

Catholic Charities president and CEO. “We serve women veterans through several programs, and we love having the opportunity to recognize those who have served and sacrificed for all of us.”

So this is a great day. Thank you Texas and the legislators who sponsored it. I look forward to working with legislation to ensure we have a national day here in the United States.

But to the staff of Catholic Charities, those who travel to Austin and all of those who recognize that we must honor these veterans as the heroes and heroines of the Nation, congratulations. You have a day, June 12. Now, forever, we will honor you on this day.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAST). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to coanchor this CBC Special Order hour.

I would like to acknowledge the great work and the leadership of our chair, CEDRIC RICHMOND of Louisiana, and, of course, my coanchor, MARC VEASEY of Texas, as we lead the discussion for the next 60 minutes.

In these next 60 minutes, we have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, and the constituents that we represent.

In this hour, we would like to discuss racism and discrimination in America and, specifically, hate crimes and the radicalization and the domestic terrorism that they present to the American people.

The conclusion of Dylann Roof’s trial a few month’s ago is the latest reminder that homegrown terrorism has become part of the fabric of life in America. This problem shows no signs of fading yet reveals a threat that is both rare and more complex than simple explanation suggests.

Solving the issue of domestic terrorism through hate crimes involves understanding the true nature of the problem—violent domestic extremism—so that effective steps can be taken to protect the Nation from it.

It is legitimate to ask whether homegrown terrorists are being radicalized. We talk about jihadi narratives and Islamic extremism, the Islamic State group recruiting online; but there are other groups in this Nation which are radicalizing our youth, radicalizing young people to be a threat against other Americans. This is a subject and a discussion that has rarely been discussed and which we believe is very important.

Since 2001, almost 40 percent of the nearly 150 terrorism fatalities in the

United States were related to domestic motivations, not jihadi narratives. It is my hope that in the discussion we will have this hour we are able to discuss in depth the effect that these hate crimes and this domestic violence has on the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter that was written June 7, 2017, by the Congressional Black Caucus to the Honorable Jeff Sessions, Attorney General; Andrew McCabe, Acting Director of the FBI; and John Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security, in which we express our concern over the alarming number of hate crimes reported across the country, particularly in the wake of the election of President Donald J. Trump.

CONGRESSIONAL  
BLACK CAUCUS,  
Washington, DC, June 7, 2017.

Hon. JEFF SESSIONS,  
*Attorney General, Department of Justice, Washington, DC.*

ANDREW McCABE,  
*Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Washington, DC.*

Hon. JOHN KELLY,  
*Secretary of Homeland Security, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC.*

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL SESSIONS AND ACTING DIRECTOR McCABE: I write today to express my concern over the alarming number of hate crimes reported across the country, particularly in the wake of the election of President Donald J. Trump. In addition to speaking out against this rising tide of hate, violence, and intolerance, it is critical that your agencies proactively investigate each and every incident of a potential hate crime and aggressively prosecute these cases to the fullest extent of the law.

During the presidential campaign, then-candidate Donald Trump employed starkly divisive rhetoric to connect with a segment of his base that relished in cultural grievance and hatred. His tone and the arguments that he made were incredibly offensive to minority communities, and his campaign rallies were forums for some of the ugliest public displays of race-based violence and animus in modern political times. Numerous Black Americans were assaulted at his rallies and scenes of deep racial resentment against Blacks, Hispanics, immigrants, and Muslims were frequently paraded and celebrated.

Since the election, it seems hate-filled individuals have been emboldened to terrorize minority communities. In just the first 34 days after the election, the Southern Poverty Law Center counted a total of 1,094 bias incidents around the Nation. Disturbingly, the center also calculated that 37 percent of these cases directly referenced either President-elect Trump, his campaign slogans, or his infamous remarks about sexual assault. This data is just from the immediate aftermath of the election. The numbers have increased since then, with national news providing coverage. These are not isolated incidents, but rather a frightening trend forming before our eyes.

In fact, this is occurring in Congress’ own back yard, like the horrific hate crime that took place just a few miles away at the University of Maryland when Richard Collins III, a promising young man, was stabbed to death on the eve of his graduation from Bowie State University by an admitted white supremacist. There have also been several reports of nooses hung throughout the District of Columbia, including in the African American Museum of History and Cul-

ture and on American University’s campus. To add insult to injury, a Mississippi lawmaker recently called for Louisiana politicians to be “lynched” for supporting the removal of racist confederate monuments from New Orleans.

Surely there is no greater cause of a government than to protect the lives of its citizens, particularly those uniquely vulnerable to hate, intolerance, and violence. The federal hate crimes statutes were designed with that mission in mind and serve as a critically important tool in combatting the most insidious elements of our society. That is why I implore you to dedicate additional resources within your respective agencies to address the increasing frequency of these deplorable acts. You should and must investigate each and every potential hate crime and prosecute offenders to the fullest extent allowed under the law. You should also ensure that community leaders, including state and local law enforcement, understand the federal resources available to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

Your leadership is required to not only bring justice to the victims of hate crimes, but also to send a clear message that these acts of domestic terrorism will never be tolerated in this country.

Sincerely,

CEDRIC RICHMOND,  
*Chair, Congressional Black Caucus.*

Ms. PLASKETT. In addition to speaking out against the rising tide of hate, violence, and intolerance in this country, it is critical that those agencies—the FBI, the Department of Justice, as well as Homeland Security—speak out and proactively investigate each and every incident of potential hate crime and aggressively prosecute these cases to the fullest extent of the law.

Since the election, it seems that hate-filled individuals have been emboldened to terrorize minority communities. In just the first 34 days after the election, the Southern Poverty Law Center counted a total of 1,094 bias incidents around the nation. Disturbingly, the center also calculated that 37 percent of these cases directly referenced either President-elect Trump, his campaign slogans, or his infamous remarks about sexual assault. This data is just from the immediate aftermath of the election. The numbers have increased since then, with national news providing coverage. These are not isolated incidents, but rather a frightening trend forming before our eyes.

