

Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, after too long, Americans are waking up to the dangers of the Chinese Communist Party. As we combat the economic and the health ramifications of the coronavirus, it has never been more important that we take on this hostile regime.

It has been my honor to serve on the China Task Force and help expose the threats that the Chinese Communist Party poses to our national security and to the American people.

Just yesterday, Congressman MICHAEL MCCAUL released the House Foreign Affairs Committee's report into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. Their evidence clearly confirms that the Chinese Communists covered up the coronavirus, enabling a local outbreak to become a pandemic.

The Chinese Communist Party knew that the coronavirus could be spread by human-to-human transmission, and yet this regime hid findings from global leaders, public health experts, and even the World Health Organization.

Leaders in the Chinese Communist Party knew that this virus could be catastrophic, and yet they deliberately chose to cover up their missteps rather than sound an alarm and warn the world that this virus was being unleashed.

Their lies cost American livelihoods. Their lies cost American lives. This pandemic's destruction could have been prevented. This didn't have to happen.

Now Americans are facing a choice. If we do not act now, who will stop the Chinese Communist Party from simply repeating this coverup?

Inaction is not an option. America must prevent another pandemic from reaching our shores.

And our work cannot stop there. Sadly, the Chinese Government's malicious acts extend far beyond the coronavirus pandemic. From cyberattacks on American citizens and blatant overreach into our virtual networks, to espionage in our academic institutions and illicit fentanyl that kills on American streets, we cannot ignore the Chinese Government's pervasive threats to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this is no distraction; this is reality. For the safety of the American people, for the future of our Nation, the Chinese Communist Party must be held accountable.

For months, the China Task Force has focused on researching these issues and exploring legislative solutions. We are currently working on a final report that will detail our findings and recommend a pragmatic path forward. While our work on this report is coming to a close, our commitment to the cause will continue.

During these busy days, I recognize that many issues are competing for America's time; but to be fair, these threats require our action. The Chinese Government's coverup of the

coronavirus pandemic requires action. The Chinese Government's persecution of Uighurs requires action. The Chinese Government's monopoly of the medical supply chain requires action. The Chinese Government's attempts to control the world's network requires action.

Despite the challenges that we are facing at home, the American people must stand together against the Chinese Communist Party. Our national security should never be a partisan issue. The health of the American people should never be a partisan issue. By working together, we can strengthen our defenses, defend human rights, spur innovation, and equip Americans to lead the way in global innovation.

Moving forward, it is imperative that America continues to strengthen our supply chain, to pursue fair trade deals with China, and, ultimately, to hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for its actions.

Once again, it has been my privilege to serve the American people as a member of the China Task Force. I thank Leader MCCARTHY for the opportunity to serve, and I am grateful to Chairman MICHAEL MCCAUL for his leadership.

This is a long road, but it is worth the fight. And as I always believe, America will win that fight.

ALOPECIA AREATA AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. PRESSLEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with my fellow Americans with alopecia in recognition of September as Alopecia Areata Awareness Month.

Today, like nearly 7 million Americans, I live with alopecia, an autoimmune disease that attacks the hair follicles. This common condition is highly unpredictable and cyclical. Hair can grow back in or fall out again at any time, and the course is different for each person.

Alopecia areata disproportionately affects children and Black Americans, and particularly Black women.

Some people may say that it is just hair, but for me and for many people living with alopecia, hair is intrinsically linked to our identity and our cultural expression.

We all have our own unique stories with our alopecia diagnosis. Mine began nearly a year ago as my braider noticed a small patch of baldness. Very soon after, I was waking up to sinks full of hair. What started as a few small patches quickly spread.

I remember the moment vividly. I was alone in my D.C. apartment, separated from my family, on the same day that would have been my mother's 72nd birthday and on the eve of an impeachment vote. I was standing in the bathroom, staring at my reflection in the mirror, and for the first time I was completely bald.

