

daughters never returned home from the line of duty. In my home State of California, 11 officers lost, one even from my own district, Deputy Jack Hopkins of the Modoc County Sheriff's Department. We recognize him, and we recognize all the brave men and women around this country who sacrifice, who stand as a thin blue line between us and a lot of mayhem. We are truly grateful and want to take time this day to recognize what you do for us. God bless you all. Amen.

#### REAL LEADERSHIP TACKLES ISSUES

(Mr. RICHMOND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to defend an 18-year-old school student who expressed his life experiences, and he did it in the form of art protected by the First Amendment to our Constitution.

But what I also want to do is make sure that we, as Members of Congress, don't use our bully pulpit in this very prestigious and most elite body in the United States to condemn the actions of an 18-year-old who is only expressing what he sees on a daily basis.

What real leadership is is to talk to that young man and ask him why, in his community, this is his perception; ask him why he fears the police; and ask him why, in his neighborhood, they fear the police. We, as Members of Congress, understand the sacrifice of law enforcement and the fact that they put their lives on the line every day, and we honor them.

But when there is a question on any segment of our society that they don't get equal justice, equal protection of the laws, and that the Pledge of Allegiance rings hollow when you say "and justice for all," what real leadership does is tackle that issue as opposed to jumping on an 18-year-old high school student.

#### COMMENDING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on Law Enforcement Appreciation Day to commend the law enforcement officers throughout our Nation who answer the call to serve their communities. Law enforcement officers face increasingly difficult circumstances while working to serve and protect the public. It is a dangerous job, and often it is a thankless job.

Just last week, Pennsylvania mourned the loss of a 23-year-old Pennsylvania State Police trooper who was shot and killed while investigating a domestic incident.

Our officers put on their uniforms each day knowing that they can be in harm's way at any moment. They answer the calls in times of distress, they

follow the rules, and they wear the badge proudly.

We must remember that our officers are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, and husbands and wives. They are human, and they arguably have one of the most difficult jobs in America. So today, and each day, let's honor our brothers and sisters in blue. Let's thank them for the important work they do to keep us all safe.

#### WE SHOULD BE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD

(Mr. YOHO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, the 115th Congress has a unique opportunity to clean the swamp, especially of Members who were convicted of committing felonies while serving in office and drawing a retirement check from the taxpayers.

I reintroduced the Trust Restored to the United States Taxpayer Act, which eliminates the taxpayer-funded portion of congressional pensions for Members who were convicted of a felony while serving. I applaud the 10 fellow Members of the House who cosponsored TRUST, and, in doing so, demonstrated they were willing to hold themselves accountable to their employers, the American taxpayers.

We are willing to hold ourselves to the same standards we hold those who serve in our military and elsewhere. If Members of Congress are serious about cleaning up Washington and are truly accountable for their actions then supporting this bill is common sense. If we break the law and break the trust of the people who have placed us in power as their representatives then we should be willing to forfeit the taxpayer-funded portion of our retirement.

We are not above the law. If anything, we should be held to a higher standard. I encourage my colleagues to support this.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota). The Chair will recognize Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business.

#### ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to have this opportunity to stand on the House floor and to anchor the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour, where today we want to discuss some of the issues and challenges confronting this country that we hope this newly constituted Congress will be prepared to take up as we move into the 115th Congress.

The first and most glaring issue confronting the Congressional Black Caucus is the nomination and confirmation of JEFF SESSIONS to be the Attorney General of the United States. The members of this caucus, since its inception, have fought for equality and justice, and we do it because it is the right thing to do, and that is how we were raised.

JEFF SESSIONS' record is atrocious when it comes to equal rights, equal protection, justice for all, and voting rights. At worst, he was a coconspirator in the promotion of segregation and discrimination. At best, he lacked the courage and motivation to fight for equality, equal protection, and justice.

In the words of Maya Angelou: "When someone shows you who they are believe them. . . ." President-elect Trump has shown us time and time again exactly who he is through his words and his actions. His Cabinet nominations offer further evidence of who he is and what he values. Each of these individuals have shown us who they are as well.

Mr. Speaker, tonight you will hear from many passionate, educated, experienced freedom fighters from our communities, and they will each address their concerns with the nominations coming from the President-elect. We do it out of an obligation to continue to fight for the least of those, those who cannot hire a lobbyist, those who are struggling to make ends meet, those who wake up every day trying to figure out how to put clothes on their kids' back, food on the table, a house, a roof over their head, and to continue to fight for the American Dream, opportunity for their children.

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

#### IMPACT OF CABINET NOMINATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome you to tonight's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour that will examine the negative impact of President-elect Trump's nominations for the position of U.S. Attorney General, Secretary of Education, and Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Let's be honest here, the 2016 Presidential election showed us both the worst and the best of American politics. The most disturbing development of the election season, of course, was the President-elect's campaign that was an "us versus them" type of campaign that really divided the Nation. It was really sad for people to see that on display.

On November 9, after winning the Presidency, the President-elect tweeted: "Such a beautiful and important evening! The forgotten man and woman will never be forgotten again. We will all come together as never before."

But will he keep his promise of doing all that he can to repair our divided nation? So far he has been very disappointing. And when you look at the nominations of Senator SESSIONS, Betsy DeVos, and TOM PRICE to key positions in his administration, it seems like he has forgotten, that he has forgotten and ignored our Nation's dark history of oppression, particularly to the African American community.

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The President-elect's nominees represent everything that the Congressional Black Caucus has vehemently fought against. As a caucus, we fought to ensure that the African American community is empowered with the tools it needs to achieve the American Dream. Mr. Trump's Cabinet nominations are set to push the dream back so far out of reach for millions and millions of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we have a list of Members that would like to speak tonight.

