

I was especially pleased to join the Black Law Students Association from my alma mater, Harvard Law School, as one of several counsel on an amicus brief. This brief was submitted on behalf of the Harvard Black Law Students Association, as well as those from Yale and Stanford.

As I stated then, I believe that we live in a country that affords us great liberties. However, for some Americans, the pursuit of these freedoms is hindered by tremendous barriers. Opportunities for some are limited because of America's sins of the past. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to make conscious attempts to right these wrongs. Hence, initiatives like affirmative action.

Affirmative action in education programs, such as the one at the University of Michigan, looks beyond students' limitations and sees their potential, potential that may be realized if presented the opportunity. More importantly, affirmative actions, like the one at the University of Michigan, benefits not just African American students, but all students.

Mr. Speaker, it promotes a diverse student body, which provides an education that equips our future leaders, both black and white, with the capabilities to successfully function in a diverse society.

Mr. Speaker, it was our hope during the civil rights movement many years ago that we were fighting this battle now so that our sons and daughters would not have to fight it later. And though I am dismayed that still this fight goes on, even today, I am heartened by the tremendous number of fresh soldiers for civil rights, eager, active and capable of engaging in the battle and winning the struggle. I commend them all.

I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) for yielding to me.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. His comments were very appropriate for the moment and the time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend all those who participated in last week's protest of the University of Michigan's admission's policies.

Many students from institutions across this great nation traveled to the nation's capitol to have their voices heard on this issue. Thousands of students from Howard University to Harvard University, walked from the Supreme Court to the Lincoln Memorial chanting, "Saving Affirmative Action."

Affirmative action ensures that all people have all equal rights. Affirmative action is one of the most effective solutions to diversifying a historically unfair society.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to say "thank you" to the countless students, volunteers, and workers who believe in this historically significant effort. It is vital that America's higher education system continue the critical role in preparing our students to be leaders in business, law, medicine, education, and other pursuits that affect public interest.

Societal discrimination has adversely affected institutions of higher education since

the founding of this country. Affirmative action programs have helped to desegregate America. Racial and societal discrimination is not just limited to higher education. It also exists in voting, housing, employment, and many other sectors of modern day society.

Equal rights in higher education must start somewhere. I agree that the University of Michigan's policy is clearly and rightfully designed to attempt to make up for discrepancies that do not afford minorities and the economically deprived access to quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in extending my appreciation to all the students who participated in last week's demonstration in support of equality and justice at America's institutions of higher learning.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the thousands of Americans who voiced their support for affirmative action admissions policies at colleges and universities on April 1, here in Washington, DC.

For twenty five years the affirmative action policies at our nation's colleges and universities have produced a stronger and better educated America. We must not turn the clock back now when so much is at stake for the future of America.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that 25 Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis students journeyed to Washington last week to say that affirmative action policies strengthen not weaken this nation.

Vanessa Villegas-Densford was one of those law students. Vanessa, the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants, arrived in this country when she was 8 years old. She didn't speak English and was placed in classes for learning-disabled students. She worked hard to overcome so many obstacles and her dream is to practice law and serve the Hispanic American community. Her dreams, determination and drive to serve, balanced an average law school test score and won her acceptance at 9 of the 12 law schools to which she applied. She attends Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis.

Without affirmative action, the Hispanic community, Indiana and America may well have missed the bright promise that Vanessa offers in spite of her average law school test score.

Gerald Bepko, interim President of Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis is quoted in a recent Indianapolis Star article saying, "You cannot rely on numbers (test scores and grades) alone. You need to know the person."

I'm proud that Indiana University supports an affirmative action admissions program.

It's sad, Mr. Speaker, when our young people can see this nation embroiled in conflict in the highest court of the land, not about the athletic factor or the alumni factor or the legacy factor in college admissions, but race.

The case against affirmative action is weak, resting, as it does so heavily, on myth and misunderstanding.

One myth, "The only way to create a color-blind society is to adopt color-blind policies." The facts show that a so-called color-blind system tends to favor White students because of their earlier educational advantages. Unless preexisting inequities are corrected or otherwise taken into account, color-blind policies do not correct racial injustice—they reinforce it.

Another myth is "Affirmative action may have been necessary 30 years ago, but the playing field is fairly level today." Not true, despite the progress that has been made, the playing field is far from level.

Women continue to earn 76 cents for every male dollar. African Americans continue to have twice the unemployment rate, twice the rate of infant mortality, and make up just over half the population of people who attend four years or more of college. In fact, without affirmative action the percentage of African American and Hispanic students at many selective schools would drop to minuscule percentages of the student body.

That decline would effectively choke off African American and Hispanic access to top universities and severely restrict progress toward racial equality.