For months, I had dreaded the moment when it would be all gone; but looking at myself in the mirror that night, I felt relief, peace, and acceptance. It was a moment of grace, and I thank God for that.

In a matter of weeks, I would lose my eyelashes, eyebrows, and the rest of my hair and be diagnosed with alopecia universalis, one of three forms of alopecia.

I am still coming to terms with my new alopecia reality and the impact of my traumatic hair loss. Every day, thanks to the support of my family, my staff, the broader alopecia community, and others who have experienced hair loss, I am making progress.

I am making progress despite the hateful comments, the cruel and constant online harassment about my baldness, the intrusive and ignorant questions on the elevators, the unsolicited advice, and the stares, lots of stares.

No doubt about it, a bald woman entering a room or entering the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives makes people uncomfortable. Visually, it challenges every antiquated cultural norm about what is professional, what is pretty, what is feminine.

But in the loss, the hurt, and the ache of it all, I have never lost sight of the following: I am Sandy and Martin's daughter; I am Conan's wife; I am Cora's stepmom; and I am the Congresswoman for the Massachusetts Seventh Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I am now bald, but I am in good health and in incredible company. I have received an outpouring of love from people across the globe who are living with alopecia.

Early on, I received a note from an elementary school-aged girl with alopecia. She wanted to give me some tips in navigating this new normal. She told me about the first time she walked into school after her diagnosis, "Just walk right up to your friends and tell them, 'I'm still me,'" she wrote.

Who couldn't use a reminder like that as they navigate the world? Those little acts of kindness and solidarity have defined this experience, too.

I am proud to be in the good company of those fighting for people living with alopecia. There is an entire community that has been working tirelessly to share their stories and to educate the public on the impact of alopecia areata.

For three decades, the National Alopecia Areata Foundation has been working to garner congressional support for research and treatment development. My longtime friend and partner in good, Congressman MCGOVERN, introduced legislation to allow medical wigs to be covered under the Medicare program so that every senior living with alopecia can afford wigs and other head coverings.

This year, the House passed my amendment to provide an additional \$5 million in next year's funding for the National Institutes of Health, which

will fund research to increase our understanding of the causes, impacts, and possible treatments of alopecia areata.

I know that our work is far from over, and I will continue to fight. I will take my seat at the table. I will take up space, and I will create it, too; and with this space, we will make change.

Every single person deserves to show up in the world exactly as they are without fear or discrimination. To my fellow alopecians wherever you may be, today I bring our story to the floor of the people's House to say that we belong, our stories deserve to be heard, and we are absolutely beautiful and worthy.

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THE REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, maligned policies from Democrats that seek to defund, destroy, and dismantle our country are dangerous. Quite frankly, these policies pose a threat to the liberties and freedoms that define the American dream as we know it. Republicans understand this threat, and we refuse to sit idly on the sidelines.

That is why we have developed our Commitment to America. The message is simple. Restoring, renewing, and rebuilding America is a mandate that we must work every day to uphold. We are fighting for families, for generations of Americans to come, and for a country that has always served as a beacon of hope to the world.

In short, it is a blueprint that gets our country back on track. The American people deserve leaders who fight for freedom, the values that we hold dear, and the promise of the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, at such a pivotal moment in the history of our country, we must work to advance policies that are pro-growth, pro-family, and pro-America. Anything less is unacceptable.

Time and time again Democrats have turned their backs on the American people with a "my way or the highway" approach to legislating.

This year alone, the House of Representatives has taken up a myriad of bipartisan messaging bills that do nothing to help our country. If anything, these bills send a concerning message about the Democrat vision for America.

Substantive legislation has been pushed to the back burner, the spirit of bipartisanship has been rendered virtually nonexistent, and political posturing has replaced meaningful conversations on pressing issues. We have had ample opportunities to work together, but Democrats have taken it upon themselves to prolong a partisan blockade that stifles progress.