I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the dean of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louisiana (Mr. VEASEY) for opening up this part of our Special Order for which the Congressional Black Caucus has come together to more critically examine the nomination of Senator JEFF SESSIONS.

As the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, I led a joint statement in November that was signed by every Democratic member of the Judiciary Committee opposing Senator SESSIONS' nomination for United States Attorney General. The Attorney General is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States, charged with the administration of the criminal justice system and the enforcement of our civil rights. Senator SESSIONS is clearly unsuitable to lead the Department of Justice.

In 1986 testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, witnesses said that Mr. SESSIONS had referred to the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and other civil rights groups, as both un-American and communist inspired. One prosecutor in the Alabama United States Attorney's Of-

fice testified that Mr. SESSIONS referred to him as "boy" and counseled him to be careful of what you say to White folks.

His appointment to the Federal branch was opposed by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and other organizations. Senator SESSIONS has criticized the section 5 preclearance provisions in the Voting Rights Act, which I and many others have been fighting to restore since the 2013 Supreme Court *Shelby County v. Holder* decision.

In the 114th Congress, Senator SESSIONS opposed bipartisan criminal justice reform efforts. He has also opposed the reauthorization of the bipartisan Violence Against Women Act and nearly every immigration reform bill that has come before the Senate.

A vote to confirm JEFF SESSIONS as Attorney General is a vote against freedom and equality. So I join with many of my colleagues today in urging the Senate to oppose his nomination, and I thank my colleague for yielding to me.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CONYERS very much for his words as the dean of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage opposition to the nomination of JEFF SESSIONS to the Attorney General's Office by this President-elect.

We have been asked and we are constantly asked: Are you saying he is a racist? He defined himself. He defined himself long ago when he was denied a Federal judgeship in 1986 after having been appointed by Ronald Reagan. He was denied because his colleagues said they heard him use the N-word.

Also, it was very well documented that after two of the members of the KKK killed an African American man, he said: Oh, I thought the KKK was okay until I learned they smoked marijuana. This is the same man that said, again, that the NAACP and the SCLC were un-American, that they were communist inspired, and it goes on and on and on. And it is not whether or not we are calling him or we think of him as a racist; he defined himself in that manner. He was denied the appointment to the Federal judgeship, including by Republicans who voted against him.

So here we have a man who is going to be considered for the Attorney General's Office where we have the Civil Rights Division. Should we be worried about that? You bet your bottom dollar we should be worried about that. Not only has he defined himself as a racist, but this is a throwback. This is a man who is a setback. This is a man who does not agree with his colleagues on criminal justice reform. This is a man who loves mandatory minimum sentences. This is a man who does not

want the Justice Department to work with local police departments who are in trouble, like what happened in Ferguson. This is a man who is against voting rights. This is a man who has shown himself to be against women. This is a man who does not support the LGBT community. Why would we want him to have this very important, prestigious position as the Attorney General overseeing civil rights? I don't think so.

I advise everybody who is listening and all of our colleagues to support him not being appointed to that position and to get the word over to the Senators that they should not support him, they should not vote for him.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS).

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. VEASEY for helping organize this Special Order on a topic that is of great concern to me and many of my constituents.

The Attorney General, as we know, serves as the United States' chief law enforcement official. He or she does not serve certain States, certain classes of people, nor is their service limited to a particular party. The Attorney General is there to serve all of us.

With that in mind, I stand here on the floor of the House concerned with Senator SESSIONS' nomination to become the next Attorney General. Based on his record, there are a number of reasons why I believe that Senator SESSIONS is unfit to lead the Department of Justice.

First, at his 1986 confirmation hearing to serve as a Federal judge for the Southern District of Alabama, it was revealed that Senator SESSIONS had called the NAACP and the ACLU un-American and communist inspired. I am a life member of the NAACP and a participating member in the ACLU. Neither one of those organizations are un-American or communist inspired.

A Department of Justice attorney also testified that Sessions said he believed that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Operation PUSH, and the NAACP taught anti-American values. Well, if being free, if being able to exercise your right to vote, being able to not determine one's color as a condition for participation, then I am not certain what Mr. SESSIONS was talking about; but I do know that he has called a Black attorney "boy," and he also talked about a White civil rights attorney as a "race traitor."

Also, what I am more concerned about is, in the aftermath of the shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, he opposed taking down the Confederate battle flag. Now, if there is one symbol that we all understand that represents hate, it is the confederate

battle flag. I am concerned that Senator SESSIONS continued to try to defend that symbol. I can't imagine someone being the Attorney General having that kind of attitude and that operation.

Mr. Speaker, I join the chorus of other members of the Congressional Black Caucus who raise their voice in opposition to what would be a travesty to the Department of Justice if Senator JEFF SESSIONS is confirmed.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) for his timely comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my fellow Texan from Houston.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank Mr. VEASEY for his leadership. Let also thank the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mr. RICHMOND, for his leadership.

Before I start, let me offer my appreciation to law enforcement officers across America—this is Law Enforcement Appreciation Day—and join my colleague, VAL DEMINGS, particularly acknowledging the sadness in Orlando today in the loss of two law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

I rise today for not a personal statement or a statement that has to do with personality. As the President-elect said of Mr. SESSIONS, he is a fine and decent fellow. I have no interest in determining whether that is true or false. But I do want to hold the President-elect accountable for the words that he said on election night that he pledged to the Nation that he would be a President for all Americans. That pledge, I believe, will ring hollow for tens upon tens of millions of Americans with the nomination of the Secretary of Education, who is against public schools, the nomination of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, who has no plan for health care, and, finally, the nomination for Attorney General.

Rather than select someone who is championing and protecting, rather than opposing and undermining the precious right to vote, the constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy, criminal justice reform, and the support for reform of the Nation's immigration system, it is quite the contrary in the nomination of Senator SESSIONS—a person who opposed *Shelby County v. Holder* in terms of the basis of trying to constructively support voting rights, an individual who is hostile to comprehensive immigration reform, and certainly someone who has constantly not sought to fix, but has sought to undermine.

