

him from having had people invest in his lawsuit.

That is what H.R. 9 does. It says, if a big corporation has stolen from you and if somebody has invested in helping you with your invention, they then become liable if you have to sue to get your money.

If something happens where the big guys win—even if you are right and they win because they have better lawyers—anybody who invests in you has to pay part of the legal fees of these big corporations, which are millions of dollars of legal fees.

No one is going to want to invest in a little guy like that. The Philo Farnsworths would be left out in the cold. The nature of our system would have been totally different than what it is today if we were to have had the provisions of H.R. 9, which they are trying to foist on us now.

Let me give you another example. Black Americans happen to be some of the most inventive people in the United States. A lot of people don't know that. If you look back in the history of the Patent Office, as I have been looking, what you will find is, while Black Americans were being discriminated against in general throughout our whole system, the Patent Office was the one place that they had equal rights to come up with their ideas and to say, "This is what I have discovered."

Because of that, we have many great Black inventors. Maybe that is the reason former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, JOHN CONYERS, is taking my side in this debate on H.R. 9. He is opposed to that.

We have a Black inventor, for example, who was the guy who invented the machine that permitted us to mass produce shoes. Before that time, Americans had one pair of shoes. We started to mass produce them because this Black American, struggling on his own because he was discriminated against like all Black Americans were in that day, managed to get his patent accepted, and he changed not only himself, but the whole country had shoes after that. Isn't that wonderful?

That is what happens when you have freedom for the little guy and not just for the big guys. They come up with the new ideas. They can uplift everybody and make sure everybody's feet feel better. We are on the verge of losing that now. We are on the verge of losing that.

When I go out in the hallway of Congress here, I see a statue to Philo Farnsworth. That is where it is. It is the statue of this Utah farmer who invented the picture tube and who had to take on the biggest company and the biggest corporate powers in the world, and he won. I will tell you that there is his statue there and that there is no statue to David Sarnoff, the corporate leader who tried to beat him down and steal his technology.

I do not care how rich and powerful he was; we respect the little guy in this

country. We want the little guys to be able to have rights that are protected by our Constitution. That is why our Founding Fathers put it in the Constitution.

Many of these megacorporations, especially electronic corporations, don't care one bit about the well-being of the American people because they are multinational corporations now.

We want to make sure our people maintain their rights, that we keep being the leaders of innovation, and that we are able to outcompete the world and not just take all of our jobs overseas and give them to cheap labor. We want to make sure that Americans benefit because this is what America is all about. It is where the little guy has the same rights legally, and they are protected.

That is what this fight is all about when it comes to H.R. 9. People need to talk to their congressmen, and the congressmen need to talk to each other about what this is really all about. It is easy to yawn when someone says: "I am going to discuss patent rights."

"Oh, yeah, patent law. How boring." It is not boring. It is going to make all the difference as to whether our country stays safe because we have to have the technological edge to be safe in the world we are getting into now. Our people are not going to have decent housing or a decent standard of living because the wealth that is produced isn't produced just by hard work, it is produced by technological efficiency, and we have to be on the cutting edge, or we will be outcompeted by people overseas. This is going to determine what America is going to be like.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 9. Let's talk to the universities. Let's talk to the other industries that are being hurt dramatically by this. Just talk to the inventors. Let the inventors know.

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

LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KNIGHT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leadership for allowing this time on the floor to take up H. Res. 329. H. Res. 329 encourages the celebration of the month of June as LGBTQ Pride Month.

I bring this to the floor, Mr. Speaker, because I have had some experiences in life that have caused me to understand why it is important that we do this. Someone might ask, Mr. Speaker: Why would you, AL GREEN—a person who is not gay, a person who is considered straight—bring a resolution to the floor, a resolution to celebrate and recognize some of the most notable events in the movement of the LGBTQ community?

Let me explain why. I am a son of the South. More specifically, I am a son of

the segregated South. I grew up at a time when my friends and neighbors denied me rights that the Constitution of the United States of America accorded me.

I was forced to go through backdoors. I was forced to drink from colored water fountains. I was forced to ride at the back of the bus. I was a son of the segregated South, and as a son of the segregated South, I learned early in life what invidious discrimination was like.

I learned what it smelled like because I had to go to filthy toilet facilities. I learned what it looked like because I saw the Klan burn crosses. I learned what it sounded like because I was called names that we no longer use in polite society. I am a son of the segregated South, and I know what discrimination looks like, feels like, smells like; I know what it hurts like.

