciate everything that he did.

We need to continue to mobilize and organize grassroots efforts around the income inequality in this country. The income inequality that we have in this country is very, very real.

You see productivity rising in our country. You see companies recording record productivity, but wages are stagnant. There used to be a time in this country that wages would go up when productivity of companies went up, and we are not seeing that anymore. I think that is really, really sad. We need to organize around that because all people need the opportunity

to be able to advance as the country advances and as industry advances. I think that that is a big part of that.

Again, I thank all our colleagues that have come here tonight to organize, to carry the torch. We need to continue to find different ways that we can use grassroots movements in this country, not just looking back and reflecting on previous grassroots and events, but how we can learn from that history and how we can mobilize people today to better America, to better wages for all communities, for the African-American community, of course, as we celebrate and come toward the end of Black History Month, but Latino communities, White communities, people in the Rust Belt, and African-American communities in places like Gary, Indiana, that really saw their fortunes hurt more than many other parts of the country. We need to get together and work on that.

So I want to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT). I know we have some other colleagues who are going to speak here tonight, and I thank them for being a part of this day.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) to speak on the issue of grassroots organizations.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership, all the work that he has done for the people of Philadelphia in his tenure. We welcome him here to the CBC hour and the information that he is going to share with us, as well as all Americans, on this topic.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, in 1976, the United States Government officially recognized Black History Month.

Every February since, we take the time to reflect on the contributions African Americans have made to this great Nation. We stand on the shoulders of those who have paved the way not only for African Americans, but for all Americans: individuals such as Shirley Chisholm, who once was a Member of this body and the first African-American woman elected to the United States Congress; Congressman Parren Mitchell; Justice Thurgood Marshall; and my personal hero, Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, a civil rights leader and a social activist who understood jobs were the key to economic development and empowerment of African Americans.

Reverend Sullivan had a very simple statement: "Don't buy where you don't work." That is what Reverend Sullivan said: "Don't buy where you don't work."

Reverend Sullivan, who was on the board of General Motors, started something called OIC, that we all know about, in 1964. I was 10 years old when Reverend Sullivan started OIC Industrial Center.

Reverend Sullivan led a movement, a movement that 400 ministers led against a baking company in the city of Philadelphia called Tastykake. That is where he said: "Don't buy where you

don't work." That is a message that is still very relevant to where we are today. It is clear that we need to change the dynamics of this economic structure.

Despite the strides that some have made in our country, we still have a long way to go to make our country a more perfect Union. Tonight, we want to ensure that those who have joined, specifically at the grassroots, in the quest for justice and equality understand that we are still fighting. Communities across our Nation are struggling, and we have to continue to fight against policies and actions that will negatively impact them, including the repeal and inadequate replacement of the Affordable Care Act.

Constituents in my district rely on the Affordable Care Act heavily, and dismantling this law will be devastating and result in the loss of jobs. Those in my district want us to understand the hardships they are going through; thus, we must all ensure that we listen to the concerns of our communities.

I personally made it a point to visit hospitals, attend rallies, visit colleges, and reach out to the community. I serve because it is my job. I was elected to represent the people. We stand united with those at the grassroots movement who are fighting for justice for all.

Colleagues, let's continue to join with those who are pushing in the right direction, not just on Black History Month, but every month and every day and every moment. This is a rather unique opportunity in history, and we all can play a role in the change in the effort.

I am proud to be a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and to be standing with my colleagues here today, pushing the message and the conscience of this country that we are still not finished. From those whom I just mentioned and the shoulders that we stand on, we still have a lot of work.

I thank both of my colleagues for leading this effort and demonstrating it. I thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for his leadership.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), who is also a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, who formerly led this Special Order hour and has been really a great mentor and support for us here in this time. She will also speak about some of the grassroots work that has been going on in the present time as well as in the past during this Special Order hour.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, some would conclude that Black History Month comes to a close because we are at the end of February, but the Congressional Black Caucus wants the Nation to know that we are prepared to share our agenda all year long.