So, for example, as a U.S. attorney, he was the first prosecutor in the country to bring charges against civil rights activists of voter fraud. But, Mr. Speaker, listen to this: he didn't just bring charges; he had 29 counts of voter fraud that resulted in civil rights activists facing 100 years in prison.

He has repeatedly denied the disproportionate impact of voting restric-

tions on minorities and has been a leader in the effort to undermine the protections of the Voting Rights Act, and he did nothing to reconstruct the Voting Rights Act and restore section 5 when tens upon tens of Members of Congress worked diligently to try to fix the *Shelby* case.

He criticized Attorney General Eric Holder for challenging State election laws, claiming they are necessary to fight voter fraud. Evidence supports that voter fraud is almost nonexistent, with 31 confirmed cases out of more than a billion ballots cast.

Senator SESSIONS fought to continue practices that harm schools predominantly attended by African American students. He led the fight to uphold the State of Alabama's inequitable school funding mechanism after it had been deemed unconstitutional by the Alabama Circuit Court.

Finally, in the State of Alabama, nearly a quarter of African American students attend what is called apartheid, or what can be called apartheid schools, meaning the school's White population is less than 1 percent.

Now we understand that the Senator has taken credit for desegregation efforts in the State of Alabama. There is no evidence of his participation in the desegregation of Alabama schools or any school desegregation lawsuits filed by then-Attorney General SESSIONS.

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I would say to you as I close, we who are vulnerable look to the Department of Justice as the solid rock of justice for the Nation. Whether we are immigrant, whether we are a woman who is trying to fight against violence, whether we need civil rights, whether we are LGBT, whether we are those who are seeking religious freedom or freedom of expression, the Department of Justice is a solid rock of justice for this Nation.

With that in mind, I believe that this nominee, who now stands with the criteria evidenced by the record, stands not prepared, not fit to hold this position of the Attorney General of the United States—a sacred position of law and justice.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committees on the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committee; Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, and the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, I rise today to express my views regarding the President-Elect's nomination of U.S. Senator JEFFERSON BEAUREGARD "JEFF" SESSIONS III of Alabama to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

On Election Night the President-Elect pledged to the nation that he would be a president to all Americans.

That pledge will ring hollow to tens of millions of Americans in light of his announced intention to nominate one of the U.S. Senate's most far-right members, Senator JEFF SESSIONS (R-AL) to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

Perhaps nothing would do more to reassure the American people that the President-Elect

is committed to unifying the nation than the nomination and appointment of a person to be Attorney General who has a record of championing and protecting, rather than opposing and undermining, the precious right to vote; the constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy, criminal justice reform, and support for reform of the nation's immigration system so that it is fair and humane.

The nomination of Alabama Senator SESSIONS as Attorney General does not inspire the necessary confidence.

As a U.S. Senator from Alabama, the state from which the infamous Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* originated, Senator SESSIONS has failed to play a constructive role in repairing the damage to voting rights caused by that decision.

He was one of the leading opponents of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

He is one of the Senate's most hostile opponents of comprehensive immigration reform and was a principal architect of the draconian and incendiary immigration policy advocated by the President-Elect during the campaign.

And his record in support of efforts to bring needed reform to the nation's criminal justice system is virtually non-existent.

In 1986, ten years before Senator SESSIONS was elected to the Senate, he was rejected for a U.S. District Court judgeship in view of documented incidents that revealed his lack of commitment to civil and voting rights, and to equal justice.

And his Senate voting record and rhetoric has endeared him to white nationalist websites and organizations like Breitbart and Stormfront.

As a U.S. attorney, Senator SESSIONS was the first federal prosecutor in the country to bring charges against civil rights activists for voter fraud.

Senator SESSIONS charged the group with 29 counts of voter fraud, facing over 100 years in prison.

Senator SESSIONS has repeatedly denied the disproportionate impact of voting restrictions on minorities and has been a leader in the effort to undermine the protections of the Voting Rights Act.

Senator SESSIONS has spoken out against the Voting Rights Act, calling it "a piece of intrusive legislation."

Senator SESSIONS criticized Attorney General Eric Holder for challenging state election laws, claiming they are necessary to fight voter fraud.

However, evidence supports that voter fraud is almost nonexistent, with 31 confirmed cases out of more than 1 billion ballots cast.

As Attorney General of the state of Alabama, Senator SESSIONS fought to continue practices that harmed schools predominantly attended by African-American students.

Senator SESSIONS led the fight to uphold the state of Alabama's inequitable school funding mechanism after it had been deemed unconstitutional by the Alabama circuit court.

In the state of Alabama nearly a quarter of African-American students attend apartheid schools, meaning the school's white population is less than one percent.

Although Senator SESSIONS has publically taken credit for desegregation efforts in the state of Alabama, there is no evidence of his participation in the desegregation of Alabama schools or any school desegregation lawsuits filed by then Attorney General SESSIONS.

I call upon the Senate Judiciary Committee to subject the nomination to the most comprehensive, searching, and withering examination.

The United States has been blessed to have been served as Attorney General by such illustrious figures as Robert Jackson, Robert Kennedy, Herbert Brownell, Ramsey Clark, Nicholas Katzenbach, Eric Holder, and Edward H. Levi.

The duty of the U.S. Attorney General is to lead the Department of Justice in protecting and expanding the civil rights of all Americans and the pursuit of equal justice for all, not to turn back the clock on hard won rights and liberties.

