

State of Michigan, 48217, where we see high rates of asthma. When I go read to children in the third grade class during March Reading Month, I ask how many children there know what I do for a living, and they don't know, usually, and I have to give them a civics lesson. I tell them that I am trying to fight for clean air. I ask them: "How many of you have asthma or are suffering from asthma?" A third of the class always raises their hands.

I ask them: "It hurts to have an asthma attack, doesn't it? It is hard to breathe. Isn't it hard to breathe?" They shake their heads.

Every day, we fail. We fail them by not taking action on climate for a livable future.

Please know this: Our children cannot learn if they are hungry, but they also cannot learn if they are breathing dirty air, if they are being poisoned by lead-infested water, so we must take action.

I know that we also have failed to enact real, meaningful gun control that our children can be proud of, that our teachers can feel is meaningful and that it actually does keep them safe.

Every day that we have failed to enact bold reforms to resurrect and protect our democracy is a day closer to dooming our children to a fascist future where their rights are stripped from them.

This isn't new for our communities, but I know for many of the young people of color in my community, the LGBTQI youth, our immigrant youth, our religious minorities, these failures have been amplified by the horrifying pandemic of racism, bigotry, and hate that has exploded in our country.

Make no mistake, the crisis of hate facing our country is 100 percent the result of continued political motivation that is literally a factor in pushing elected officials and social leaders in spewing out fear rather than trying to address the root causes of the issues that our children are facing.

I know the only solution here is fundamental overhaul of what we govern. We must put our children before corporations, people before profits, and community solidarity before hate and fear.

Madam Speaker, I cannot thank my colleague enough for his incredible leadership. Sometimes it is our lived experiences that we bring into this Chamber that give us the passion and inspiration to work hard. I am so honored to be able to serve with somebody that not only was a principal but is also a father himself and understands and has been on the front line and seen the lack of action in this body for our youth mental health crisis in our country.

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank RASHIDA for her voice. It is good to see her and be with her.

Tonight, we have heard from Members who represent communities across the country. The youth mental health crisis is a national crisis that requires

an all-of-government response. Our children deserve nothing less.

There were so many voices that contributed to these remarks this evening from my district, New York-16. I recognize them at this moment.

Making the necessary investments in our youth mental health will take all of us at every level of government and in every community.

I give a special shout-out to constituents of mine who shared their priorities around youth mental health. Jonathan Lewis, a Scarsdale Village trustee, shared how important it is to understand the relationship between a mental health crisis and learned outcomes to our students, not just in an academic sense but also with respect to school climate and the importance of creating a learning environment that is safe from violence.

Stephanie Marquesano from the Harris project in Ardsley highlighted how important it is that communities, youth, and all levels of government be in dialogue with each other about the intersection of mental health and substance use disorders, particularly as it relates to our youth.

Ron Hartridge, educator and advocate in the Bronx, expressed his deep concern regarding the impact that trauma and fear have on our children and how important it is to equip our schools to support students instead of prioritizing compliant behavior, which is so often used to justify and perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.

Jonathan Alvarez from 914United in Yonkers called for meaningful juvenile justice reform in the Lower Hudson Valley.

Darryl Taylor, a Tuckahoe Village trustee, wrote in about the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on our youth who lost loved ones, parents, siblings, or friends, and the urgency we must have to reach out to our youth who may be feeling alone in their grief and hopelessness.

Mary Graves, Mount Vernon's Democratic chair, shared how important it is that we make mental health resources and support available to the whole community and consider how there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to mental health.

Julie Cordin from my district shared how troubling it is to learn that suicidal ideation and attempted suicides amongst children increased during the pandemic and that this will not go away on its own. We have to work on this together. I am so grateful to all of my constituents who care so deeply about our youth, both locally and nationally.

The youth mental health crisis is a national crisis that requires an all-of-government response. Our children deserve nothing less.

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

□ 1745

MORAL BREAKDOWN OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about several issues which have either not been covered enough lately or not covered in the appropriate way.

The first thing I would like to talk about is the loan forgiveness program and the recent change in the law increasing public loan forgiveness.