I know of the people who lost their lives in the effort to try to bring about justice and equality for all. Medgar Evers lost his life, and Myrlie Evers still suffers to this day because she lost her husband in a worthy cause, in a cause for justice.

I know what it is like, and I know that, notwithstanding my circumstance as a straight guy, I didn't get here by myself. There were people who lived and died so that I could have the blessings that I have. Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney died. Schwerner and Goodman were not Black. John Shillady died in Austin, Texas, fighting for the rights of Black people. John Shillady was not Black. Of the people who formed the NAACP in an effort to stop lynchings, which were almost commonplace, a good many of them were not Black.

I have been the beneficiary of the efforts of people who do not look like me, of people who had blessings such that they could have gone on with their lives. There was no reason other than they wanted "justice for all" for them to take up my cause.

I believe that, when you are blessed, there is a reason for it. You are blessed so that you may be a blessing to others. You have such that you may help those who have less or who have not. Hence, I find myself standing on the floor tonight of the Congress of the United States of America, proud to sponsor a resolution to encourage the celebration of the month of June as LGBTQ Pride Month.

This resolution celebrates and recognizes some of the most notable events of the LGBTQ movement.

□ 1900

What I would like to do is explain what this resolution actually does, H. Res. 329. H. Res. 329 celebrates the accomplishments of Houston mayor Annise Parker, the first lesbian elected as mayor of Houston, Texas.

I am proud that it does because not only was she elected mayor of Houston, Texas, before she was mayor, she served as the city's controller for 6

years; and before serving in this capacity, she served on city council for 6 years. She has earned the right to be recognized, and I am proud to have her recognized in H. Res. 329.

It celebrates the hard work that the transgender community has done to spread awareness about tolerance and inclusion and encouraging the community to keep on working toward broader inclusion. We live in a society that has within its Pledge of Allegiance the words "liberty and justice for all."

I salute the flag of the United States of America, and I am proud to do so because I am a proud American. Liberty and justice for all, that means that we have to encourage liberty and justice for those who are in the transgender community and encourage them to keep on fighting for liberty and justice.

This resolution recognizes the protesters who stood for human rights and dignity at Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1968, as some of the pioneers of the movement. It celebrates the gay rights organizations in major cities in the aftermath of the Stonewall uprising.

After Stonewall, there was an uprising in a very positive way that took place. People realized that there was something they could do and should do to make sure that justice and equality were more than words for those who are members of the LGBTQ community.

This resolution highlights the importance of the American Psychiatric Association removing homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses in December of 1973. There is a recognition in the medical community that we should not have and that we must undo what has been done by labeling people as mentally ill because they were being the persons that God created them to be.

We have a saying in my community that God didn't create any junk, and people who are homosexuals are not junk; they are not persons with a mental illness; they are people who deserve the dignity and respect of all human beings and the dignity and respect that we accord other human beings, and I stand here tonight as a friend of the community to make it known that there are people who are willing to stand alone and fight for the rights of others, notwithstanding any consequences that may be put upon them.

This resolution recognizes Elaine Noble as the first LGBT candidate elected to a State legislature in 1974 and Barney Frank as the first Representative to come out as an openly gay Member of Congress in 1987. I had the preeminent privilege of knowing the Honorable Barney Frank.

I served on the Committee on Financial Services when he was the chairperson of that committee. He was a person committed to human rights for all, to human dignity for all. I am proud to stand here tonight and say that he has become an honorary member of the persons who are sponsoring this resolution.

By the way, there are many persons in Congress who are sponsoring this resolution, and I want to thank all of them for signing on to it. The Honorable Barney Frank is no longer in Congress. That is why he is listed as an honorary sponsor or cosponsor of the resolution.

This resolution highlights the importance of the Civil Service Commission eliminating the ban on hiring homosexuals in most Federal jobs in 1975. It seems unimaginable and unthinkable that we had to have a civil rights commission to eliminate the ban on hiring persons because of their sexual preference, because of their sexual orientation. It just seems unimaginable, but it had to happen, and it did.

The resolution celebrates Harvey Milk making national news when he was sworn in as an openly gay member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on January 8, 1978. I remember when it happened. It was really big news in this country. Quite frankly, it took courage for him to do this, and the kind of courage that he showed, that he exemplified, has merited his being mentioned in this resolution, H. Res. 329.