It is the responsibility of this Congress as well as those agencies to stem this flow of violence that is occurring in this Nation. We know that our President would not tolerate these sorts of matters, and we are hopeful that he, the Justice Department, the FBI, and Homeland Security will do whatever is necessary to protect American lives from hate crimes that are occurring, domestic terrorism, and the radicalization of our young people to exert hate against other Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), my co-anchor, to speak on this issue. Then we will have an opportunity to hear from other members of the Congressional Black Caucus about this.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. PLASKETT for starting off this Special Order hour on racism and discrimination in the age of Trump.

I really think that this is important and timely that we talk about this because, as you mentioned, these incidents are on the rise and we need to start to discuss them. We need to have open and honest, frank discussions about them, to be quite forward, because, if we don't, then we are never going to be able to move past this or be able to have a better America in regards to racism, hate, and discrimination if we don't begin to have that open dialogue.

Not only does the country need to have an open dialogue, but I think that, as Members of Congress, we need to be the leaders in this area, and we should be the ones who are kicking off the dialogue and starting this.

Make no mistake about it, I know a lot of people will tell you that racism is dead, that discrimination is a thing of the past, that it was something that happened to people that are baby boomers and older and that the effects of discrimination are no longer with us, but we know that is not true.

We know that, again, as Ms. PLASKETT just mentioned a second ago, since 2016, there has been a disturbing number of incidents that have occurred, a disturbing number of things that have been said, things that have been tweeted, the rise of the alt-right, and so many other things that we should be concerned about.

The Southern Poverty Law Center supports this very claim. This organization has collected over 1,300 reported bias incidents between the day after the election and February 7.

Let me point out, because I know that, sadly, there are some people that will cast doubt towards the Southern Poverty Law Center, but the Southern Poverty Law Center has done a tremendous job over the last couple of decades or so of not only helping identify people that commit acts, but groups like the KKK, neo-Nazi groups, and others.

Quite frankly, I don't know why anyone would want to try to undermine or put down an organization that wants to put down groups like that, like the KKK, skinheads, and Nazis. It makes no sense. I hate when I hear people say bad things about the Southern Poverty Law Center because of the time, money, and effort that they put into fighting groups like I just mentioned.

Let me be clear, because oftentimes when we talk about race, it turns into a very divisive topic, and we don't need for this to be a divisive topic. We need to sit down, come together, and talk because we need to create an opportunity here in America where we can change people's attitudes and make sure that our Nation's history is not repeated.

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I also think that, as parents, we have to openly talk about race, bigotry, and hate with our children. One of the things that disturbs me as a parent and, quite frankly, just as a proud

American is I will hear people say: Well, I don't say racist things in my house, so my kids would never hear that. If kids are saying racist things, then it must be because they are hearing it at home.

But I have to tell you, as a parent of an 11-year-old, I know that there are influences outside of my home. I know that there is a lot of peer pressure on kids. I know there are a lot of things on social media, and kids want to fit in. Kids want to be cool. So you can never utter one bad thing about a different nationality or race or someone of a different sexual orientation than yours in your house, and your kid could still end up being caught up in something bad like bigotry or racism just because of inappropriate influences at school.

That is why it is important, in my opinion, that, as parents, we talk about this with our children, as uncomfortable as it may make us, but we need to have the discussion. We need to know and our children need to know that it is important to us that we recognize other people's culture; that we recognize other people's faith and sexual orientation and religion so that, as they are forming and they are growing, they understand that this is a nation that is a great nation that is open to everybody, regardless of race, ethnic, or gender background.

I know that for some people, having to talk about racism, it can be very uncomfortable because it makes people guilty. A lot of times when it comes up or you are talking about this, you just—you hear people trying to come up with different examples to sort of assuage any sort of guilt that they may have. It makes them very uncomfortable.

But, again, we have to tackle this head-on. We have to come together to confront these issues of social injustice because it really is time that our Nation heals. It is time that our Nation heals and it is time that we break the chains of our plagued history.

I know that we have other Members here on the House floor that want to talk, and I have some things that I am going to mention a little bit later, just some of the unfortunate incidents that have happened with the President, with the Commander in Chief, the history that he has with racism that I would, quite frankly, like to see him address. Whether it is HUD discrimination, Central Park joggers, after they were exonerated by DNA, I think that his comments were: "Well, they still did something bad," so on and so on. Just some of the issues at the casino that he owned in New Jersey, we need to talk about those.

Quite frankly, he can be a leader—he can actually be a leader in discussing these incidents that happened under his control and under his command, whether it was at his private corporation or whether it was commenting on the Central Park joggers, about how it was a learning experience for him, how

he is never going to let it happen again, and how he is never going to let those words utter out of his mouth.

But before I go into that, I am going to turn it back over to the Representative PLASKETT from the Virgin Islands. I, again, thank her very much for kicking this off.

Ms. PLASKETT. Congressman VEASEY, I think it is important, one of the things you talked about is what is going on in our homes and the fact that our children can be radicalized outside of the home. This is an opportunity for us as Americans to see the victimization even of those children who become a part of the alt-right, who become a part of neo-Nazi groups; that they are, in fact, being radicalized by these very disturbing groups, and that we, as leaders in America, have a responsibility.

That is why I am asking unanimous consent to have the letter that was written by Chairman CEDRIC RICHMOND put into the RECORD—the letter of June 7 that went to the FBI, to Homeland Security, as well as to the Justice Department to ask them to investigate and take proactive stances; not just to protect those individuals who are victimized when violence occurs, but to protect those young people and others who may be untowardly influenced by social media to become part of these groups.

I think that is a great point that you bring up, as well as our President becoming someone who can lead the charge against this. We see the rise of this activity during his campaign and after his election. Well, then our President needs to be the one to be Presidential and to stem this influence and this rise of hate crimes that are taking place.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I am asking that our colleague, DONALD PAYNE, from the great State of New Jersey, who has done an amazing amount of work in his own community in the area of Newark in trying to stem violence and criminal justice, the reform work that he is doing, to speak on this matter this evening. I thank him so much for the time that he is giving us. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Well, first, I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, Congresswoman PLASKETT, and the gentleman from Texas, MARC VEASEY, for hosting tonight's Special Order hour on such an important topic: racism and discrimination.

