

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Remarks on Signing Legislation To Designate the National Pulse Memorial

June 25, 2021

The President. I'm Joe Biden. I'm Jill's husband. [Laughter]

Collapse of the Champlain Towers South Condominium Building in Surfside, Florida

Before I sign, let me start with a few words about what's going on now in Florida. And you know, the people who are here, who were part of what happened that night at the Pulse nightclub and the scores that I just spoke to a moment ago—they're online looking at this—they understand that—what it's like to have to wait and wonder what happened.

The families—I remember going down there to the Pulse nightclub afterwards—and wondering: "Is it my son, my daughter, my husband, someone I love—is that who got lost?" Because you didn't know for certain initially.

And as Congressman Cicilline knows, there's nothing worse than having to wait and wonder what happened. And I know, Val, when you were a police chief, you had to go through waiting a lot as well.

And so I just want to say, I've spoken to Governor DeSantis. And we've provided all the help that they have—they need. We sent the best people from FEMA down there. We're going to stay with them; with the disaster declaration we made, provide for everything from housing to, God forbid, whether there's a need for moratoria—if there are—to—for the bodies to be placed. Everything in between.

And—but I just want to say—and I'm sure I speak for all the Members of the Congress here today and all the survivors here that it's a tough, tough time. There's so many people waiting. "Are they alive? Will they be—what will happen?" And so our heart goes out to them.

And I—to the people of Florida, I want to—I've spoken to Debbie Wasserman Schultz. I've spoken to most of the folks down there and member—in authority. And I promise you, the administration, the Congress, we're doing everything possible to be of assistance now and after this occurs—after they decide exactly what the state of play is.

Legislation To Designate the National Pulse Memorial

But I'm glad to welcome everyone here to the adjunct to the White House here, and in person and virtually: survivors and family members, victims, and the path-breaking leaders like Senator Baldwin.

Just over 5 years ago, the Pulse nightclub, a place of acceptance and joy, became a place of unspeakable pain and loss. And we'll never fully recovery, but we'll remember. And we have to—what we're going to do is what the Members of Congress here did and enshrine in law—as a consequence of that law, enshrine, in perpetuity, literally a monument to the loss that occurred there, and an absolute determination that we're going to deal with this every single, solitary day and make sure that we're not in a position to see this happen again.

Behind me, you see, on either board there, the 49 lives lost: family members, parents, friends, veterans, students, young, Black, Asian, Latino—all fellow Americans. And in their memory and for the countless others forever scarred is why I sign this today.

And let me say how much I appreciate it—and I mean this sincerely—the commitment of the Members of the House and Senate to make sure that we don't forget—that this isn't forgotten.

Now, there's a tradition when a bill is signed that the President gives a signing pen to each of the people who had something to do with the law or the decision being made in the first place.

I promise you, I have all the pens, but they're in the other room. I couldn't figure how to sign—[*laughter*—sign them all. But don't leave without the pen. Okay? All right? All right.

Representative Mark A. Takano. Thank you, Mr. President.

Representative Darren M. Soto. Thank you, Mr. President.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. May we never have to sign another—no President ever have to sign another monument like this. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

And one last thing, as I said to—to the survivors and their—those who lost folks, a little earlier, in private: You know, what the Congress has done means a great deal, and it's important. But it's really hard; it brings back everything as if it happened yesterday.

And every time there's a memorial service for our son Beau, you know, you're flattered. You feel good about it. You think it's wonderful—the recognition. But it's tough. It's as if it happened yesterday, it happened the day before, it happened the moment you're signing it.

So I want to thank the folks who are here and the folks who are survivors who are on Zoom with us. I want to thank them for their courage—I really mean it—for their courage.

But, I promise you, none of the Members of Congress that are here, nor I, nor Jill are going to let up until we deal with equity across the board.

Thank you so very much.

Equality Florida Action Inc. Central Florida Development Officer and Media Relations Manager Brandon Wolf. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And you've got to come back and get your pens. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Valdez Butler Demings and Deborah Wasserman Schultz. H.R. 49, approved June 25, was assigned Public Law No. 117–20.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : National Pulse Memorial legislation designating, signing remarks.

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Names: Baldwin, Tammy S.; Biden, Jill T.; Cicilline, David N.; Demings, Valdez V.; DeSantis, Ronald D.; Soto, Darren M.; Takano, Mark A.; Wasserman Schultz, Debborah; Wolf, Brandon.

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