No senator should vote to confirm the nomination of JEFF SESSIONS as U.S. Attorney General if there is the slightest doubt that he possesses the character, qualities, integrity, and commitment to justice and equality needed to lead a department, the headquarters building of which is named for Robert F. Kennedy, one of the nation's greatest and most indefatigable champions of civil rights and equal justice for all.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank very much Ms. SHEILA JACKSON LEE of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from California, Ms. BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE. Let me thank Representative VEASEY for hosting this important discussion on President-elect Trump's disturbing nomination and for the gentleman's commitment to defend civil and human rights for all Americans. Now, more than ever, the voices of the CBC's are so important in this fight.

I would also like to recognize our new chair, CEDRIC RICHMOND, as he takes the helm of the CBC during these very challenging times; but I know that, under his leadership, our caucus will continue to fight in a very strong and aggressive way for equality and justice.

The President-elect, Mr. Speaker, ran one of the most divisive and racially tinged campaigns we have witnessed in modern history. Since winning the Presidency, President-elect Donald Trump has nominated individuals to serve in his Cabinet, proving that he will govern just as he campaigned. There is no greater example of this disturbing reality than in Senator JEFF SESSIONS' nomination to serve as our country's Attorney General. The Justice Department is our best tool in protecting civil and human rights and voting rights. By appointing Senator SESSIONS to lead this department, President-elect Donald Trump is making it clear that he will abandon these fundamental values.

Senator SESSIONS has a long history of opposing civil rights and equality. He has called the Voting Rights Act a piece of intrusive legislation. He said that the Supreme Court's disastrous decision to gut voting rights was good news for the South. In the 1980s, he was rejected from serving as a Federal judge due to his blatantly racist comments.

Any one of these statements should be disqualifying. In the proposed, big-

oted Trump administration, frankly, I am not surprised; but I am appalled that the President-elect would choose such an extreme and divisive figure to serve as Attorney General. Clearly, someone who has publicly displayed prejudice and intolerance is not qualified to serve as our chief law enforcement officer for our civil rights laws.

By that standard alone, one thing is clear: Senator SESSIONS is wholly unfit to serve as Attorney General. Senator SESSIONS has forcefully degraded the LGBT community, has voted against the Violence Against Women Act, and has undermined the cornerstone of the civil rights movement and the Voting Rights Act. His nomination really is a chilling indication of how a Trump administration intends to govern. This country has made tremendous progress in the fight to protect, preserve, and expand civil rights for all Americans. We will not allow a Trump administration to drag us back into the past.

As the conscience of the Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus is a voice for the marginalized. Our message to the Trump administration and to President-elect Donald Trump is simple: A vote to confirm Senator JEFF SESSIONS is a vote against justice. We will fight to protect any rollback on civil or human rights. We will not be silent.

I call on all of my colleagues to oppose Senator SESSIONS' nomination as the United States Attorney General because his history disqualifies him for this important position.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank very much Representative LEE. I really appreciate the gentlewoman's remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to someone who, over the last 20 years, has been in nearly every battle in the United States Congress when it comes to the issue of civil rights. He is Representative BOBBY SCOTT of Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for organizing this Special Order.

I will be brief. There are a lot of people who want to speak. I will just speak to the jurisdiction of the Education and the Workforce Committee, on which I have the honor of serving as the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, as we consider appointments to the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services, we shouldn't just look at people's personalities, but at what the policy implications are of their appointments. The Senate must reject those nominees who will fail to stand up to the goals and aspirations of America's children and workers.

The first nominee I will speak to is that of Secretary of Labor, Mr. Puzder, who was the CEO of CKE Restaurants. He has spoken out many times in opposition to an increase in the minimum wage. Many States have recognized that the minimum wage is so low that people who work full time fail to make a wage that exceeds the poverty level.

What is his position going to be on increasing the minimum wage? With

overtime, are people entitled to work overtime after 40 hours?

The regulation is in place. Will he enforce that new regulation? Or will he try to overturn the regulation that recognizes and honors the 40-hour workweek, whereby those who work more than 40 hours will get time and a half?

If you look at CKE's retirement plan, it leaves a lot to be desired in terms of fees.

What will his position be?

When you look at the fiduciary rule—which requires financial advisers, when they are looking at somebody's retirement fund, to have the worker's best interest in the forefront, not their personal profits and what they can rip off from someone but to look at the worker's views as paramount—will he change that so that we can go back to the days in which people could take advantage of unsophisticated workers and sell them products that are not in their best interests?

What are his positions going to be on enforcing Federal regulations?

CKE Restaurants has been found in violation of many wage regulations.

Will he vigorously enforce those?

Those are the kinds of things that we need to look at when we look at the Secretary of Labor.

The Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, is best known for her support of vouchers. Vouchers in Michigan have shown that they fund schools that are actually worse than the average, so they have not done any good.

Will she support public education? Or will she support the privatization of education?

Finally, Health and Human Services: Will we privatize Medicare? Will we repeal without replacing the Affordable Care Act?

A lot has been said about repeal and then replace later. Let me tell you, until you have seen a plan, you can just count on the repeal; there will probably never be a replace.

What will happen to everybody if there is no plan?

Twenty million people—maybe 30 million—will lose their insurance, and the insurance market for everybody else will be in chaos. We need to make sure that we look at this and get these decisions straight before we confirm anybody.

All of the nominees and others should be reviewed not on their personalities, but on the policy decisions they will be making. The next generation of Americans will base their education, their jobs, and their health care on the decisions these nominees will make. The Senate should reject any of the nominees that will take us in the wrong direction.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank Mr. SCOTT of Virginia very much.

Mr. Speaker, I inquire as to how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I next yield to the lone voice in the State of

Wisconsin, someone who is always speaking out on these issues not just for her district, but for the many people around her State who want that voice from the CBC: Ms. GWEN MOORE of Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. I thank Mr. VEASEY so much, and I thank our new chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for his tremendous effort in putting this very important Special Order hour together.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening because I am extremely concerned about the nomination of Senator JEFF SESSIONS.