When my constituents back home ask me, what is the biggest problem? I say, well, we certainly have problems with the economy, we certainly have problems with education, we certainly have problems with crime—but I say the biggest problem is we are in a moral breakdown in this country.

I would like to address the way the loan forgiveness program and public loan forgiveness is changing America, I think, for the worst.

The first thing I would like to address is the fact that this institution has apparently felt that you are a lot better off, or it should be much easier for you to have your loan forgiven if you work for a nonprofit organization or a governmental entity.

Now, whenever I go around my district, the manufacturers, the farmers, a couple of big insurance companies, they are all looking for more people to work. But the message out of Washington is, don't work for business, which, after all, is the engine that really makes our country go around. It shows kind of a hatred for manufacturers, a hatred for agriculture, a hatred of retail, a hatred of insurance.

People working in this building who work with our government employees, their staff is government employees, apparently felt: Well, I think those hardworking people in government, they ought to be offered a tremendous benefit that people who don't work for the government don't get. We are going to find a way to forgive the people's loans if they are the nice, noble people who work for government. And if they are somebody who, say, works for a manufacturer—which is so important for the country—well, we don't care about those people. We hate those people.

The next message in our loan forgiveness policy is the dislike of people who don't go to college. One of my goals in the legislature—which I think I am succeeding at a little bit—is educating people about all the good, necessary jobs we have in our country that don't require a 4-year college degree.

Recently, The Wall Street Journal pointed out—I am told—that if you are a plumber and compare your lifelong earnings to someone who is a general practitioner, it is about the same. We so desperately need more people in the

trades. We so desperately need more people who are skilled in the manufacturing field.

But what do we do here?

We turn around and put them or their children in greater debt with this loan forgiveness program or it will likely drive up insurance more with the loan forgiveness program that is going to cost over \$300 billion a year.

We benefit the people who go to college. We treat the people who don't go to college like dirt: No, you are not getting anything, inflation is going to go up and hurt you because we have to give money to the people who went to college.

The next bad message that it sends is, I think it is discriminating against the hardworking.

I ran into somebody recently, heard about somebody who got a nice job out of college, but with pride he said he was going to work extra hard and pay off that student loan. So he got a job as an Uber driver and he got a job as a bartender. I am sure between them both he was working well over 60, 65 hours a week but he was proud to prepay that student loan.

And what does the government say to somebody who works especially hard and pays off their student loan?

Sucker. We are going to give the same benefit to someone who didn't work that second or third job.

Again, you are eating away at the moral fiber of America.

The next group is the frugal. I always thought it was wise to be frugal, wise to be debt-free, pay off that debt before you take out your credit card and buy a fancier car or buy more furniture or buy a fancy vacation or something. But we look at the people who are frugal and use their frugality to pay off their student loan. Again, we say: Sucker, you shouldn't have paid off your student loan. The government will pay off the student loan for somebody who wasn't as frugal, and we consider you kind of foolish for being frugal.

And the final thing I would point out is that under the proposed forgiveness by President Biden, we give out twice the forgiveness if you originally took out Pell grants.

Now, one of the problems I have talked about with the Pell grants in the past is that it is easier to get a Pell grant if you are not married, which probably isn't a good thing, but that is the way it is.

Now, you already get the benefit of the Pell Grant for not being married in the first place. Now we double the amount of loan forgiveness if you wind up originally getting this additional boost with the Pell grant.

So, again, it is sending the wrong message to people. In addition to the fact that it is another \$360 billion log on the fire of inflation. And then people will pretend they don't know where inflation came from. But when the Treasury is spending 360 billion bucks, that is where the inflation came from.

The next thing I am going to address is what is going on at the border. And

as I mentioned before, this is another topic that the press underreports.

Earlier this week, one more time, we had the information come out on the number of people who came across the border in August. It varies from month to month, between 140,000 and 180,000 people crossing the border. But that is just totally inappropriate. It makes a mockery of our immigration laws to people who are doing it right.