The Congressional Black Caucus comes to the House floor tonight to

commemorate those brave men and women who came before us to fight for justice, equality, civil rights, and voting rights for all. These are men and women who shaped our Nation in the hope it would one day become a more perfect Union for all Americans, no matter their creed or color.

□ 2045

I want to thank our Congressional Black Caucus chairman, Congressman CEDRIC RICHMOND, and our Special Order Hour coanchors, Congresswoman Stacy Plaskett and Congressman MARC VEASEY, my classmate, for hosting tonight's important discussion.

Mr. Speaker, you see, I grew up reading about soldiers of justice like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Crispus Attucks, and so many more.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I lived through the legacy of legends and civil rights leaders like Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King, Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, and Fannie Lou Hamer, all heroes and heroes that allowed me to stand on their shoulders, to stand with them to continue to fight for justice and equality.

Today, we stand up during Black History Month, as 49 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, 49 strong, making our place in American history as African Americans, members like the iconic Assistant Leader JAMES CLYBURN, who you will hear from tonight; Congressman JOHN LEWIS; Chairman CEDRIC RICHMOND; Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, who serves as the ranking member on the prestigious Financial Services Committee; Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, the 21st national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Senator KAMALA HARRIS, the second Black woman to serve in the United States Senate; Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, chairwoman of our healthcare brain trust; and so many more who serve in Congress, and who served as mayors of cities, mayors like Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER, Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE, and so many more.

You see, Mr. Speaker, we are a part of that history. We are fighting. And so I tell you, I end with one of my favorite quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we are in a challenging time with the new Trump administration, and so I say to you, we are fighting, we are uniting in a movement to fight for our democracy.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the assistant leader of the Democratic Caucus, for him to speak on the matter that is before the House at this time, that being, grassroots movements in Black history and

its importance and relevance for us here today.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me and for the work she does with this Special Order. And I thank my friend from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), for allowing me to participate.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the scholarship of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, and the perseverance of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, we continue to lift up the contributions of and achievements of Black Americans.

The celebration of Black History Month has its roots in Black History Week, established back in 1926; and because of the urgings of Carter G. Woodson, the week was selected to be the second week of February in order to embrace the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Now, later, in fact, in 1969, students at Kent State University, after having experienced some turmoil on their campus back in 1968, as it took place on campuses in other places across the country—Jackson State in Mississippi, South Carolina State in South Carolina—students at Kent State decided, as a part of their redress, to expand the week to a month. So they, in 1970, celebrated what they called Black History Month.

Now, 6 years later, President Gerald Ford signed legislation creating Black History Month. When he signed that legislation, he said it was to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans.

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History is entrusted with the celebration every year, and it falls upon them to select a theme for each year. This year they have selected the theme which I think is very timely, “The Crisis in Black Education.” Having started my professional career as a public school teacher, I totally embrace this particular topic for this year.

Throughout our history, especially post-Civil War history, there has always been a focus on Black education. As we all know, slaves were not allowed to be educated, and, as a result, when the Civil War came to a close, there was this big push to get the former slaves educated.

One of the leaders of that push was one of my heroes, Robert Smalls. Robert Smalls, though he was not allowed to be educated himself because he was born into slavery, used his God-given intellect to study the currents of the Charleston Harbor and to study the whistles that were used on the ship that he was working on as a slave. He decided that he could, at some point, find his way to freedom.

Because he learned those currents so well, and because he became very proficient at studying the sounds of the whistles on the ships, one night, when the opportunity presented itself, he absconded The Planter that he was working on, navigated the waters out of the

Charleston Harbor, picked up his wife and friends, and sailed them into freedom. And when he delivered that ship to the Union soldiers, he was rewarded with his freedom and a cash award.

Robert Smalls, after the war, went back to Beaufort and, in 1867, founded a school to educate the newly freed slaves. He also participated as a delegate to the 1868 South Carolina Constitutional Convention, and in that Convention, he authored and got passed a resolution that created the first free public schools for all in America.

