

I rise to pay tribute to that kind of determination. As we proceed to debate the American rescue package, I want the Members, my friends on the other side of the aisle, to recognize that elections count, that people are looking for us to stare down the devastation of COVID-19, the devastation of poverty, and the devastation of lack of jobs.

They are looking for diversity in terms of vaccinations, reaching out to neighborhoods. They are looking for the child tax credit, the earned income tax credit, and that is because John Lewis stood tall for the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

In fact, after that Bloody Sunday, President Johnson rose to this podium and said: "I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy. . . . At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama."

So when we debate, I want us to be reminded that people died for the Voting Rights Act because elections count: people like Jimmie Lee Jackson, who was shot by a State trooper in Marion, Alabama, after a peaceful rally to vote; women like Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife who was driving people back and forth between Montgomery and Selma. She, a mother of 5, was shot to death.

So today I rise to emphasize that Bloody Sunday is not just Bloody Sunday. It is a continuation of the fight for justice and the fight for voting rights. It is what we will do tomorrow. It is the PRO Act. It is the Violence Against Women Act. It is the vote for the American rescue package that does not disallow the fact that all Americans, those impoverished, those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19, those teachers who want to get in the classroom and teach. All of this will be part of the American rescue package.

Thank you, John Lewis, for beginning to tell us what America should be and what America can be. It is because of that kind of strength that we are here today. To John Lewis, we commit to you to pass H.R. 1 in the Senate, to pass the Voting Rights Act enhancement number four, after Shelby, Alabama, destroyed and undermined the very strength of the Voting Rights Act. Because we would not be here today; we would not have the opportunity to have the American rescue package; we would not have the opportunity to have the Violence Against Women Act; we would not have the opportunity to have the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, whose family was here last week when we debated it, if we did not have the right to vote.

So it is my belief today that, as we go into this debate, as we go into the rest of the week, as we vote for the universal background checks and the Charleston, South Carolina, closing the loophole, it is not a frivolous authority

or power that we utilize. It is because people were willing to be beaten and to be almost killed, but certainly unbowed, as Shirley Chisholm said, for the precious right to vote.

Bloody Sunday may be one day, March 7, but all the years that I have gone and crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, chosen to highlight a Confederate segregationist, but we turned that lemon into lemonade. When thousands and thousands and thousands every year marched across that Edmund Pettus Bridge, we weren't marching for segregation, we weren't marching for the violence that was perpetrated against the foot soldiers year after year. We were marching for freedom and the right to vote.

So this right to vote will be exercised on the floor of the House this week. I ask and beg my colleagues to join us in what is good. Join us in the American rescue package. Join us in the PRO Act. Join us in the universal background checks. Join us in closing the Charleston loophole. Join us next week in the Violence Against Women Act. Join us to make America the country of John Robert Lewis, standing for what is good.

Madam Speaker, I know we will do good and get into good trouble.

A QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH IN TEXAS

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise, a proud, liberated Democrat unbought and unbosomed.

I rise today to address the question of life and death, the question associated with the Governor of the State of Texas indicating that on tomorrow people may go out into the public and to public venues without a mask. He is leaving it to the public to make decisions associated with life and death. Life and death in Texas because the 7-day average for hospitalizations is 6,000. The number of people that died on last Sunday was 65. Life and death. And he leaves it in the hands of people who may somehow believe that he is risking his life. Not so. Not to the extent that the public will be, those who haven't been vaccinated because on December 22 of last year the Governor was vaccinated.

The Governor has resources. If by chance he should contract the virus, the Governor will have access to the finest medical care in the world. The Governor will get to the hospital expeditiously either by some car that will have some officer driving at a high rate of speed because the road will be cleared for him or he will pursue his needs by way of helicopter. The Governor has resources.

Better example. The former President, who called the virus a hoax, when he contracted the virus, he went to the finest medical center, received the finest medical care, and he survived.

His friend, who attended one of his rallies and 9 days later contracted the virus, died. This is a matter of life and death. The virus has not dissipated. It has not gone away.

So to the people of Texas, I love you, but I say this to you: If you don't have the resources that the Governor has, if you don't have a helicopter, if you don't have access to the best medical care in the world, if you don't have a doctor that will be waiting on you when you get to the hospital, if you have to go to the emergency room—the Governor won't go to the emergency room, he will bypass that.

So if you can bypass the emergency room and you can have the finest medical care in the world, maybe you should consider going into public venues without a mask. But if not, remember, it is a question of life and death, and the life you save may very well be your own.

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PANDEMIC HELP AND TESTING FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

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

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I am so proud of the wins in the American Rescue Plan, and in particular with what this means for America's children. As a pediatrician, my life's work has been the health and the wellbeing of children.

This pandemic has been particularly hard for children and families. The most important thing we can do to bring relief to our communities is to end the pandemic. This means getting shots into as many arms as possible as quickly as we can. It also means taking steps now to ensure that when children return to the classroom, our schools and our small businesses can stay safe and stay open.

Testing is key to keeping our schools and workplaces safe. And, frankly, we have not used testing in a way that significantly curbs the spread of this disease. Rapid home testing, in particular, is a critical public health tool that we have yet to really deploy. And there is funding in the American rescue package to support more strategic widespread testing.

Rapid tests can give results in about 15 minutes, and they can be done at home. Imagine testing in the morning before brushing your teeth. By the time you are done with breakfast you would have a result. If positive, you would stay home and avoid spreading coronavirus to others. This is how we break the chain of transmission and starve the virus. What we need now is to get these tests evaluated, approved, scaled up and priced such that everyone can use them two to three times a week. Frequent testing means you will catch infections early while people are

still asymptomatic and would otherwise unknowingly be spreading them to others.