Certainly, President-elect Trump has a right to nominate people and have them be presented before our Senate, and, certainly, you don't expect a Republican to necessarily agree with all of your positions; but I am concerned about Senator SESSIONS because I think he has aligned himself with extreme ideological views that won't best serve all of the people of the United States.

During the last 7 years, the Department of Justice has investigated at least 23 law enforcement agencies in response to rampant civil rights abuses. I fear that, under an Attorney General JEFF SESSIONS, those consent decrees and that very important work in resolving the conflicts between, particularly, African American communities and police officers will be lost.

I am extremely concerned, as are at least 70 civil rights organizations and organizations that serve women, with an Attorney General JEFF SESSIONS. They are concerned about not just the anti-abortion views that Senator SESSIONS has displayed, but about the zealous anti-choice positions that he has taken—his association and alignment, again, with extreme anti-abortion organizations. They believe that he is not capable of fair and impartial action as Attorney General.

What is so chilling, as an example, is when Senator SESSIONS was asked about President-elect Trump's Access Hollywood scandal in that he said he didn't characterize the grabbing of a woman's genitals as necessarily a sexual assault. Very, very chilling and disturbing.

In being from Wisconsin, where we have fought egregious and unfair voter ID laws that were designed to disenfranchise, particularly, African Americans, Mr. SESSIONS has indicated that the gutting of the Voting Rights Act has actually had no impact and that no one has been denied the right to vote. He seems to be tone deaf to the cries of African Americans across this country to protect their voting rights.

I encourage the Senate to look very carefully at this nominee, because, in fact, the United States Attorney General's only charge is to protect the civil rights of all of the citizens. I don't know that he will be willing or able to do that.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank Representative MOORE. I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments and I thank her for men-

tioning some of the issues with voter ID in Wisconsin, which may have tilted the election results in that State.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to my good friend from Brooklyn in the Empire State, Representative YVETTE CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I thank Mr. VEASEY for his leadership this evening. I thank our chairman, CEDRIC RICHMOND, for his vision and his timeliness in bringing this to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of the Ninth Congressional District of New York in opposition to Donald Trump's nominee for the position of Attorney General of the United States, Senator JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama. I stand with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus as we raise our voices on behalf of the millions of Americans who depend on this caucus to speak as the conscience of the Congress—speaking truth to power.

Mr. Speaker, I struggle to understand how Senator SESSIONS can even be considered to lead the Department of Justice when time and time again throughout his political career he has actively opposed the mission and purpose for which the Department of Justice was created. For the better part of my life—at least a half a century—the Department of Justice has assumed a position of leadership in the fight for the civil rights of African Americans who seek the uninhibited right to vote, for young women who seek protection against sexual assault on college campuses, for disabled individuals who fight for equitable access to basic services, and for immigrants who aspire to pursue their visions of the American Dream.

The nomination of Senator SESSIONS does not support the legacy of progress that has been made under the auspices of the modern-day Department of Justice. As a young prosecutor, he directed racial slurs at his African American colleagues. Senator SESSIONS spoke highly of the Ku Klux Klan. He actively targeted and persecuted activists like Mr. Albert Turner—one of Dr. Martin Luther King's advisers—for simply trying to register disenfranchised voters.

□ 2000

When he became Attorney General of Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, a product of segregated education, worked tirelessly to prevent predominantly African American public schools from accessing an equal share of resources that had been long denied to Black students.

As a Member of the Senate, Senator SESSIONS has been an outspoken opponent of criminal justice reforms that many of his Republican colleagues support. He is a leader in the effort to define undocumented Americans as “the other” and forcibly separating families in the United States.

The women and men who lead the Department of Justice are called upon to pursue justice; but with such a documented history of hostility toward the

most vulnerable populations—people of color, women, disabled individuals, and immigrant families—we cannot expect Senator SESSIONS to pursue justice on their behalf.

I absolutely and unequivocally oppose the nomination of Senator SESSIONS. He has demonstrated his disdain for the most basic of human principles: equality, justice, and fairness. These principles represent the promise of our Constitution. The Senate considering and confirming Mr. SESSIONS would break that very promise.

Mr. Speaker, I stand with the CBC today asking the Senate of the United States to uphold the virtues of the Constitution and reject this divisive nomination.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to remind Members that we have 3 minutes per Member left of speaking time. I wanted to just remind Members of that so everyone will have an opportunity to speak on this very important matter.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Representative CEDRIC RICHMOND as he takes the helm of the CBC and manages this exercise tonight; and also Representative MARC VEASEY, who will be the point man for doing these Special Orders.

We are called upon tonight at a critical time in the Nation's history. We have a new President coming in who is polarizing, divisive, inexperienced, and immature. He is making some selections for his appointments, and the Senate has the opportunity to weigh in on those appointments.

So what is happening is that there are incomplete and missing answers to the Senate questionnaires that appointees like Senator JEFF SESSIONS, who I rise in opposition to, have completed and sent in. This puts the Office of Government Ethics that vets these candidates at a severe disadvantage of not having the information that they need in order to vet these appointees, like Senator JEFF SESSIONS. They don't have the information that they need.

So we also have a compressed schedule of nominees to be considered over the next few days. This, combined with the incomplete answers, puts us in a position of not having enough information to conduct full, fair, thorough, and sifting analysis and vetting for the American people. These are the people who are going to serve them into the future.

So I am very concerned, especially about a guy like Senator SESSIONS who has a history of being opposed to civil rights for certain Americans. Now, there are those who would say that this took place 30 years ago, all of the things that he said and did prior to becoming a Senator 20 years ago. Some will say that all of these things that have been cited about Senator SESSIONS are 30 years old.