He turned his wealth—or his financial reward into great wealth. And also, he became a very, I would say, successful politician. He served 10 years in the South Carolina Legislature and a total of 10 years here in this House of Representatives.

While he was participating in politics, Robert Smalls authored a piece of legislation that created what is now South Carolina State University. Therein lies a part of my presentation I would like to concentrate on tonight.

When South Carolina State University was created—I want to first get people to understand, there are more than 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the country. Now, there is a difference between—we commonly call them HBCUs. There is a difference between an HBCU and what we call an MSI, a Minority Serving Institution. All HBCUs are MSIs, but not all MSIs are HBCUs, simply because the definition means that you must have been in existence before 1964.

We have had a lot of Minority Serving Institutions that have been created since 1964; to name just a few, Malcolm X College, Medgar Evers College. These are all Minority Serving Institutions. There are a lot of Hispanic Serving Institutions, but they are not necessarily HBCUs.

The reason I point this out, because here in this Congress, in this body, currently, 19 members of the Congressional Black Caucus are graduates of HBCUs. Now, the reason I point this out is because I think it is necessary for us to understand the role that these colleges and universities play in our society.

I often spend a lot of time with friends, many of whom are graduates of HBCUs, and I knew Astronaut Ronald McNair very well. I have a good friend, a cardiologist, recently retired, David Dowdy. I also have a friend, a California businesswoman who I interact with quite a bit, Janice Howroyd. All three of these people graduated from North Carolina A&T State University.

I have talked a lot with another former Member, Carrie Meek, a former Member of Congress; her son, Kendrick Meek; former Congresswoman Corrine Brown; and the chairman of the board of Microsoft, John Thompson. All four of these individuals are graduates of Florida A&M University, an HBCU. These are people who have made significant and are making significant

contributions in our thrust toward a more perfect union.

I came before this body several times the week before last highlighting some of the HBCUs that are in my congressional district. Of the more than 100 in the country, 8 of them are in South Carolina. Seven are in my congressional district. I talked about six of them when I came before this body before. Tonight I want to close out my discussion of these HBCUs by talking about two of them, Claflin University and South Carolina State University, both located adjacent to each other in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

□ 2100

Now, Claflin University was founded in 1869, by Methodist missionaries to provide education for newly freed slaves in order to prepare them for full citizenship. The university was named for William Claflin, then-Governor of Massachusetts, and his father, Lee Claflin, both prominent abolitionists and Methodists. They provided a large portion of the funds needed to purchase the land for the campus. Claflin is the oldest Historically Black College in South Carolina. In its beginning, it had a law school which was headed by former South Carolina Supreme Court Justice Jonathan Jasper Wright, the first African American to serve on South Carolina's highest court.

In 1948, under the leadership of its first alumnus to serve as president, Dr. John Seabrook, Claflin was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It has always featured a strong music program, and the Claflin University collegiate choir performed at the 1965 World's Fair in New York. Claflin graduate and Kingstree, South Carolina native, Dr. Henry Tisdale has served as the university's president since 1994. Under his leadership, Claflin has thrived and grown to new heights. He has built Claflin to an enrollment of almost 2,000 students and consistently seen it ranked in the top 10 nationally for HBCUs. In 1999, through funds from the HBCU Historic Preservation program by this body, the historic Ministers' Hall was restored.

The auditorium at Ministers' Hall was named for former Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney, one of Claflin's most notable graduates. Finney graduated from South Carolina State's law school and would go on to serve on the South Carolina Supreme Court from 1985 through 2000, including 6 years as Chief Justice. Early in his career, Ernest Finney represented the Friendship 9, a group of Rock Hill students who were jailed in 1961 for a sit-in in McCrory's lunch counter. In 2015, Finney represented the surviving eight members of this group to see their convictions overturned—54 years after they were originally prosecuted.

Claflin is still affiliated with the United Methodist Church and offers multiple master's degrees, as well as a highly regarded honors program. For 148 years, Claflin has been a beacon of

hope and a place of refuge for those who desired a quality education regardless of race and/or gender.

