

REPRESENTATIVE CONYERS: Thank you.

Thank you so much, Fred Harris. Good to see you again. Your health is going great, and that's in -- at this time of our ages, the most important thing. I want to greet, first of all, the Eisenhower Foundation people because I've known Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich for a long time. I'm very happy to talk with the president, and, of course, memories go racing back to 1967, Representative Chairman Cushingberry, these days. This was, of course, the most costly. More damage and destruction occurred and more loss of life than any of the riots during that period of time.

Newark exploded. L.A. exploded. Washington, D.C. It went on and on. And so I just want to put this congressional layer onto some excellent discussion that I've heard so far coming from Chairman Cushingberry and George Galster of the university and the rest of you.

Here's what I want to add: that there is some larger dynamics going on that, if we do not take them into consideration and keep looking at this locally, we're never going to get out of this. And I lift up this very bifurcated term "globalism," because globalism is a new driving force and it doesn't really matter whether you're first or second or third with the worst statistics. When I'm in Chicago, they all tell me this is the worst, Congressman.

When I go into Maxine Waters's parts of Los Angeles, it's the worst. And when you go to New Orleans, it's the worst. They're all the worst. So whether we -- what your number is in the ranking is the central fact that we've ignored getting rid of ghettos in America since the last half of the 20th Century, not understanding all the promises that were made and all the attempts -- most of them honestly feeble in terms of dealing with this subject matter. So here we are.

The reason I lift globalism into this discussion is the central fact that we now have a class crisis that's going to overtake the racial crisis. And the reason I'm finding this out firsthand is that the conservative members of the state legislature some years ago gave me nine Downriver cities. They said this will fix this progressive member of Congress' clock for a while.

The problem with that and the reason it didn't succeed was because I had been looking at this from the point of view of working people and how we create a full employment society. And so I got -- I arrived Downriver into Trenton, Southgate, Melvindale, Allen Park, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile. I got there just in time because some great assumptions about the automobile manufacturing industry and the workers' opportunities which brought my father from Georgia to Detroit are now undone and may be gone.

And all of this is due to the fact that as long as you have a Congress and -- I don't say this because I'm supporting Obama. And the Clintons are my great friends, but the Clintons and some people are great free traders. Let's ship out -- let's get better, Congressman, by opening up our doors and letting our markets go. That's a tragic -- I mean, it's, to me, so obvious a mistake. And then we have some other world organizations that impact upon

this area, the home of the automobile industry in the United States, that is, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund. There are four or five big organizations that have had tremendous impacts on what happens to the destiny of this country so that you have a President Gettlefinger now being told you will reopen these contracts that were hard fought, and the companies had far more legal counsel than the unions did. "You will open these contracts, or we're going to close the doors and cut out the lights. Take your choice. " And that's why, as unreported as it is, the UAW said, "Let's talk, "because they sounded like they could do it.

And guess what? They're still exporting. They're still laying off. And there are more coming.

So what has begun to happen now -- and this can have a negative effect on the question of race and inequities in our system, because once you start losing your job, you get more self-concerned about "What's going to happen to me and my family and my neighborhood and my schools? " So we have to take into account this other dimension. I am convinced that what the Foundation and former Senator Harris is doing has to go beyond this. We got to have a discussion with ourselves.

Look, New Detroit, if you won't do it, I can call a town hall meeting right here. We've got to have some extensive talks with ourselves that won't always be agreeable and harmonious, but we have to make this exchange and to study them and see where we all are going with them.

Now, with this hearing, which I consider to be critical, because Senator Harris is on his way to Newark and Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, we've got to have this at the national level. So as the Chairman of the Committee that has a great concern about this, I invite you to bring the set of hearings to Washington so that we can conduct them at the national level in the United States Congress, which needs the most.

Now, after that, comes the examination, and curious, isn't it, that yesterday at this time I was at the Memorial service of the late Gus Hawkins of Los Angeles, the father of the Full Employment and Balance Growth Act, namely the Humphrey Hawkins Full Employment Act, which I keep asking myself, "When are we at the national level going to deal with this problem of, first of all, creating security? " You can't have liberty if you're unemployed. I mean, that's fundamentally contradictory. You can't do much about fighting terrorism anyway because you feel you're a victim of it. I'm always curious about some of my colleagues who talk about fighting Islamic terror.