We have to look at what has occurred in the life of Senator SESSIONS to make



us think that he has changed. It takes a courageous person like George Wallace to come forward and say: I was wrong for being a racist. It takes a strong person like Lee Atwater to say: I was wrong.

Senator SESSIONS has not said he was wrong. There is nothing that Senator SESSIONS has written that says: I apologize for what I did back then. There is nothing that he said. Certainly his legislative record, which is only nine bills over the last 20 years—three of which were ceremonial in nature—there is nothing in that legislation that would lead us to conclude that he has changed. So he is going to be bad for the Attorney General's office.

I conclude by asking my Senate colleagues to think carefully about what you are about to do and say “no” to Senator JEFF SESSIONS.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. PAYNE), my classmate and a voice from the New York area.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Fort Worth (Mr. VEASEY). I was looking forward to a potential clash with his team next week, but I guess you have to get out of Green Bay before you can go to Dallas.

Mr. Speaker, the job of the U.S. Attorney General is to protect the rights and freedoms of every single American. Senator SESSIONS' record and public statements suggest that, if confirmed, he will not uphold our Constitution's values of fairness, justice, and equality for all. Since the election, President-elect Trump's victory has been marred by allegations of voter intimidation and suppression in key States.

It is clear that we need to restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. Yet, Senator SESSIONS has called the Voting Rights Act an intrusive piece of legislation. When he was the United States Attorney in west Alabama, Senator SESSIONS used the power of his office to intimidate and dissuade African American voters.

Americans recognize the need for Congress to find a bipartisan solution to immigration reform. Yet, Senator SESSIONS has been one of the loudest opponents of comprehensive immigration reform. He has even fought against legal immigration, arguing, instead, for immigration moderation.

Americans also recognize the dire need for criminal justice reform. Yet, Senator SESSIONS has opposed bipartisan legislation to modernize prison sentencing for low-level drug offenders.

On every measure, Senator SESSIONS has shown that he will be detrimental to African Americans and other minority communities as our Nation's next Attorney General.

The next Attorney General must build on the progress of the last few years under Attorney General Lynch and Attorney General Holder. He or she must safeguard civil rights, prosecute hate crimes, protect the right of due process, and uphold the Constitution and our basic values and freedoms.

Every indication is that Senator SESSIONS is too extreme and unwilling to protect the safety and the rights of every American. If confirmed as U.S. Attorney General, Senator SESSIONS will pose a grave threat to our justice system and to the communities that system is meant to protect. His ideologies are in direct contrast with the Justice Department's mission.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), my classmate from the Buckeye State, representing the Columbus, Ohio, area.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and chair of this Special Order hour (Mr. VEASEY) and the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (Mr. RICHMOND). It is indeed an honor, Mr. Speaker, for me to stand here with these colleagues tonight.

We come tonight with a strong message. We are here to speak out against President-elect Trump's Cabinet nominations who, based on their records, are, in my opinion, too divisive, too extreme, too out of touch, and unable to protect the interests and the safety of all Americans—individuals like JEFF SESSIONS and Betsy DeVos.

Trust me, Mr. Speaker, these nominees need to be vetted. The American people deserve to know who will be in charge of these critically important Federal agencies.

We are extremely concerned with Senator JEFF SESSIONS' nomination to be the U.S. Attorney General. SESSIONS, as you have heard tonight and you will continue to hear, has continuously obstructed the progress we have made with the enactment of the historic civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

He has consistently, Mr. Speaker, fought to block legislative efforts to ensure racial equality, including his staunch opposition to full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act—the very bill, Mr. Speaker, if confirmed, he would be in charge of enforcing and protecting.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues. We cannot allow that to happen.

Next up in Trump's Cabinet of cronies is his nominee for Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, who has pushed to expand taxpayer-funded vouchers for private and religious schools and has absolutely zero experience as an educator or an educational leader. She has, however, Mr. Speaker, spent millions of dollars lobbying for school choice proposals which harm disadvantaged and at-risk communities.

Now, I am from the great State of Ohio, and to have someone owe our Ohio Elections Commission \$5.3 million, we cannot allow that to happen. We have to be the voice for the people. Especially those people who are voiceless.

Mr. Speaker, let me end by saying that as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I stand here tonight wanting the public to know that we are concerned and we are exercising our right and our voice.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York, the Empire State, (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague and classmate, Representative MARC VEASEY, for his leadership today; and the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Representative CEDRIC RICHMOND, for convening us and for the leadership that he has already shown.

We have a President-elect who, for 5 years, perpetrated the racist lie that Barack Obama was not born in the United States of America, and who ran one of the most divisive campaigns in the Nation's history and then promised that he was going to bring all of us together.

Then you have got his colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have said: Well, Democrats, people in the civil rights community, African Americans, we should give the new President a chance.

This is the same group of people who declared war on Barack Obama on day one of his Presidency and governed themselves under the following approach: Obstruction today, obstruction tomorrow, obstruction forever.

That should sound familiar to folks from Alabama and the Deep South.

Now they want us to give them a chance. You can't lecture us on Presidential etiquette. You have no credibility in that area. We will decide how we want to engage. As it relates to your pick to head the Department of Justice, it is totally unacceptable, unreasonable, unjust, and unconscionable, not because of anything that he may have said 30 years ago, as offensive as that may be, but because of the positions that Senator JEFF SESSIONS has taken today.

Today, in 2017, based on his recent track record, he supports the Confederate battle flag, not 30 years ago, but today. Today he supports voter suppression efforts that are advanced by his unwillingness to repair section 4 and section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. That is not 30 years ago. I don't care that you showed up in Selma, Alabama, for a photo op. Your position on the Voting Rights Act is unacceptable today.

□ 2015

Today you support mass incarceration, the failed drug war, and the prison industrial complex. And because of your position today, reasonable Americans should oppose your ascension to the Department of Justice.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS).