Before I begin, I want to take a moment to mark the 1-year anniversary of the Pulse Nightclub shooting and to remember the 49 lives that were cut short in the deadliest mass shooting in our Nation's history.

As we grieve for the victims and their families, we must continue to stand in solidarity with the survivors and with the LGBTQ community against hate, intolerance, for love, in support of our Nation's values of equality and dignity for all.

The kind of intolerance, hate, and violence on display that day in Orlando has become an alarming trend in this country, a trend that has disturbingly been fueled by President Trump. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, 37 percent of the 1,094 bias-related incidents in just the first month after the election referenced the President, his campaign slogans, or his remarks about sexual assault.

As he did throughout his campaign, President Trump continues to speak the language of racial and cultural grievance, pitting Americans against one another and perpetuating the viciousness he pretends to despise. The result is what you would expect: a spike in hate crimes and hate speech.

I have seen in my district in New Jersey where anti-Semitic graffiti was plastered on a pedestrian bridge. We have seen it at American University and just down the road at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, where nooses were found last month. Communities of color know this pain all too well.

Mr. Speaker, I am really fortunate to be able to discuss an issue of such importance to this Nation. This is one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

You know, I have been very fortunate in my life to have been born into a situation where a great American prior to me held this seat for 23 years in the 10th Congressional District of the State of New Jersey. His name was Donald Payne. He was my father and he afforded me a lifestyle, one of which I did not know of his suffering and pain growing up as a young African American in this country. But even in that situation, I have found myself—irrespective of being in that position, I found myself in situations that have been dangerous and uncomfortable.

As a young, 20-year-old—you know, when we are 20, we do things that we probably shouldn't be doing at times. I was on my lunchtime going downtown to pay a bill at a department store where I had my first credit card, and I was running late. So what I decided to do was make a U-turn on the main street, Broad Street, in Newark, New Jersey, which is the largest street in the town. And I made a U-turn to come in front of the store.

Naturally, you know, with my luck, a motorcycle police officer was coming down the street at the same time. So he pulled me over, as he should, and I was wrong. But I was using my cousin's car. So when he asked me for my license and registration, I could not find the papers that I needed and I was fumbling and nervous.

The officer leaned into the car and used the N-word and said: If you don't find those documents in a minute, I will throw you so far under the jail that they will never find you.

So this is very frightening for any citizen to go through. So I was able to get my license, and I handed it to him. Just before that, they would throw me

so far under the jail that they would never find me again. Once I handed him my license and it said that I was DONALD PAYNE, Jr., whose father was a sitting councilman in the city of Newark, his whole attitude changed.

“Don’t you know that you could get hurt, or you could hurt someone, or you have to be careful.” A minute ago I was nothing. I would be so far under the jail, they would never find me. But now that I am connected to something or someone, all of a sudden we have become paternal.

Mr. Speaker, there are millions of people in this country that aren't connected to someone, and these are the types of things that they go through. So I am just here to say that we must be vigilant. I believe in this country; I believe in its greatness. I believe in the words in the Pledge of Allegiance. I believe in the Constitution. We must make it work for all Americans.

Ms. PLASKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. PAYNE, for your words, your enlightenment, and for sharing that very personal piece of you and your own experience. There are so many African Americans and so many people of color in this country who have those exact same experiences.

Whether it is us, personally—I know I have mine exactly like that. You know, I have four sons, and each one of them have had that kind of experience here in this country.

With the rise of hate that is occurring, we have to be careful for every American and we need to be concerned that this country is no longer becoming a safe place for groups of individuals; that there are people that are rising up and attempting to terrorize other Americans. This should be of concern to Congress. This should be of concern to our President.

I thank Mr. PAYNE again for that.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield to Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE from Texas, who sits not only on the Budget Committee, but, very relevant to our discussion this evening, is one of the senior members of the Judiciary Committee, as well as Homeland Security Subcommittee, where so many of these issues form a confluence.

Thank you so much for being with us this evening, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE. We look forward to your remarks and to the enlightenment that you will be giving us here in this Chamber as well as the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, first of all, it is my honor and privilege to thank Congresswoman PLASKETT for her ongoing leadership in speaking to our colleagues and the American people. Let me take a moment of personal privilege to say to her that, over the weekend in Texas, I was with a number of individuals from the Virgin Islands, and it certainly was my first task to tell them of the excellent representation that they were getting by her leadership on so many issues.

But to you, I want to say that we were at the commissioning of the USS Gabrielle Giffords, and proudly so. The commander of that ship is from the Virgin Islands, so there was a contingent of individuals from all over the country for recognizing the commander and his wife. Let me say that I made sure that those sailors knew who was supporting them as well. It certainly was a great honor to former Congresswoman Giffords, and there wasn't a dry eye as we did that. So I just wanted to add that and thank you for your indulgence of that.

If I might, let me also acknowledge my colleague on the floor, Congresswoman VAL DEMINGS, and Floridians who are here, just to make note of the commemoration of the tragedy at the Pulse Nightclub.

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This is the area in which the Congresswoman policed, if you will, and her spouse still there leads the community in law enforcement. I will honor to those who lost their lives, but to the recognition that terrorism and hateful acts are not to be accepted by any of us.

As a good friend of mine, a Muslim, said yesterday as we stood against hateful acts against Muslims around the world, and particularly around the United States, he said that the way that we deal with this danger is to love in recognition of the human dignity of all.

To the LGBTQ community, my deepest sympathy and recognition in this month that we honor and have Pride Month that we recognize your deep involvement in this country and your right to human dignity. So I thank Congresswoman PLASKETT for allowing me to engage in that statement.

Let me say that I would hope that none of us would have wanted to be on the floor tonight to talk about the changing face of America since the election of the President of the United States but, in fact, to recognize that there has been a surge in discrimination throughout this Nation.