The technology is inexpensive and is similar to that used in pregnancy tests. In fact, these tests can be produced in bulk for a dollar or two per test. But we need investment from the Federal Government in doing head-to-head comparisons to determine which tests are the best, and then production and procurement of those best tests on a massive scale.

This is a new virus. Variants have already emerged that make it more contagious. More are sure to come. It will be close to a year before all of our children are vaccinated. Now, frequent rapid testing is a way to identify infected children and staff before they get symptoms and keep them at home so they can't infect others. It can give staff and families confidence that our schools are safe. It can also give an early warning of outbreaks. Now, imagine what this sort of testing could mean for workplaces, for restaurants, and for theaters.

The American Rescue Plan does more than strengthen our vaccines and testing though. It provides critical relief that families need right now.

We are in one of the worst economic downturns this country has ever seen, and the American Rescue Plan provides help where it is most needed, prioritizing children and families.

This plan shores up the child tax credit and provides it up front as a monthly check for up to \$300 per child. This is a very big deal. More than 93 percent of children and families will benefit, including the poorest 10 percent, who currently get no benefits because their parents' income is too low to qualify. These are the families who need the help the most. This provision alone will cut the number of children living in poverty in half.

It also shores up SNAP benefits and incorporates my bill to expand WIC, so that children can get good nutrition and enough of it to power their brains and their bodies. It provides cash benefits and enhanced unemployment benefits that will help the hardest-hit families the most, and it gets even more help to families with children.

It expands Medicaid in States that haven't already and makes it easier for people to afford and sign up for health insurance.

And finally, it provides resources to schools so that educators, staff, children, and their families feel confident that they are returning to classrooms safely. And it expands broadband access at home to narrow the digital divide.

The American Rescue Plan is a win for the country. It meets the moment, and it focuses relief on the people and businesses hardest hit by the economic and social fallout from this pandemic. Important to this pediatrician, it helps families and children with bold policy changes we have always needed but that have become even more urgent during this crisis.

UNIONS WILL HELP REBUILD THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, later today we will debate the PRO Act, and we will pass the PRO Act to free up American workers to form unions and bargain collectively just because they darn well please without interference from their employer. And when we debate the PRO Act, Madam Speaker, we will get into all the details of the provisions of the PRO Act, which are really incredible, and I am very excited about that.

But right now, I want to talk about what a difference the PRO Act would make, why it would be a game changer for the working people of this country.

First of all, let's talk about productivity. American workers are incredibly productive. In the whole period during and after World War II when Americans were forming unions, thanks to the National Labor Relations Act, and up to a third of private-sector workers were in unions, wages and productivity rose in lockstep. You can't even separate them.

But then in the late seventies when we started deregulating airlines and deregulating trucking, and when Ronald Reagan became President and busted the air traffic controllers union, PATCO, and the union-busting business came up, and union membership started declining, productivity kept zooming up, but workers' compensation was totally flat. Since 1979, productivity has increased 70 percent, but compensation only 12 percent.

What about income inequality? We can go to the next one. For the last 100 years, income inequality has tracked union membership almost exactly. So if you take the share of income taken by the top 10 percent of the workforce, you can see that as union membership grew, income inequality fell.

Look at the difference the National Labor Relations Act itself made. In 1935, union membership shot up. The wages of the top 10 percent shot down as a share of everybody. We got more equal. We achieved the American Dream. And now with 1,000 cuts to union membership, when we are down to 6 percent of private-sector workers being in unions, there has been this incredible divergence, and the wealthy have taken all of the gains, and workers aren't in unions anymore.

And let's look at some specific stuff as we get the next slide up here. Let's start with benefits. Union members have more benefits and better benefits almost across the board. Here are just a couple of examples: 86 percent of union members have access to paid sick leave, as opposed to 72 percent of nonunion workers; and 94 percent of union members have access to healthcare benefits, compared to just two-thirds of nonunion workers.

And it is not on this slide, but more than half of union members have ac-

cess to defined benefit pensions, real pensions, and only a small fraction of nonunion workers do.

Finally, let's look at wages in the next one. For all workers across the private sector, union members make about \$1,150 a week more.

We are here debating, and finally we are passing, \$1,400 for poor families one time. Union members earn \$1,150 more every week through their own labor because they negotiated for it. That is \$7,800 a year more.

And finally, if we look at the next slide—and Rick is doing an awesome job here; I appreciate you—it is especially important for women and workers of color. Look at this: This shows that across all categories of American workers, White, Black, and Latinx men and women workers make more. Women make \$11,752 a year more if they are union members than if they are not. African-American workers make \$10,088 a year more if they are union members. And Latinx workers make almost \$14,000 a year more, \$13,936.

Madam Speaker, any way you slice it, when we give workers the power to form unions at their workplace, they lift themselves up, they lift up their families, they lift up all the nonunion workers around them because the non-union employers have to raise wages to keep up with the unionized workers, and they lift up our country.

Let's pass the PRO Act and rebuild the middle class of this country.

GUN CONTROL BILLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. GREENE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition of gun control bills.

I rise today in support of our Second Amendment, the greatest freedom that we have as Americans, and a right that people all over the world wish that they had.

The Second Amendment reads: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

H.R. 8 and H.R. 1446, both gun control bills, infringe on the people's right to keep and bear arms. We must stand up and stop the constant flow of gun control bills that constantly come out of this House. The American people have these freedoms for a very good purpose.

You see, the right to defend oneself is something that should never require us to be on a list. It should never require us to pay a tax. It should never require us to wait to be able to purchase a firearm to defend ourselves. It should never require rules or shame or condemnation from another American.

Right now, we are in a time where people are being shamed just for being a gun owner. Our government is constantly pursuing legal gun owners and making them out to be the bad guy.