Mr. Speaker, this is America and we can do better than that. So I commend the advocacy and passion of those who marched last week. I have no doubt that they understand what could be lost if this precious opportunity is eliminated.

IN SUPPORT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. I will not take all the time. I would like to be able to yield to the gentleman and to a number of our colleagues on the floor, but I note that we are blessed by the presence of some of the warriors that were engaged in the heroic and historic day on April 1, 2003.

What I wanted to encourage with the chairman of our august body here is to restate I believe the willingness of members of this caucus and Members of this House to be able to be on the campuses of these outstanding students who have taken up the challenge, the bloodstained banner, if you will, to be able to be on their campuses, pronouncing our commitment that we will never go back, and to restate what has been stated by all of you, that affirmative action is not a handout, it is a hand up, and to clearly indicate that what we have occurring to us, meaning opportunities, is not to deny others.

So I hope that we will be able to, if you will, make it very clear tonight that this is not the last time that we will be engaged in this discussion, debate, but that we will be out at the campuses surrounded by or hand in hand with these outstanding new civil rights activists of the 21st century.

I want to thank the distinguished gentleman and thank the distinguished gentleman from Georgia and would be happy to yield to the distinguished gentleman or yield to the gentleman from Florida to comment.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say in regards to what the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) just said, just this evening, Mr. Speaker, we held a conference, a teleconference, with student leaders from all over the country. And it was such an exciting event. We have already come to an agreement that we are going to take all of that energy that they had back here on April 1 and we are going forward.

As our first Vice Chair has said, we will be traveling from campus to campus and organizing here in Washington and across the country, because we realize that all of our young people, that one day it should not end there, but it must go forward. So we will be doing that.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would say to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for what you are suggesting, your recommendation and your plan of action. It reminds me of another period in our history when we just got out there and did what we had to do.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will allow me, there is a saying I love. It says, "In our time, in our space, we will make a difference, with God's grace."

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that not only all of the Members here, but the Members who could not be here that did place information in the RECORD, it is such an honor to be here, coming from Florida. So many of you were involved in that effort there to save and work towards a better affirmative action in Florida and this country.

Words are inadequate to even describe the kind of work that is going to have to be done for the understanding of this country of how important affirmative action is. I tell every American, if you have a daughter and a mother, and obviously we all do, you are for affirmative action.

I commend those individuals that came before us, and the NAACP and other organizations that organized to get them here. I look forward to working with the gentleman and the members of the Congressional Black Caucus as we continue to work with these young people and younger people that have done so well for us.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we will work together and pull together and push together to make it all happen.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. EVERETT (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for April 7 on account of attending to district business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HOEFFEL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HOEFFEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. INSLEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NORWOOD) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCCOTTER, for 5 minutes, April 9.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 9.

The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 164. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of sites associated with the life of César Estrada Chávez and the farm labor movement; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 212. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the High Plans Aquifer States in conducting a Hydrogeologic Characterization, Mapping, and Modeling Program for the High Plans Aquifer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 278. An act to make certain adjustments to the boundaries of the Mount Naomi Wilderness Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 328. An act to designate Catoctin Mountain Park in the State of Maryland as the "Catoctin Mountain National Recreation Area", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 347. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a joint resource study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Rim of the Valley Corridor as a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mr. Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 397. An act to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construc-

tion of a hydroelectric project in the State of Illinois

H.R. 672. An act to rename the Guam South Elementary/Middle School of the Department of Defense Domestic Dependents Elementary and Secondary Schools System in honor of Navy Commander William "Willie" McCool, who was the pilot of the Space Shuttle Columbia when it was tragically lost on February 1, 2003.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 9, 2003, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1702. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Lactic acid, ethyl ester and Lactic acid, n-butyl ester; Exemptions from the Requirement of a Tolerance; Technical Correction [OPP-2002-0-217; FRL-7298-4] received April 1, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1703. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Modified Acrylic Polymers; Revision of Tolerance Exemption [OPP-2003-0079; FRL-7297-8] received April 1, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1704. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report for purchases from foreign entities for Fiscal Year 2002, pursuant to Public Law 104-201, section 827 (110 Stat. 2611); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1705. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report regarding assured access to space for the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1706. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a report entitled, "Development of Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Programs and Activities Beginning in FY 2004"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1707. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Extension of Contract Goal for Small Disadvantaged Businesses and Certain Institutions of Higher Education [DFARS Case 2002-D038] received April 3, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1708. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the President approved changes to the 2002 Unified Command Plan; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1709. A letter from the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement; Foreign Acquisition [DFARS Case 2002-D009] received April 3, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.