The roots of racial extremist violence against peaceful Black communities runs deep in American history: from this country's dark path of chattel slavery; to the southern lynch mobs that sought to permanently disenfranchise the Black vote; to the church bombing that killed four little Black girls in Birmingham; to the dismantling of an entire economic district in Tulsa; and to the senseless stabbing, just a few weeks ago, of a bright, young man by the name of Richard Collins III.

I am sad that the election of President Trump—and I am not sure whether this has been brought to his attention. I would like to bring it to his attention—has created a divisive atmosphere. Trump's political debut was centered on the racist birther movement, which questioned the citizenship of then-President Obama.

He was not in office then. And to some, it was a little humorous; some were shocked. Certainly, the Black community did not take it humorously. This was a Senator who had been duly elected by the citizens of Illinois. He had done nothing to bring in commentary on himself personally. He sought the Presidency of the United States. He offered to the American people all of the documentation that would be required, yet Donald Trump persisted for 5 years in insisting, through fake news, that he was not a citizen of the United States of America.

During his political campaign, he repeatedly refused to reject the endorsement of White supremacist groups. He failed to condemn supporters who shouted out racist slurs, and, on occasion, violently attacked protesters who happened to be an African-American woman, in particular.

In a nation completely comprised of immigrants, he has built a hateful movement around building a wall. And to my friends who are Hispanic, particularly Mexicans, he called them drug dealers and any number of names.

This country has prided itself on the value of immigration, of diversity, and, certainly, freed slaves who have come to make this country the great country that it is. Overall, his anti-immigrant incidents were the most reported, 315 incidents; followed by anti-Black, 221; anti-Muslim, 112; and anti-LGBT, 109.

So I just want to take a moment to add to my commentary, the things that I think are grossly horrific; that we should realize that this is not a time for the CBC to be on the floor casting blame.

Let me also, as I acknowledge Congresswoman PLASKETT, thank our chairperson, Congressman CEDRIC RICHMOND, for his really unceasing leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus and the work that he has done to make sure that we astutely have the information to be the conscience of Congress.

These are the pictures of hatred. This is the individual who killed the young man that—I don't want to show the wrong picture—but this is a picture of an individual who was engaged in the killing of two individuals, I believe in Portland, Oregon, because they were trying to defend someone of a different background.

We have a noose found hanging near a school in Washington, D.C. This is a picture of that. This has all happened since the election of President Trump.

We have an incident, June 9, 2017, The Washington Post says, “Shut up, Slave!: A spilled Starbucks drink led to a racist tirade and sidewalk fight.”

I don't know if people are under extreme tension, but this is all happening in 2017.

We have another one: A day without racism? Not for Trump's administration. The Department of Justice is dismantling, or lowering the Civil Rights

Division, cutting the staffing that is there.

Hate crimes in the U.S. rising. These are the kinds of things. And tragically, here is a handsome, beautiful, young man who was taking his commission and getting ready to graduate, Richard Collins III, and he was killed.

Let me finish on these points about the criminal justice system that I think is very important.

Black Americans are more likely to have their cars searched.

Black Americans are more likely to be arrested for drug use.

Black Americans are more likely to be jailed while awaiting trial.

Black Americans are more likely to be offered a plea deal that includes prison time.

Black Americans are more likely to serve longer sentences than White Americans for the same offense.

Black Americans are more likely to be disenfranchised.

We also know that we have statistics, that I will offer into the RECORD, of Black American youth who are more likely to be included in the juvenile detention center, police stops, police searches, use of force during arrest, juvenile arrests, transgender arrests. Sixty percent of the transgender arrests are Black or Latino; arrests for marijuana.

Most Blacks are not likely to get pre-trial release. More Blacks are likely to be prosecuted. More Blacks are likely to get prison versus community service. Length of incarceration is longer than Whites.

State judge incarceration, there are 208,000 people in State prison for drug offenses; 32 percent are White, 68 percent are Black.

Federal drug convictions are higher among African Americans. Forty-seven percent were Hispanics, and we are higher than those.

Federal court sentencing, and, of course, incarceration of women African Americans are higher. Sentencing to life without parole, African Americans are higher, 65 percent.

Hiring people with criminal records, that makes it very difficult for us to work, and eliminating the right to vote.

So, Congresswoman, I will close by simply saying, where is the President on standing with the moral compass of asking the hatred to stop; to really empower a Department of Justice not to be led by an individual who has fought against voting rights, fought against the rights of those who are seeking to be rehabilitated in the criminal justice system; to join a bipartisan army of individuals against mass incarceration? Where is the President in standing against the hatred that has impacted the African-American community?

The words that he has said, where is the President in stopping this onslaught that is generating into violence in the streets?

Where is the moral compass of this administration? If it is not you, Mr.

President, the Congressional Black Caucus will not take a back seat to you. We will fight and bring this country back to where it should be, and that is a country that believes in the equality of all Americans, and the African Americans who have died and bled in wars, and have been slaves, and, in essence, came through a reformation to be free. We will not take a back seat to all of this hatred.

I ask you, Mr. President, where are your answers?

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues, Congressman VEASEY and Congresswoman PLASKETT for anchoring this important special order on “Racism and Discrimination in America.”

For over 40 years the CBC has been at the forefront in the fight against the evils of racism, discrimination, marginalization, and the various manifestations of institutionalized racial bias.

In today's uncertain times, we must be more steadfast than ever to continue that fight.

No matter what your party identification is, I believe we can all agree that we must root out extremist violence everywhere, and especially within our borders.

And while we are all committed to eliminating ISIS and all its sympathizers, we must not underestimate the threat of domestic terrorism and domestic violence by racial extremists.

Throughout the history of this country, African-American communities have faced innumerable threats from those who don't comprehend that there is value within our nation's diversity.

The roots of racial extremist violence against peaceful Black communities runs deep in American history: From this country's dark past of chattel slavery, to the southern lynch mobs that sought to permanently disenfranchise the Black vote, to the church bombing that killed four little girls in Birmingham, to the dismantling of an entire economic district in Tulsa, to the senseless stabbing of a bright young man by the name of Richard Collins III just a few weeks go.