Mr. Speaker, that is wrong and that is not leadership. Leadership is fighting for the American people at every turn. Leadership is defending the promises of the American Dream. Leadership is advancing policies that raise America to new heights.

I am proud to stand alongside Leader MCCARTHY and my Republican colleagues as we chart a meaningful pathway forward. The road ahead may seem uncertain, or even arduous, but we are confident that with steadfast leadership and commonsense policies, America will flourish.

BIRTH OF THE HERO ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of my bipartisan measure, H.R. 1646, the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act, or the HERO Act.

The HERO Act is the best of what we do in this people's House, which is accessible to our constituents and others, and that is why we love the House of Representatives.

Over 2½ years ago, two of my fire chiefs, Mike McLaughlin and Maurice Johnson, visited my office here in Washington to talk about some issues. In passing, they also talked about the number of firefighters and first responders that succumb to suicide, and the stresses of the job.

We talked about it and we started to do a little bit of research. We realized we didn't have good statistics on the actual incidence of firefighters or first responders that were succumbing to suicide.

We started to talk to others, the International Association of Firefighters, and we talked to law enforcement. We realized the stresses that these individuals, men and women, who are out there protecting our communities every day, face. They see untold challenges that normal human beings don't see. So we started talking about this.

We looked for those statistics, talked to the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance founder, Jeff Dill, and again, realized we ought to challenge the CDC to collect these statistics, and we ought to do something about it. We ought to help relieve the suffering of these first responders, firefighters, law enforcement individuals.

So we went about writing a bill and working with our partners. That was before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. What we have seen since the pandemic is untold pressures on our frontline healthcare workers, our nurses, the folks in the hospitals. And I want to applaud a fellow doctor, a Republican Member, MIKE BURGESS, who is the ranking member on the Energy and Commerce Healthcare Subcommittee, he realized this fact. And working together with our staff, we amended the HERO Act to include and recognize the

unique stresses that these frontline healthcare workers are facing.

We talked about how they don't need to suffer by themselves, how we could put in place peer-to-peer contacts where folks could reach out, create a space for some of these individuals that might be suffering alone to talk about what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank Chairman PALLONE and Ranking Member WALDEN on the Energy and Commerce Committee, as well as the chairwoman of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, Ms. ESHOO, for helping get this bill to the floor and getting it passed yesterday evening.

Again, the HERO Act demonstrates what we can do when we come together as Democrats and Republicans, when we listen to our constituents, and we work with those folks that are out there.

I, again, want to applaud the frontline healthcare workers, the firefighters, the law enforcement individuals, and emergency responders that are out there keeping us safe every day. You have got our back, we have got your back. So thank you to all of them.

RECOGNIZING THE SCHEDULER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a group of courageous Federal employees: Matt Nordquist; Janet Hartman, now Schmautz; Jake Gibson; Carren Crossley; Virginia Mueller, now Partridge; Jordan Haverly; Joy Henrichs; Perry Ford Stamp; and Molly Mackenzie Harris.

There is no more difficult job in Washington than that of a congressional scheduler. My thanks and apologies go to those who served in my office these past 24 years.

For me, being away from home was the worst part of the job. Who booked the flight and told me I had to get back to D.C.? The scheduler did. Who would meet me in the office at 7:30 a.m. to get me to a breakfast meeting at 8 a.m.? Who would hang around to pick me up at 9 a.m., just to race me to the Hill for a 9 a.m. meeting? The scheduler did. Who received an irate call from me wondering why no one was at the meeting in HC-5, only to be told that if I had looked at my schedule, I would have seen that the meeting location had changed to the Capitol Hill Club? The scheduler did.

Who took the frustrating call asking how I can be in a meeting in the Capitol from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., and then in my office in the Rayburn Building for an 11 a.m. meeting? The scheduler did. Who took the blame when I finally cried out that I needed a bathroom break after consecutive 30-minute meetings? The scheduler did. Who picked me up after votes at 6:30 p.m. to hit a reception at 6:45 p.m., another