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus for coming out and speaking out.

I rise today to express concern and strong opposition to President-elect Trump Cabinet nominations for Attorney General, Secretary of Education,

and Secretary of Health and Human Services. President-elect Trump chose not to practice what he preached, and he didn't drain the swamp. Instead, he nominated politically divisive individuals to serve in his administration.

Throughout a public service career spanning more than 30 years, Senator SESSIONS used the power of the courts to discriminate against civil rights leaders. He allegedly used racially charged language to disparage minorities, expressed support for the KKK, and then tried to dismiss it as a joke. He celebrated the gutting of the Voting Rights Act and opposed same-sex marriage. He denied the constitutionality of *Roe v. Wade* and voted against greater access to health care for veterans. He blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act and voted against the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. He does not respect the rights of minorities or women, and he has proven himself to be unfit to serve as United States Attorney General.

Education is the great equalizer. One of the most important investments families make is in their children. The Secretary of Education must be committed to providing a free, world-class education to all students regardless of race, gender, ability, status, financial means, or geography.

Unfortunately, Betsy DeVos has consistently fought for private school vouchers that divert funds from public schools, our communities, and our children who need these investments the most. She has even used her personal wealth to lobby against important transparency and accountability measures that would have provided necessary safeguards for Michigan students.

DeVos' track record of undermining public education and her lack of commitment to defending the civil rights of students causes me great pause in her quest to become Secretary of Education. I can't support it. Betsy DeVos, absolutely no.

Finally, Chairman PRICE. He has made it clear that his budget priorities are highly partisan. We can expect that if he is confirmed, he will strip 20 million people of affordable health care, women would be denied their right to contraception and reproductive health care, and devastating cuts would be levied against Medicaid funding. We can't go back to a time when being a woman is a preexisting condition for insurance coverage. Chairman PRICE's nomination offers just that.

These folks will not unite the American people, and they cannot be trusted to advocate for our most vulnerable populations, so I urge my Senate colleagues to oppose the confirmations of Senator JEFF SESSIONS, Betsy DeVos, and Chairman TOM PRICE.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take a stand against those

who seek to further divide our Nation. We face the greatest chaos not by the acts of outsiders or foreign intruders, but by the division and war with each other. The nomination of JEFF SESSIONS as our Attorney General threatens our strength as Americans. Over three decades of a career in public service, JEFF SESSIONS' words and actions lead to one question: Who is included and excluded from the public he chooses to serve?

JEFF SESSIONS has referred to the Voting Rights Act as a "piece of intrusive legislation." The first Federal prosecutor in the country to bring charges against civil rights activists for voter fraud since the passage of the VRA in 1965, SESSIONS has called the *Shelby v. Holder* case, which eliminated the preclearance formula, "good news . . . for the South."

SESSIONS has referred to the NAACP and ACLU civil rights groups saying they have done more harm than good by trying to force civil rights down the throats of the good people of the United States. He has referred to these organizations as un-American and communist inspired.

African Americans and other people of color are disproportionately affected by acts of voter suppression and the criminal justice system. Those, among others, are the key areas in which SESSIONS has shown deliberate disregard for the justice and equality of all Americans.

This is a pivotal moment in our Nation's history, and we simply cannot treat the American people like a social experiment. History will reflect on this moment in time, and our action and inaction will be accounted for.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN).

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who have spoken this evening.

As I have said, I would have liked to have spent this transition period working with the President-elect on ways to solve our Nation's issues. I would have liked to have been reassured that, despite disparaging and divisive rhetoric, his actions would have worked to unite us all. Instead, we are battling against a nominee who has already been deemed unfit for a Federal judgeship. So what can possibly make him fit to serve as our Nation's top law enforcement officer?

The definition of justice is the quality of being just, impartial, or fair. Synonyms include equity, objectivity, and neutrality. Senator SESSIONS has built a reputation and a voting record that does not align with justice. I do not wish to relitigate the past, and while it cannot be ignored, we don't have to look too far back to identify Senator SESSIONS' priorities. In 2006, he voted to renew the Voting Rights Act. In 2013, he supported the Supreme Court decision to strike key provisions of that law.

Following being denied a Federal judgeship, Senator SESSIONS cosponsored legislation to honor Rosa Parks with a Congressional Gold Medal while also voting against legislation in 2009 to extend Federal hate crime protections against people targeted because of their sexual orientation. Further, he has been the ringleader to immigration reform.

How can we in good faith recommend, nominate, or confirm a person to a post that is solely responsible for protecting the civil rights of all Americans, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, and discriminated against?

This administration is continuing to ask us to put aside our intellect and to trust their intentions. I refuse. This administration would like us to support a man who, throughout his career, has determined the rights of those who look like me, like constituents I serve, as inferior. I refuse, and I ask the Senators to please consider this as they listen to whether or not this gentleman deserves to be confirmed.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, I would have liked to have spent the transition period working with the President-Elect, Trump, on ways to solve our Nation's issues.

I would have liked to have been reassured that despite disparaging and divisive campaign rhetoric—President-Elect Trump's actions would work to unite us all.

Yet, instead we're here battling against the nominee for the 84th attorney general of the United States who was already rejected as a federal judge.

His disqualification was rooted in allegations that he called a black attorney "boy" and his suggestions that a white lawyer working for black clients was a race traitor.

Not only that but Senator SESSIONS found humor in his only issue with the Ku Klux Klan was their drug use, and accused civil rights groups as being "un-American" organizations trying to "force civil rights down the throats of people who were trying to put problems behind them."

So what could possibly make him fit to serve as our Nation's top law enforcement officer at the Department of Justice?

The definition of justice is the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.

Synonyms for justice include equity, objectivity and neutrality.

Senator SESSIONS has built a reputation and, most importantly, a voting record that does not align with that definition.