As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, or the “Conscience of the Congress”, I call on this body to do all it can to stem the rising tide of racial violence.

Although progress has been made, President Trump's divisive rhetoric, and the actions of his followers, have shown us that we still have much work to do before all of America can feel safe.

Consistent rhetoric of intolerance coming from Trump's campaign and now his administration has not only put a target on African-American communities, but also on Mexican-Americans, Muslim-Americans, women, and those within the immigrant population.

The election of Donald Trump has had a significant effect on the nation's race relations:

Trump's political debut was centered on the racist “birther movement”, which questioned the citizenship of then President Obama for months.

During his political campaign, he repeatedly refused to reject the endorsement of white supremacist groups.

He failed to condemn supporters who shouted out racist slurs and on more than one occasion, violently attacked protesters.

In a nation completely comprised of immigrants, he has built a hateful movement around building a wall to keep them out.

This country has prided itself on being the melting pot of the world. The bastion of freedom of equality. Violence against any person based on their class, color, or creed is not only immoral, it's anti-American.

We must condemn, denounce, and seek to eliminate these acts of racial terror with the same fervor that we would when dealing with religious extremists.

I have to quote former Attorney General Eric Holder who stated, "Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards."

Regardless of who resides at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., this body, the people's chamber, has a responsibility to do all that it can to ensure the safety of all Americans. That is why I, along with my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus, have sent out a letter to the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the acting director of the FBI urging them to allocate more time and resources to curbing the recent uptick in violence.

#### Incidents of Racialized Violence Since the Election:

The Southern Poverty Law Center has conducted a report on incidents of racialized violence following the Presidential election.

There were over 1000 violent attacks reported within a month of the election.

Overall, anti-immigrant incidents were the most reported at 315 incidents, followed by anti-black (221 incidents), anti-Muslim (112 incidents), and anti-LGBT (109 incidents).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for her leadership on issues related to the Judiciary Committee and to others.

At this time, I would like to invite the Congressman, not just from New York, but from, of course, what I believe is the best, most illustrious borough in New York City—Brooklyn, of course, which is where I was born and raised.

Thank you so much, Congressman JEFFRIES, for your leadership on the Judiciary Committee, your discussions about the issues that we are discussing here this evening, and I am waiting to hear what you are going to not only present to us here in this Chamber but to the American people on this issue.

I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for yielding, and for the phenomenal job that you have done, along with my classmate, the distinguished gentleman from Texas, Representative MARC VEASEY.

As you know, I have great affection for the fact that you have a significant connection to Brooklyn. We say back home, there are two types of Americans: those who live in Brooklyn, and those who want to live in Brooklyn.

But, certainly, this is a significant issue, that the Congressional Black Caucus has gathered here today to discuss during this hour of power, the opportunity for members of the Congressional Black Caucus to speak directly to the American people on an issue of great significance.

Since January 20, we have seen a disturbing increase here in America in anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-Black, anti-LGBT, and anti-Semitic acts.

And the question is: Is this just a coincidence, or could it possibly have something to do with the election of the 45th President of the United States of America?

Now, in part, what we are seeing is connected to a historic backlash that has often occurred throughout this journey that we have been on here in America, that whenever we make significant progress, there is always a backlash amongst some in America who have got a problem with the fact that we have done things designed to be more consistent with our values of liberty and justice for all, equal protection under the law.

We know slavery was the original sin here in America. That was corrected in the aftermath of the North's victory during the Civil War. We had the reconstruction amendments: the 13th Amendment, abolish slavery; 14th Amendment, equal protection under the law; 15th Amendment, the right to vote regardless of race. That was progress in America followed by the inevitable backlash.

The imposition of Jim Crow laws; a lynching epidemic; Black code, segregation, particularly through just the Deep South. Progress followed by backlash.

And then finally, in the 1960s, in an effort to create a more perfect union and address the unfinished business in America, you had the civil rights movement, anchored with the '64 Civil Rights Act, effectively ended Jim Crow; the '65 Voting Rights Act, giving African Americans in the Deep South, people of color throughout the country the right to vote, unimpeded from things like grandfather clauses, and poll taxes, and other types of shenanigans that people were practicing; the 1968 Fair Housing Act capped off the civil rights movement, followed by the inevitable backlash.

Richard Nixon ran a racist campaign, a southern strategy, designed to appeal to aggrieved Whites in parts of this country, particularly in the Deep South, ushered in an era of resistance to the progress that had been made, antibusing, antiaffirmative action.

And then, of course, we have got Barack Obama who was elected in what many of us viewed as an incredible step in the right direction. African Americans, having gone from the outhouse to the White House. Eight years of tremendous progress in moving this country forward, followed by the election of Donald Trump, a man who spent 5 years perpetrating the racist lie that Barack Obama was not born in the United States of America.

And many of us are wondering, why were so many people who worship at the altar of White supremacy drawn to Donald Trump's campaign? What was it about this individual that so many

folks dripping in hatred flocked to his candidacy? That is not to say that everyone who voted for Donald Trump is a racist. We do know that every racist in America voted for Donald Trump. That is a problem.

And so, again, I just ask the question in closing: Is this all a big coincidence? We know part of it is the backlash that has often occurred whenever we have made progress in America. But this President has a responsibility to address the rise in hate crimes that have taken place on his watch, whether or not his election is directly connected to it.

Many of us have our own suspicions, but he is the Commander in Chief.

□ 2000

He has got to tell his Attorney General, who is straight out of central casting in terms of the good old boys: Your job as chief law enforcement officer in the land is to enforce the laws whether you like them or not.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

The gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands may continue.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that every single thing that has been said—and I would urge you to challenge anything as a fact. In fact, there are facts that have been left out in terms of my remarks about the 45th President of the United States. I have actually been kind of gentle as it relates to the person who is occupying 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue right now, but more to come. I would welcome the Speaker to dispute anything that has been said in the name of us trying to move this country forward consistent with the notions of equal protection under the law and liberty and justice for all.