Mr. Speaker, the final HBCU in this series is my alma mater, South Carolina State University. South Carolina State University has its roots in the Morrill Acts, the first of which was passed by Congress in 1862. The Morrill Act of 1862 created land grant colleges, a system of agriculture, science, and engineering and military science schools. One of the schools established under this law was Clemson University. But after Reconstruction ended, Southern States refused to admit African Americans to these institutions; consequently, Congress passed a second Morrill Act in 1890, which stipulated that Blacks must be included in the land grant system. Southern States had the choice to either admit Blacks to the 1862 institutions or create new land grant institutions which would be open to Blacks.

In South Carolina, by the 1890s, White supremacists had gained total control over State government. Though the State was still majority African American, through illegal and violent intimidation, extreme voter suppression, and outright fraud, Benjamin Tillman was elected Governor in 1890. The Constitutional Convention of 1895 subsequently codified White supremacy and the disenfranchisement of African Americans into the State's system of governance. When the United States Supreme Court sanctioned segregation the following year in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, segregation was firmly the law of the land.

This was the context for the founding, in 1896, of the Colored Normal, Industrial, Agricultural and Mechanical College of South Carolina, as South Carolina State was originally named. The State of South Carolina continued to resist but relented when land was acquired from Claflin University, and the campus of what is now known as South Carolina State University was born. It continues to be the only publicly supported HBCU in South Carolina.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, that I have consumed a lot of time, and I don't want to take all of the time from my colleagues, so let me just close by saying this: South Carolina State's first president was a man named Thomas E. Miller who served as a Member of this body. Thomas Miller guided the school for several years. Notable graduates of this institution are folks like Dr. Benjamin Mays, the noted president of Morehouse College.

South Carolina State has a reputation as producing more African-American general officers than any other school in this country. I entered South Carolina State in 1957, and, of course, I was there during the turbulent sixties. It was my great honor to help organize the first sit-in in South Carolina. You talk about grassroots. That took place on March 15, 1960. Now, I was jailed as a result of that sit-in, but it just so

happens that sometimes good things can come out of jail. While I was there, a young lady came to bring food. I was so grateful for that hamburger she gave me, I married her 18 months later, and if all goes well, come June 24, she and I will celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary.

Now, when all of these cases took place growing out of these demonstrations and sit-ins, one stands out which I will close with. I mentioned Kent State in 1968, Jackson State, and South Carolina State. A lot of people have heard of Kent State. Few people know about the deaths of three students and the injuries of 27 others in an incident called the Orangeburg massacre that took place in 1968, all over the integration of a bowling alley.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close my comments by thanking the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for giving me this opportunity and the gentleman from Texas and thank them very much for highlighting Black History Month.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for me to really share the real impact that schools like Claflin, South Carolina State, and the over 100 other HBCUs have had on our great country. But, as I conclude our observance of Black History Month, I salute all of them and thank them for the indelible mark that they have made on the fabric of our Nation.

Ms. PLASKETT. I thank you so much, Mr. JAMES CLYBURN. There can never be enough time for you to tell these stories and to educate and highlight to all of us the experiences that you have had personally, as well as the importance of Black History Month, and particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities to the fabric of the United States. Thank you so much, sir.

Mr. Speaker, as we have been discussing, often grassroots organizations are actually born out of necessity, not only because the system has not worked for them oftentimes, but sometimes because the system has been created, has been reorganized, or is actively fighting against them. Virgin Islanders understand the importance and the value of grassroots organizations. It is our nature and our lifeblood. We are a small people on a small island who have a history that was born out of oppression. So the very need for grassroots organizations and people who are resilient and willing to resist and fight in a passionate manner has been our very nature.

Our first experience with grassroots organizations was in 1733, on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands, which is probably the first slave uprising in the Western Hemisphere where a group of 150 slaves decided that they had had enough, and those Akwamu slaves of Ghana decided that they were going to throw off the shackles and rebel and organize themselves. They were so effective at it, Mr. Speaker, that they were able to hold the island of St. John

for 6 months against the Danish Government. The Danes had to organize in such a manner that they brought the French and the Swiss Government to provide assistance to them. The slaves of St. John were quelled after that rebellion, but it took a grassroots group of organized individuals to be able to do that.