I do not wish to re-litigate the past as I would not want to be judged on my actions and thoughts of 30 years ago. However, Senator SESSIONS' growth and commitment to inclusivity—even 30 years later—remains to be seen.

Following being denied a federal judgeship, in the early 90s, Senator SESSIONS co-sponsored legislation to honor Rosa Parks with the Congressional Gold Medal, while also voting against 2009 legislation that extended federal hate crime protections to people targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

While in 2006 he voted to renew the Voting Rights Act, just years later in 2013 he supported the Supreme Court's decision to strike key provisions of the law.

Furthermore, he has been the ringleader of opposition for immigration reform.

How can we in good faith recommend, nominate, or confirm this person to the post that is solely responsible for protecting the civil liberties of all Americans—including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, and discriminated against.

This administration is continually asking us to put aside our intellect and to trust their intention. I refuse.

This administration would like us to support a man who throughout his career has determined the rights of those who look like me and the constituents I serve are inferior. I refuse.

This administration would like us to sit idly by as Donald Trump tries to overwhelm us into tacit submission to his dangerous agenda. I refuse.

A Trump-Sessions Department of Justice would be not only an attack on our civil rights and equality; it would be an insult to the intelligence of the American people.

Mr. VEASEY. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCEACHIN).

Mr. MCEACHIN. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for organizing this hour today.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today because I believe that confirming JEFF SESSIONS as Attorney General for the United States would jeopardize the progress we have made for equal rights and against discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, it is an affront to common sense to confirm someone who has criticized the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and believes that this landmark law, which provides all Americans with the right to cast a ballot for candidates in our democratic process, is intrusive. It is an affront to common sense, Mr. Speaker, to confirm a nominee who views an old advertisement calling for the death penalty of people who are later exonerated as a mark of conservatism.

Mr. Speaker, it is an affront to common sense to confirm someone who was previously rejected as a choice for a Federal judgeship to lead a Department that, in part, vets future Federal judges. It is an affront to common sense, Mr. Speaker, to confirm someone who does not believe in justice for all to lead the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this nominee would not act in the best interest of all Americans, regardless of color, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, or economic status. Mr. Speaker, it is my fervent hope that the Senate of the United States will deny the confirmation of this nominee.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, President-elect Donald Trump's cabinet nominations are nothing short of alarming. With the United States Senate expected to begin nomination hearings this week, we need to ensure that Congress follows a fair and thorough vetting process as we evaluate the suitability of these individuals to fill the various cabinet positions.

One source of concern is the process by which Republicans in Congress are choosing to conduct these nominations. The recent Republican effort to rush the nominees through the process does not invite confidence in our ability to properly consider each individual on their merits. Walter Shaub, Jr., Director of the Office of Government Ethics, raised his concerns of this very fact given that his office is charged with conducting ethics screening reviews of the nominees. The aggressive hearing schedule to consider these nominees is unprecedented and has placed an undue burden on the Office of Government Ethics (OCE) and its ability to conduct thorough ethics reviews. These ethics reviews are essential to the process and help us to identify potential conflicts of interest or other ethical considerations before we confirm these individuals to serve in public office. Director Shaub has stated that it is unprecedented for the Senate to conduct a confirmation hearing before the ethics review process has concluded. This is simply unacceptable and undermines the democratic process.

The nominees themselves are also cause for concern. Namely, I believe that the nomination of Senator JEFF SESSIONS for Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice threatens the best interests and safety of the American people. Senator SESSIONS has served in the United States Senate for twenty years, during which his record on civil rights and other national issues was questionable at best. For example, he voted several times against the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which aimed to hold offenders of violence against women accountable for their actions. He has also taken a very clear position against rights for the LGBT community, which would deny these Americans basic human rights. His positions on criminal justice and government reforms are also disturbing.

Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns about the means by which my Republican colleagues are approaching the nomination process this Congress. If we are to properly evaluate the qualifications and the ethical suitability of these nominees, we must conduct an exhaustive examination of each nominee based on their merits—not on their politics. The Republicans are failing to uphold these basic principles through their recent actions. In the name of protecting the American people and doing what is best for our country, I urge my Republican colleagues to return to normal order and delay these nomination hearings until OCE can conclude its ethics reviews of the nominees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMER). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities against Members of the Senate and the President-elect.

#### ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 34

*Resolved*, That the following named Member be and is hereby elected to the following

standing Committee of the House of Representatives:

(1) Committee on Armed Services—Mr. Smith of Washington.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following Members of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. HIMES, Connecticut  
Ms. SEWELL, Alabama  
Mr. CARSON, Indiana  
Ms. SPEIER, California  
Mr. QUIGLEY, Illinois  
Mr. SWALWELL, California  
Mr. CASTRO, Texas  
Mr. HECK, Washington

#### HOPE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here tonight at the beginning of this new year. It has been great being in east Texas this weekend, last weekend, hearing all of the hope that has arisen as we have entered this new year, 2017. I think it is going to be a good year.

I am told that just on the basis of a new President coming in who is promising to throttle back, remove so much of the heavy, iron boot off of the throat of the economy that firms are starting to hire again. Businesses are making plans to expand and grow. And then we are seeing reports of plants that are deciding to stay in the United States instead of going elsewhere. There is a lot of optimism out there.

There are young people that are asking what was it like back when you came out of college and had multiple job opportunities for most of the people coming out of college instead of opportunities to live with your parents or your grandparents or a parent or the other parent. They actually had multiple job opportunities, and that optimism has arisen.

As we entered this year, also, it is very sad to see a form of racism and negativity that arises. I have said before publicly, and I think it is still true, we need go back no further than the confirmation hearing for Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. But the more you look, the more you find that the most persecuted person to be in America these days is a conservative African American. If you are Black and you are conservative, you can expect