Ms. PLASKETT. I thank Congressman JEFFRIES and I really appreciate his remarks. I know that this House has rules and is concerned about decorum in here. We at the Congressional Black Caucus are also very concerned about decorum. While we uphold the position of the President of the United States, many individuals—particularly constituents, the underserved within our communities—are fearful about us actually speaking out, specifically to the personage and to the person of President Donald Trump.

What we are trying to do in this Special Order is speak unrefutable facts; not about the personality, not subjective discussion about the President, not our feelings, and not our fears, but the actual facts of what has happened in this country and what is happening in this country because that is life for our children, that is the very essence of us continuing, and that is what democracy is about.

If we cannot critique the actions of our President, then that is very fearful

to us as Americans and very fearful to this House, which is supposed to be a separate branch of government and which I recall maybe a year ago it speaking very vehemently against the person who was in the White House at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN), who is my classmate. I thank Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for her work, particularly in working with other Congressional Black Caucus women to found the Caucus for Black Women and Girls, which is very important right now because this is a forgotten group quite often here in the United States, and the gentlewoman is advocating and speaking out for those individuals.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman so much for her leadership and this Special Order hour and considering this subject matter that we are going to discuss.

I want to talk a little bit about something that has sort of been my observation and my experiences for a very long period of time and I think that are actually exacerbated by this Presidency that we currently have in this House. Let me, by way of association, just comment positively to the remarks of my colleague and the former speaker, HAKEEM JEFFRIES from New York.

I entitled my remarks “From the Cradle to the Grave.”

From the cradle to the grave, Black people in America are required to be resilient, courteous, and persistent. The rules are always different.

From the cradle to the grave, Black people in America must be comfortable and confident in ourselves, but only so much so that we do not intimidate or aggravate.

From the cradle to the grave, Black people in America are told our plight, our struggle, and our sacrifice is a mere fantasy in post-racial America while we witness the reality of institutional racism, conscious discrimination, and our rich history erased or appropriated.

From cradle to grave, Black people in America experience this racism and discrimination walking home from the corner store eating a pack of Skittles, listening to music at a gas station, or simply sitting in our neighborhood park.

We experience this racism and discrimination showing up to school in our natural hairstyles, shopping in our favorite stores, or even just showing up to work—including the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Last Wednesday, it was reported that Black troops are far more likely than their White counterparts to face court-martial or other forms of military punishment.

National data shows us that Black girls are 5.5 times more likely to be suspended from school than White girls. That rate actually balloons in

my State of New Jersey to 8.5 percent. More than 60 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, school systems in the United States are still separate and unequal.

As of 2014, California had 31 open desegregation cases. In 2016, a Presidential candidate ran a campaign on divisive rhetoric that targeted our communities, our well-being, and our safe spaces. It only gets worse.

From the cradle to the grave, we are told to calm down, sit down, and be courteous and humble. From the cradle to the grave, the experiences, the challenges, the stories, our history, and even our very being are kept out of boardrooms, classrooms, voting booths, department stores, history books, movie screens, television scripts, and the like.

But let me just tell you that, from the cradle to the grave, we are built to persevere, we are strengthened to overcome, we are born to lead, we are committed to uplift, and we are fully equipped to soar with weights on our shoulders even in these times and even under this Presidency. And guess what. We do.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much for her inspiring words and motivation to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS). We always bring up the fact that Congressman DWIGHT EVANS is a freshman, but he isn't really a freshman. Everybody acknowledges his leadership in his work in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the State house that transcends him as a freshman. We call the gentleman a superfreshman in that respect because he comes with a great deal of experience and wisdom here to the House floor. I am very anxious to hear what the gentleman has to speak about related to hate crimes and the rise of domestic terrorism against people of color and against minorities here in this country.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for her leadership, along with my colleague from Texas, because both of them have demonstrated real clear leadership for the Congressional Black Caucus and the leadership of our chairman, CEDRIC RICHMOND. So I thank both of them publicly for what they have done and all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot to lose under the Trump administration. It has been very clear, as has been stated by all of my colleagues, from healthcare to food policy, to education, to affordable housing, the President and his party continue to look for ways to take away what we have come to know as fundamental programs behind building stronger neighborhoods.

Our Nation is facing challenging times and we simply cannot afford to carry on business as usual. From the nooses found at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American

History and Culture to the racial slur spray-painted on LeBron James' house during the NBA finals and attacks against Jewish community centers and vandalism in Jewish cemeteries, our country and our globe are sadly seeing horrific increases in discrimination and racially biased incidents.

Dr. King always said: We have come over here in different boats, but we are now in the same boat.

I really mean just that. Think about it: an attack against one of us is an attack against all of us. We know we have come a long way in our fight against racial intolerance and hate in our country, but our journey continues. It doesn't matter if you are Black, Jewish, Hispanic, or LGBT. We are stronger together when we celebrate both our similarities and our differences.

When we watch the news, it is incredibly upsetting to see what is still happening in 2017. A little over a week ago at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture here in D.C., we found another noose on the Smithsonian grounds. The museum's founding director said: “It is a painful reminder of the challenges that African Americans continue to face.”

We know that we are not only seeing violence and intolerance against the African-American community, but it is everywhere. This year at the Mount Carmel Cemetery, a Jewish cemetery just outside of my district in northeast Philadelphia, countless tombstones were toppled and vandalized. Days after this, the JCC in Wynnewood in my district received a bomb threat.

These are just a few of the truly cowardly acts of violence taking place in our neighborhoods, yet our Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, and the President claim to be tough on crime. They want to put more people in cities behind bars.

This weekend, Mr. Speaker, I was the keynote speaker at Gaudenzia, an addiction treatment and recovery center in my district. The graduates are some of the strongest individuals in our city, and their stories of perseverance and hard work are truly inspiring. I always say: Where you start is not where you end up.

Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to trying to find ways to build stronger neighborhoods block by block. To do this, we have to make good jobs, great schools, and access to healthcare a reality.