It praises the thousands of activists who participated in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights to demand equal civil rights in 1979 and the National March on Washington to demand that President Reagan address the AIDS crisis in 1987.

There were some people who, because they thought that the disease impacted a certain segment of society, did not readily respond with the hand of help that was available. I am grateful that President Reagan did take up this cause to help with the fight against AIDS.

AIDS can impact anyone in our society, and I am proud that our government has spent money on this disease to help eliminate it, but we haven't spent enough, and we haven't done enough. I think we can do more, and we should do more.

The resolution highlights the importance of the 1980 Democratic National Convention, where Democrats took a stance in support of gay rights. I am proud of my party. I happen to be a Democrat, but this is not a partisan effort, and the Democratic Party took that stance at a time when it wasn't popular to take the stance.

It has become popular now, to a certain extent and to a certain degree, to support gay rights and the rights of gay people, but in 1980, it was not nearly as popular as it is today, and the party took the step forward and in so doing brought a lot of others along with us.

The resolution highlights the importance of the Supreme Court ruling in *Romer v. Evans* in May of 1996, which found a Colorado constitutional amendment preventing the enactment of protection for gays and lesbians unconstitutional.

It is important that we challenge laws that prevent people from having equality of opportunity from receiving the same access to all that society has to offer as other people, and I am honored that the Colorado amendment preventing the enactment of protections for gays and lesbians was found unconstitutional.

It celebrates Vermont becoming the first State to legally recognize civil unions between gay and lesbian couples in 2000; and, my, have we come a long ways since 2000. We have come a long way because a good many people in this country now understand that the laws ought to apply equally to all, that the 14th Amendment is not for some, it is for all.

The judges who interpret these laws, who are indicating that these laws should apply appropriately to the LGBTQ community, these judges are not all gay judges. These are judges who are sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, and they are doing it because they know that it is the right thing to do.

The Supreme Court will be taking up the case of gay marriage—in fact, is taking it up and will make a ruling sometime in the very near future. My hope is that the Supreme Court will honor the 14th Amendment and will allow the Constitution of the United States to apply to the members of the LGBTQ community to the same extent that it applies to people in other communities.

The law should be blind to who you are; it ought to give you justice because you happen to be a person that is a subject of the Constitution. It ought not peek to see if you are of a different hue or of a different sexual orientation. It ought to weigh equally all people and mete out justice to all the same.

This resolution recognizes the importance of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was signed into law on October 28, 2009, by President Obama, as it expanded the Federal hate crime laws to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, or disability. People ought not be assaulted because of who they are.

What this does is it recognizes that, if you assault a police officer because you know that person is a police officer, then the crime that you will be charged with is enhanced, the punishment is enhanced. You will be punished more severely because you have assaulted a peace officer. This is a law in the State of Texas.

Well, if you assault a person because of who that person happens to be and because you don't happen to like that person because of the person's gender, because of the person's ethnicity, color, there ought to be a special punishment for you because you have gone out of your way to hurt somebody that you don't know in a good many circumstances and you want to do it simply because you don't like the way the

person looks or you don't like the person's perceived sexual orientation. The law has been changed, and it punishes you if you decide that you are going to commit this type of crime.

This resolution celebrates 2012 as the first year in which all 50 States had at least one LGBTQ elected official. All 50 States have now at least one person who is a part of the LGBTQ community holding public trust. People have come to understand that it is not the color of skin, it is not sexual orientation; it is the character within a person that determines whether or not a person ought to hold public trust, whether or not a person ought to be respected appropriately. It is the character, not the way the person is perceived in terms of color or sexual orientation.

This resolution celebrates Senator TAMMY BALDWIN being sworn in as the first openly gay United States Senator in January of 2013, and she has served her country well and merits this sort of recognition.

The resolution highlights the importance of the Supreme Court ruling in the United States v. Windsor on June 26, 2013, which found that section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, DOMA, found it unconstitutional and determined that the Federal Government cannot discriminate against married lesbian and gay couples for the purpose of determining Federal benefits and protections.

This is the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the same Supreme Court with conservative and liberal Justices on it. We don't have to agree with everything the Supreme Court does, but I thank God I live in a country where we respect the decisions. We can differ with them. Even the Justices themselves differ about various opinions, but they respect the rulings of the Court. This Supreme Court has made such a ruling as it relates to the Defense of Marriage Act.