Again, on July 3 of 1848, many people don't know that the Virgin Islands became the second place in the Western Hemisphere to receive emancipation after Haiti. We did that on July 3, 1848, through the work of General Buddhoe. But what people do not know is that John Buddhoe had an enormous organizational group that plotted and planned for months before the actual staging of that uprising, which was so effective and so organized that when they went to storm the fort against an armed militia, the militia didn't realize that all of the gun powder had been taken out of the cannons and had been replaced with molasses. The slaves were so organized and so quiet and kept to themselves so much that they didn't even realize that it had been done.

The Governor of Denmark who was assigned to the Virgin Islands had to sign the emancipation on that date because he knew that this group of people were so organized that that rebellion could take the entire island out. So we received our emancipation earlier than the African Americans received theirs through that organization of grassroots.

Again, in October of 1878, the slaves had been moved not from slavery to slavery but to an organized serfdom where there were labor contracts that had to be signed. People were oppressed and living in what many here would understand as the sharecropping system but was really a serf system. Four women organized the labor rebellion at that time which we in the Virgin Islands call the Fireburn. They were willing to burn the islands down for just wages for themselves and laborers throughout the islands. They forced the signed contracts to have much better wage laws in them, much better terms in them for individuals. Those women were imprisoned and sent to Denmark—many of them burned at the stake for that rebellion. But it was grassroots organizations that were able to do that.

More recently, in the 1950s, there was the creation of the Virgin Islands Labor Union, the organizing of cane workers and field workers. I am proud to say that my own uncle, Raymond Plaskett, was one of the organizers of that. They were able to force the sugar plantation owners, the sugar industry, to sit down and create unionized, collective bargaining labels. But we would be remiss as a people if we kept those organizational skills to ourselves, and we brought that to the United States as well.

Many people know about Denmark Vesey who organized slave rebellions in

South Carolina. He did that as a free-man, coming from the Virgin Islands and understanding that oppression anywhere of anyone was an oppression of himself, and gladly laid down his life and gave up his freedom to help organize the people of Charleston, South Carolina, that my great colleague, JAMES CLYBURN, represents to bring freedom to those individuals.

Hubert Harrison from the island of St. Croix was a civil rights activist. He was the mind of Pan-Africanism, along with Edward Blyden of St. Thomas, who gave form and shape to Marcus Garvey and his organizing of his Back-to-Africa movement.

□ 2115

More recently, Roy Innis, another relative of mine, was one of the leaders of CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality. Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X are people of the Caribbean who have come to the United States and recognized that grassroots organizations must be formed to push for equal rights.

The accomplishments of the civil rights movement have given us much. It created the momentum of the Civil Rights Act, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, ended housing discrimination, the desegregation of schools. We saw Democratic political gains and the March on Washington.

But we have organized groups still growing today, because equality has not come to its full fruition in America. There is still income equality, achievement gaps, poverty, unemployment, and an increase in the use of for-profit prisons that have incarcerated Black men disproportionately. Because of that, we have seen other movements now today: Black Lives Matter, founded in 2012 after the death of Trayvon Martin; Moral Mondays, which began in April 2013 by the Reverend William Barber II of Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, after the Governor's mansion and the State legislature was taken over related to voting rights.

These are injustices that are continuing today, which African Americans and others are standing up for, whether it be Standing Rock or the Muslim ban. We had the March on Washington and the grassroots group Indivisible, which has grown with African Americans and others who stood with their constituents at recent townhalls to make sure that their Congressmen and -women hear their voices on all issues of importance.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the people of the United States need to understand the importance of grassroots organizations as we end Black History Month. This has been an outstanding time for Congress, as well as the people of America, to hear about the grassroots organizations and how they may close.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the foundation of our democracy is built upon the strength of grassroots movements and our ability to organize. It is the will of the people—and not the will of a select few—that shapes our values as a nation. While leaders and institutions play an important role in our society, ultimately it is the people themselves who create the momentum to bring about the change that they would like to see throughout our society.