We know the tradition and reentry back into our neighborhoods isn't always easy. In Philadelphia, ShopRite supermarket is hiring to give good-paying jobs to those who formerly were incarcerated. The company estimates they have given over 500 jobs to formerly incarcerated individuals. This is the result in one city.

Sadly, we know that racism and bigotry are still a factor in our communities. We have to confront this head-on. As the Congressional Black Caucus

collectively stands here today, we will not accept what is taking place. We are prepared to face these challenges, and we are asking others to join us because we recognize that we can move this country forward, but it will take all of us.

So what we are doing here today is raising the awareness because we must have this conversation in a public way. We must deal with this issue of racism, noninclusion, and discrimination. No longer can we accept this.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you today: As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, we are prepared to do our part.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his remarks and continued work to discuss middle communities, middle neighborhoods, and the importance of these communities and how they need to be protected.

Congressman VEASEY, we have had a discussion here this evening about so much of the rise in hate crimes and the rise of racial tensions. I know that this weekend Puerto Rico had its plebiscite in which they talked about becoming a State.

One of the things that I often talk to people about is the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico, all of us are territories now after 100 years.

It was never the intent of Congress for areas of the United States to be a territory for 100 years except for the fact that these are now people of color. These are communities of people of color. So based on the insular cases 100 years ago which said that the people living in the territories and offshore territories were people of alien races who couldn't understand Anglo-Saxon principles of law, that is why we were not able to have the full-fledged rights of American citizens.

□ 2015

Now we are seeing, even here on the mainland, individuals, people of color, who are being treated as second-class citizens and who are not afforded the full protection of this country.

When you have incidents like on May 20 with Richard Collins, on May 26 with Jeremy Joseph Christian, who began shouting racial slurs at two women on a Portland, Oregon, train, and as the two men stepped in to de-escalate the situation, those two great men were stabbed to death, and a third man was wounded, much needs to be done.

We have our moments of silence when there are mass shootings. We mourn for the families of Pulse nightclub and for what happened in those areas. But it is not enough for us to have Special Order hours, to have discussions, or even have moments of silence. Action must be taken by this administration.

Mr. VEASEY. Absolutely. We do need action taken by this administration, Representative PLASKETT.

I mentioned to you earlier that I wanted to talk about the President's

history on racism and some of the things that came out in the campaign—not anything new but, nevertheless, very disturbing—and why we need for the President honestly to lead this discussion.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMUCKER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I know that there were other issues that the gentleman wanted to discuss with regard to some of these and examples that he wanted to give as well, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. VEASEY. Very briefly, we have the President's history on racism from the very beginning of his candidacy, of course, and the way he disparaged Mexicans and Mexican Americans in this country by calling people rapists and accusing people of bringing disease and crime into the United States, pretending that he didn't know who David Duke was. It is unbelievable, pretending to not know who David Duke was.

Ms. PLASKETT. I think he knows now.

Mr. VEASEY. Even condoning the beating of a Black Lives Matter protester, his history extends before that.

Of course, it was very well covered, very well chronicled during the campaign about the Justice Department suing his real estate company and his father's real estate company for not renting apartments to Black people, not renting apartments to African-American potential tenants. Of course, they ultimately settled that lawsuit because of the wrongdoing that happened there.

Ms. PLASKETT. That was in the 1970s, I believe.

Mr. VEASEY. The gentlewoman is absolutely correct.

In 1989, he encouraged and celebrated the wrongful imprisonment of the Central Park Five and took out full-page ads in New York area newspapers calling for the return of the death penalty in response to a very infamous case in which a woman was beaten and raped while jogging in Manhattan's Central Park.

Back then, before he was President, Donald Trump said: They should be forced to suffer, and when they kill, they should be executed for their crimes. I want these murderers and always will.

Of course, there was a lot of public outrage over that case. It was very well talked about. It was on all the talk shows and what have you.

Those men wrongfully spent time in prison because the DNA evidence exonerated them.

Ms. PLASKETT. Actually, they weren't men at the time. They were teenagers.

Mr. VEASEY. They were teenagers at the time.

Even after the DNA evidence exonerated them, he still said that maybe they could be guilty of something. I thought that was a terrible thing to say.

Of course, the New Jersey Casino Control Commission fined Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino \$200,000 in 1992 because managers would remove African-American car dealers at the request of certain big-time gamblers that would come in.

In 1996, 20 African Americans in Indiana sued Trump for failing to honor a promise to hire mostly minority workers for a riverboat casino on Lake Michigan.

Let me tell you why, even despite this, the President has the ability to lead a discussion on race.

You might remember Shirley Sherrod. I don't know if that name rings a bell with you. She was an African-American agricultural worker who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and was given an example of how she overcame her own bias and her own racism.

Of course, her comments were misconstrued and the tapes were made to sound one way. She ultimately lost her job. She was offered her job back after it was proven this conservative newspaper had actually tried to disparage her so they could have some sort of a racism equivalent or something to try to make the readers feel better.

The reason why I bring that up is because here was a woman that was being honest about and trying to give an example about how she overcame bias and how she overcame prejudice. The President has an opportunity to talk about Central Park, to talk about racism in his apartments, to talk about the issues at the casino, to talk about the other areas in his life where he has fallen quite short when it comes to fairness and honesty and racism. So we need him to lead that discussion so we can begin to talk more and begin to heal our country.

Ms. PLASKETT. Part of leadership is expressing your shortcomings and using that as an opportunity to move forward and to move the Nation forward. So many people look to our President for his leadership and for his thoughts and his out-of-the-box thinking. This would be tremendous not only to the people who are being oppressed, but to others as well.

One of the things I wanted to leave us with was a quote and some work that the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is working on, that has a mission to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting, in particular, the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities.

In December 2016, Kristen Clarke, who is the president, stated: "Hate

crimes and hate-filled incidents stand as a dark cloud over our democracy. The recent spike in hate crimes is attributable, in part, to racially charged rhetoric that characterized the 2016 election cycle and the rise of ‘alt-right’ white nationalist extremism. This is a moment that calls for Federal, State, and local officials to use every tool in their arsenal to fully investigate and prosecute these incidents when they occur.”