What about domestic terror? I mean, we were blowing up things and killing people because of political and racial ideology long before we had 9/11. But it's being used, and the media is involved in this. They are guilty of using terror and fear of the unknown.

I mean, I get off the airport -- out at the airport too regularly; and because of heightened security, we ask you to watch your bags or report any suspicious activity. That tape has been running for three years or more; and, you know, after a while, you look around and

"Hey, what's that bag? Whose bag is that? Who's this guy standing in front of me in line?" The whole thing is cleverly developed, and there are books on it now, thankfully, that tell us that, you can destabilize a people because of the fear of the unknown.

Look, we have been fighting terror since slavery. What the heck is that? Terrorism in its most virulent form. The noose is being hung -- Jena Six. Look, that's been -- there are so many Jena Sixes in the United States, as the Judiciary Committee is finding out. So, you know, let's not say, oh, that's terrible. What was wonderful is that 40,000 people rushed in and took that one ugly example and lifted it so high that even the White House and the Congress could no longer ignore the fact that this was the state of existence of race relations in many places across the country, not just Jena, Louisiana. And so we've got a new responsibility.

Now, here we just swore in an Attorney General who most of the kids in my son's sixth grade class would know what waterboarding is as a form of torture, who wasn't sure, as he was giving the oath. He almost -- that one question almost sent him back to his law practice because everybody realized where he was coming from. Now, he is not without political understanding himself.

So when the marchers came yesterday to Washington by the thousands, he issued a press release that in effect welcomed them and that he was glad to concern himself with the issues they were raising, and he knows he's going to be meeting with the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary very shortly; and we're going to be tracking out what we can do to restore the Department of Justice in the 14 months that he has remaining. And, believe me, there is a lot that we can do. But the first thing on this Chairman's mind, unless you can persuade me otherwise, is to make sure that the integrity of the ballot is really sustained for next year, next November, or we're going to have another 2000 election result and a 2004 election result. See the books, what went wrong with Ohio and Bush versus The Constitution.

Now, I want to close with this note because I see Al Fishman in the audience, and I've been the beneficiary of so much support nationally and internationally so that, when I get criticism from my friends, it's with love and understanding or curiosity or "What's happening to your brain"? Let's go. We've got -- "Chairman Conyers, we've got the longest list of impeachable people in the federal government than in any time in the 20th Century. So what are you waiting for? "Well, I want to close just telling you what it is I'm waiting for. I do not want to step on the fact that I think we're going to have a major change in direction in administrative -- in administration leadership a year from this month and that I do not want to be the one that brought the whole federal government -- not just the Department of Justice, the Congress. We wouldn't be able to legislate an agreement on what day of the week it is we're sitting in Congress much less anything else.

And I'm not going to jeopardize that to have people tell me what my constitutional duty is. I've been in on more impeachments than any man or woman in the House and the Senate, and I know what will happen. And I know too that we've got -- on a good day

when everybody is healthy, we've got a majority of one in the Senate and we have 30 in the House; but we have 40 blue dogs, and we have 15 freshmen, who would like to come back, which I would like them to come back to -- I like being chairman.

At least more than one term -- who are elected by two points. Two points. And so what I'm saying to you is that impeachment is retroactive, and all of the violations of the federal criminal statutes are retroactive. You don't resign and then shed your liability for acts that you may have formerly committed. Oh, no. And you don't escape the citations and subpoenas that we have that are growing more numerous on my desk each month.

So this game isn't over, but there are other considerations. To me, if you want to protect the Constitution, you better get a change of direction in Washington next November. And I close on this because this is not measured very carefully. The media has a lot more work to do here.

The courts are where the best will of local and national government get undone. We've got a court that's busy undoing and turning back the clock on Civil Rights, on freedom, on the whole questions of not being subjected to warrantless wiretaps. It goes on and on. And we have the federal prison industry and this thing Naomi Klein talked about, disaster capitalism, where you put in a Blackwater in Iraq and you've got more private contractors than you have U.S. military there. You go to Louisiana and there are more private contractors getting huge government bids and proposals done, but you see very little progress. So it seems to me that, even though we're studying Detroit, we've got to layer in these global effects that have a profound outcome on our efforts here today.

I congratulate you all for being here.