

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Martin Luther King Day that we celebrated earlier this week. Americans celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King who would have turned 78 this month. While there is much left to be done, Dr. King's dream of a colorblind society is closer to reality this year than last.

Dr. King championed nonviolent resistance as a means to bring about fundamental change. He sought such change to bring about equality between peoples of all races, an end to segregation and racial injustice and improved working conditions for all.

Dr. King was a master of rhetoric, and he used his power to bring together Americans from a variety of backgrounds to march in pursuit of equality and justice. And Dr. King achieved great success at attaining these lofty goals, despite his murder at the age of 39.

At only 26 years of age, Dr. King became a national figure by leading the Montgomery bus boycott. At that time, Dr. King was the new pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and was spurred to action by the arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give her seat on a public bus to a white man. Dr. King inspired action through his words, "There comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression." With that, he called for a citywide boycott of public transit and demanded first come, first served seating, courteous treatment by bus operators, and the employment of African American bus drivers. The boycott lasted 382 days and in that time, Dr. King's house was bombed and he was arrested. Ultimately, the United States Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation on public transportation.

With the success of the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King noted, "We have gained a new sense of dignity and destiny. We have discovered a new and powerful weapon, nonviolent resistance."

Nonviolent resistance, which had been pioneered by Mohandas Gandhi in India, became a cornerstone of King's strategy to gain full civil rights and equality for all people. Over the next 13 years, Dr. King achieved basic civil rights for African-Americans, desegregation, the annulment of Jim Crow laws and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Dr. Martin Luther King Day allows us to reflect on the steps that we, as a nation, have made towards fulfilling Dr. King's dream. Dr. King's 1963 March on Washington was organized around numerous demands for civil rights, many of which are still very relevant today. One such demand was full and

fair employment, including a raise in the minimum wage from \$1.25 to \$2 at that time.

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I am proud that last week is part of the 110th Congress' first 100 hours. The House of Representatives addressed this issue by raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. This will significantly benefit a great many low-income families, including the 2.1 million African American minimum wage earners. Other legislation in the first 100 hours will improve health care and education for American families, including 3.9 million African American Medicare beneficiaries and 2.3 million African American college students.

This past weekend I commemorated the work of Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Jackie Robinson Park and at the Metropolitan Baptist Church in my district. At these celebrations my constituents and I examined our progress over the past 40 years since Dr. King's tragic death and remember his line from "I Have a Dream" about the fierce urgency of now. Dr. King preached then that now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children, and it is still that time now.

With continued and wide disparities and access to higher education, wages, and access to health care, we as a Nation still have much work before us. Now, even as we celebrate one of the truly great men in this Nation's history, it is time to recommit ourselves to the vision of Dr. King and bring about racial equality and opportunity for every American.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FIRST 100 HOURS OF THE NEW
CONGRESS

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to stand here today and report to the American people that we have completed the 100-hours agenda. We are demonstrating that we have kept our promise. We have set a tone for the 110th Congress that is one of cooperation, consensus, and compromise that extends beyond party lines. From the ethics reforms to restoring fiscal

responsibility, to strengthening our national security, to giving more Americans a realistic shot at the American Dream, the new Democratic majority is committed to real and lasting results for the people that we serve.

On the opening days of the Congress, January 4, we adopted the most sweeping ethics package since the post-Watergate era. We restored tough pay-as-you-go budget rules, which will begin to reverse the record budget deficits that are passing on trillions of dollars to our children and grandchildren. We all recognize how important that is.

We recognize that we are some \$8.6 trillion in debt, that each one now owes over \$29,000. In fact, every child born now owes some \$29,000 in order for us to pay the debt.

In the remainder of the first 100 hours, we have turned to passing the Six for '06 agenda to meet the everyday needs of all Americans. We made America safer by the passage of a bill that implements the recommendation of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, which were submitted by Congress in 2004.

We are extremely proud of that particular piece of legislation, because it allows us to address those needs that were identified by the commission, needs, especially, in south Texas, as we know, on border security, that are critical, other needs, such significant, although they might be considered not so important, but the importance of the agencies to be able to communicate with each other that was found to be one of the most difficult problems that we have still, but have not confronted.

We made our economy fair by passing a bill that increases the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over the next 2 years, affecting approximately 900,000 employees in Texas. Texas is hit the hardest with this, with the minimum wage; and we are extremely proud to have passed that piece of legislation. It also impacts some of 28.6 percent of the jobs that pay below the Federal poverty line in Texas. We have improved health care by passing and extending the Federal funding for lifesaving embryonic stem cell research, which will help 110 million Americans suffering from diseases.

We have helped to make health care more affordable by passing a bill that directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct cost savings negotiations with the drug companies for lower prices for Medicare beneficiaries. That is essential. The way the legislation has been written is basically un-American, not allowing us to bargain with the pharmaceutical companies to get lower prices, very similar to what the VA does now.

We know that they are able to get prices at 60 percent lower than what we can for our seniors under Medicare. This particular piece of legislation is going to be out there, and it is going to help all of us, and especially the taxpayer that has to pay for Medicare. So we are extremely proud to have passed that piece of legislation in the last 100 hours.