The Civil Rights Movement is a definitive example of the importance of grassroots movement. The Civil Rights Movement reshaped our society into one that affords equal rights and protection under the law for all Americans. But it was also a movement that began at the local level. From protests in Virginia over *Brown vs. Board of Education* to civil acts of disobedience in Montgomery, Alabama, the success and momentum of the movement was driven by grassroots movements all across the United States. Without it, it is difficult to say what kind of country the United States would be today.

The importance of grassroots movements remains clear as day, particularly in the 21st Century. The election of President Trump sparked countless protests across the country, while uniting millions of people globally as individuals came together in opposition to his hateful rhetoric targeting minorities, women, and other vulnerable segments of the population. It is this momentum that has manifested into the Women's March on Washington, which brought millions of people in cities around the world to march in support of human rights, racial equality, immigration reform, and other progressive ideals. It was a dramatic statement of opposition against the perceived wrongs and violations in our society, and it will help shape the nature of discourse for many years to come.

These social movements are crucial to our democracy. Grassroots movements serve as a counterpoint to injustice and help provide a medium through which we as a people can communicate our ideals. As we honor Black History Month, we must look to the struggles of our ancestors in order to inform our decisions of today, or else we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes that already tarnish our history.

WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we are back in session. We were out of session last week. It was great to get all over east Texas. It is just good to be an east Texan and from around east Texas. I had occasion to talk to a whole bunch of folks from part of my district, even tonight.

As I think about the headlines, I think about this group called Indivisible demanding townhalls, and I keep coming back to last Monday at Jack Ryan's restaurant in downtown Tyler. Tyler Young Professionals had asked me to speak there. I knew the gentleman that had white hair and looked distinguished was probably not one of

the Tyler Young Professionals but probably one of the Indivisible people, the Democrats that—yes, some of them say they are nonpartisan, but so much for that. But I knew when I called on him to ask the first question, he probably wasn't one of the Tyler Young Professionals.

I offered to him, I said: Look, I give you my word. You come, bring somebody with you. Let's sit down at a conference table and I will hear you out. I will give you a chance.

No, he said. That is not what I want. I demand a townhall.

So I keep coming back to that answer because that seems to make very, very clear this whole Indivisible movement. It is not about being heard. That can be best done, as the Founders realized when they put together the Constitution—a complete democracy is where you have mob rule, that a majority is always going to prevail; but they figured out that, far better than having a big mob rule so you don't end up with lynchings and crowds convincing themselves to do something dramatic that they would never, ever do individually—it would be too much of a violation of their conscience. But there is something about a group dynamic that people can get whipped up into a frenzy as a group that doesn't happen when you sit down one-on-one with them.

So this has never been about townhalls. It has never been about being heard. It has been about headlines, trying to intimidate some of us from keeping the promises that we made to our constituents before we got elected.

I think God has a way of preparing us for what lies ahead. Had I not been a felony judge for a decade and been threatened by all kinds of felons, then I might have been at least somewhat intimidated. But it all seems rather interesting, this frenzy. Really good, decent people get in a group and get worked up into a frenzy.

One of them did ask an interesting question there in east Texas on the east Texas Indivisible Facebook page: Well, what would be wrong with sitting down with him on an individual basis or something like that? That individual understood that, if all we want is to be heard, why wouldn't we just want to sit down and talk.

What that individual didn't understand is Indivisible is not about being heard. It is exactly about what is in the Indivisible playbook, the Guide. The idea is to disrupt those who won with a majority of the vote in congressional seats and Senate seats, disrupt those who won with a majority and prevent them from keeping their promises.

It reminded me somewhat of what happened back when George H.W. Bush was President. He had run saying, "Read my lips: no new taxes." I wasn't in politics back when he was running and saying that, but I sure got involved in late 1991, I guess December, and in 1992. I guess that was back in the 1988 election.