And we from the Congressional Black Caucus say, as well, to eradicate this from our Nation.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the 2016 presidential election was an exceptionally bitter fight between Republicans and Democrats. The election highlighted many of the existing divides between many Americans and the underlying frustrations that we have been wrestling with as a people. Couple this with the resentful partisanship that we have experienced in Congress, and it is quite clear that there are deep rifts dividing our country. However, one of the biggest consequences of this partisan bickering and inability to compromise has been the increase in the frequency of hate crimes across America.

The latest figures from the Southern Poverty Law Center estimate that there have been nearly 1,372 bias incidents between the day after the election and February 7, when these statistics were last reported. SPLC is collecting self-reported data from across the country in an effort to monitor “bias incidents”—or acts of hostility that are motivated by racism or other prejudices—across the United States. While it is important to acknowledge the limitations of self-reported data, this trend is consistent with several other incidents reported nationwide that have challenged the notion that we are living in a post-racial society.

For example, several nooses were found throughout our nation’s capital this month—one near an elementary school, another in the African American Museum of History and Culture, and on American University’s campus. On June 2, a Muslim couple was allegedly harassed in Oregon and told to go back to their country. More prominently, two men in Portland were stabbed to death and another wounded when they tried to intervene on behalf of two women, one of whom was wearing a hijab, who were being verbally assaulted by a man yelling slurs.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the horrendous incidents being reported in the wake of this election and the hateful rhetoric that has come to define the political narrative. However, I am here to join my colleagues not only to denounce these actions and hateful words, but also to remind ourselves that we are better than this. We are better than this as a people and a nation, and we must all do our part to discourage this behavior and hold these violators accountable. Until we all take active roles within our society and democracy, we cannot reasonably expect our society to overcome these challenges and emerge a stronger society. I am proud to join my colleagues tonight in sending a clear message that these acts of hatred and violence will not be tolerated. Not today, not ever.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### HONORING PULSE NIGHTCLUB VICTIMS IN ORLANDO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) for 30 minutes.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as I stand here tonight before you, in my hometown of Orlando, thousands of people are gathered at Lake Eola Park like they were 1 year ago to mourn, honor, and pay tribute to the 49 lives we lost on January 12, 2016. We were with them earlier today. We would love to be with them tonight, as we were last year, but we are here doing the job we were elected to do.

I am joined tonight by my colleague—I am absolutely honored to serve with him—Representative DARREN SOTO. We stand here tonight on the floor of the House of Representatives together so the world will not forget the lives we lost in the Pulse nightclub shooting.

It was supposed to be like any other Saturday night for the men and women inside the Pulse nightclub. I can only imagine the excitement they shared that evening as they celebrated birthdays and friendships. Mr. Speaker, they were out for what my bishop likes to call late-night fellowship.

Then, at 2:20 a.m., when everyone was closing their tabs for the night and about to head home, it was then that an ISIS-inspired gunman, motivated by hate, walked into the club and opened fire. Within a matter of minutes, he was able to kill 49 people and wound so many others. The innocent men and women in the club didn’t stand a chance against him that night.

We lost 49 lives. Their full potential will never be known, and we will always wonder, when we think about their lives, what could have been. Many others continue to recover from their visible and invisible wounds.

In the days and weeks following the Nation’s deadliest mass shooting, we saw our community come together in beautiful ways. We mourned with those who lost their loved ones. We came out in droves to donate blood for the survivors who needed it. We showed support and gratitude for our law enforcement officers, our first responders, and the nurses and doctors who acted with courage and bravery in the face of unimaginable tragedy.

We embraced and celebrated the diversity that makes Orlando “The City Beautiful.” We showed the world that we are a city who defeats hate with love.

One year after the shooting, the wounds are still fresh and the scars are still not fully healed, but our community is resilient and united in the face of this tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from Florida, (Mr. SOTO).

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida, Representative VAL DEMINGS. First of all, I thank her for her service in law enforcement and also for her husband, Jerry Demings’ service in law enforcement and to remember the 1-year mark of the Pulse nightclub shooting.

□ 2030

I wrote a poem entitled: “Our Pulse Still Beats.”

Inspiration from a brother lost too soon  
A place for his memory to play the tune  
Alas his pulse ceased  
A safe place for a rainbow of people  
Full expression was presented throughout  
this steeple  
They all danced to the pulsating sounds  
Then came a night of celebration  
For many friends from many nations  
On the move to impulsive grooves  
In the midst of the night a dark figure entered  
Hate-filled heart and soul a splintered  
His guns pulsating death.  
Horrors, and cries, as bullets fly  
Some they ran and some they died  
Their pulses ceased to be  
Brave officers infiltrated the scene  
A melee ensued amidst the smoke and gleam  
And in the end terror was silenced, the repulsive vanquished  
Medics and firefighters quickly came to the rescue  
Seeking out those who cried out with fading hues  
Come quick he is still breathing, wait she has a pulse  
In makeshift ambulances staining ER floors in red  
One by one saved from the dead  
On the monitor, pulses finally steady beep, beep  
In the morn Orlando awakes in sadness  
But comes together as One above the madness  
The pulse of the city is unspeakable grief and unbreakable love  
From everywhere we came to the Center, the Bloodbank, the Lake, and the Streets  
We gave our time, our pennies, our blood, our hugs, and our eats  
Donors with a strong pulse are needed to replenish our stock  
Makeshift monuments grew before our eyes  
We gathered at Dr. Phillips for those we lost and those still alive  
As the bell rang 49 times, sorrow became the natural impulse, but so was unity  
This emotion, this grief, this love was felt around the world  
By mothers and fathers, boys and girls  
A community pulsating with sadness and defiant hope  
Our happy little tourist town known for magic  
Became the site of history’s most violent shooting, tragic  
But our community’s pulse still beats  
One year later one community stronger  
Our pulse still beats  
For those who survived