This resolution celebrates the 37 States and the District of Columbia where it is now legal for same-sex couples to get married. Literally, more than half of the States in the United States of America now permit same-sex couples to get married—more than half of the States.

This means that this country is moving toward, without a ruling from the Supreme Court, the notion that same-sex couples should be allowed to not only love each other, but to marry each other, to have the same benefits that heterosexual couples have when they marry.

□ 1915

Marriage is a great institution. I celebrate the institution of marriage. But the law, under the 14th Amendment, seems to indicate that we cannot prevent people who are of the same sex and who love each other from having the same opportunities that benefit from the institution of marriage that other people who are heterosexual have the opportunity of benefiting from.

So the States that have decided that they would do this should be recognized. By the way, many of these States recognize same-sex marriage because of judges in those States who have made rulings, because of legislatures in those States who have legislated, and because of people in those States who have voted.

There are 37 States. The States include Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut. They are all States that recognize same-sex marriage. Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, and Idaho are States that recognize same-sex marriage. Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Minnesota all recognize same-sex marriage. Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Ohio all recognize same-sex marriage. Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are all States in the United States of America that recognize same-sex marriage.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am honored to present the resolution. And I am honored to do so because I know the importance of having people who were not of African ancestry who supported causes that made it possible for me to be here.

I have a debt that I owe. I hope that tonight I have made a down payment on the retirement of that debt. Because somebody suffered so that I could have the opportunity to stand in the Congress of the United States of America and make this floor speech. No one could have—or would have—predicted at my birth that I would have the opportunity to be a Member of the Congress of the United States of America.

For me to be here, somebody had to find out what a 90-pound German Shepherd bites like; somebody had to find out what a high-pressure water hose stings like; somebody had to find out what going to jail feels like; somebody had to find out what losing someone that you love dearly to a cause hurts like.

I am not here because I am so smart. I am here because there are people who were willing to make great sacrifices so that I could have the opportunities that I have. And because I have them, I have a debt that I owe. And I am here tonight to say that I am proud to stand with the LGBTQ community to help bring about the kind of justice for this community that I have enjoyed.

Now let me be perspicuously clear about one thing. I am not saying that we have reached the panacea as it relates to the African American community. There is still great work to be done as evidenced by what happened in Charleston, South Carolina. There is still work to be done and still heavy lifting to do. But I am also very proud of some things that happened there.

I happened to be in a position to be at the bond hearing that took place, and as I listened, I could not believe

my ears when I heard a mother say, "You took my son"—took her hero, "but I forgive you. I forgive you." Time and time again, persons said, "I forgive you."

I had tears well in my eyes because it takes a special person to say "I forgive you" so close to the event that is being forgiven or that the forgiveness addresses. It takes a special person.

And I want to compliment the families of the persons who lost their lives in church. My God, in church, lost their lives in church. I want to commend those families for having what Dr. Martin Luther King called the strength to love. The strength to love. He wrote the book, "Strength to Love." It is a collection of his sermons. And he makes it known to us in that book that it is not easy to love your enemy. It is not easy to forgive those who would persecute you. But he also makes it known in the book "Strength to Love" that that is what love is all about: loving those who would do ugly things to you, who would be spiteful, who would be evil.

I think that the family members in Charleston who have shown the strength to love are a supreme, superb, sterling example to the rest of this country of what we must do if we are to continue to live together such that we will have a future that will be void of the kind of behavior—the ugly, dastardly deed, if you will—that took place in that church.

Dr. King reminded us also that we have a duty—an obligation, if you will—to learn to live together as brothers and sisters. We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters. Because if we don't learn to live together as brothers and sisters, we will perish together as fools.

I thank the people of South Carolina for exhibiting the ultimate in the strength to love, and I thank God that I have been blessed. I pray that God will continue to give me the strength to be a blessing to others.

I yield back the balance of my time.

FAITH THROUGH THE BIBLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I enjoy hearing my friend from Texas, a former judge down in Houston, talk about love. I do love him as a Christian brother. We can disagree and still love each other.

I have been surprised in recent years to find some of those of us who believe in the Book that used to be read here. It was a pretty common practice on the floor of the House on Sundays down in Statuary Hall, and even in this room, back when church services were held in the former House Chamber.

It was attended by the man that first coined the phrase, "separation of church and State." It is not in the Constitution. It was in his letter to the