We know that some of these people, after all, had to break the law to come here, and are going to be disproportionately in a situation in which they have to take advantage of the public benefits of this country. And we don't know whether they have been adequately blended into America, think like Americans, think with the self-reliance that Americans should have. I don't think any serious country believes in open borders, except for we do here.

In addition to the obvious problem of the adults coming here, we have—depending on the month—about 10,000 unaccompanied minors coming here to be dropped off, presumably at relatives, somebody or other. I don't know where the press is that always worries about broken families, when our open borders results in 9,000 or 10,000 people, who at least claim to be minors, without a parent around.

The next problem, a humanitarian problem, when you have such a huge number of people crossing the border, people die coming over the border. The last time I was down on the border, they found two bodies of people around San Diego and the Pacific Ocean. We were told it was more common to find bodies on the Mexican side of the border. We hear about people dehydrating to death in the Arizona desert. We hear about people drowning in the Rio Grande.

Nevertheless, these things are not talked about. They are an inevitable consequence of sending a message to people all around the globe that we don't care what happens at the border.

Another problem is, depending on the person, they frequently are charged \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000 to come here. Who is benefiting by this?

The Border Patrol believes that the drug cartels are right now making more money smuggling people across the border than they do selling drugs.

So what is the effect of the drug cartels making more money? It gives them even more of a stranglehold on our southern neighbor, Mexico, which is quickly becoming more and more of a narco State.

I think part of that is our fault in America for having too many people consume drugs that are snuck in across the southern border. But some of the fault also has to lie in this open-door policy pursued by the Biden administration as the Mexican drug cartels get wealthier and wealthier.

Another thing to point out is we are not inappropriate otherwise as far as letting people in this country. Depending on the year, we have over 800,000

new people sworn in as American citizens. That is certainly very generous, particularly when compared to other countries. Meanwhile, we have a situation in which we are encouraging people to come here right now.

Madam Speaker, 65 percent of the bursts of illegal immigrants are people on Medicaid, which would indicate that it is still a greater burden on our budget to have more people come here.

The American Medical Association points out the huge number of illegals who show up in emergency rooms. Of course, as a practical matter, they are in charge of this if something passes through to the other people who are paying for their medical care. But, again, we have to say one of the reasons for the spiraling costs of medical care in this country is people who show up in the emergency rooms and don't pay. That would be illegals.

I recently talked to someone who operates a free clinic in my district. And they told me that a significant number of the people that they deal with at the free clinic are people here illegally.

This could become even greater if eventually President Biden gets his dream—it could very easily happen if the elections go away. I don't want to have them go away—in which we give Pell grants to people who come here illegally which results in close to a free college education that the American middle class doesn't get. But apparently an inducement to have more people come here is we are going to give Pell grants to people who come here illegally.

I hope that the American press corps pays more attention to the numbers introduced earlier this week, as far as the number of people who came here illegally in August. It should be a banner headline. It will be a permanent change in America when over 150,000 people come here.

And I should point out that as more people come here, it doesn't mean we are kicking out more people who break our laws. At the same time, we are deporting only about a quarter of the number of people who President Trump was deporting for breaking the law. So we are, in essence, allowing more people who are criminally prone to come into this country.

The next issue I want to talk about that the press should be paying attention to: I recently talked to someone who claims that in the military, where they had required vaccines, we have recently heard of increases in miscarriages, cancer, blood clots, neurological complications, and deaths.

I would hope the press would dig into this, make some freedom of information requests. If it really is true, as my friend tells me, that there is an increase in medical problems at the same time that our military was required to get the vaccine, it is something we should know not only for the benefit of the military but the rest of America as well.

I haven't seen this being adequately covered given the huge amount of

money we are putting in these vaccines, as well as the fact that we are encouraging children to get these vaccines. I would hope that a lot of attention is being paid to the effect of vaccines on the primarily young military population, and a population that is generally in shape.

The next thing that not only the press should be paying attention to but, quite frankly, the business lobbyists should be paying attention to is something called the PRO Act.

The PRO Act passed the House of Representatives two terms in a row. It is being held up in the Senate right now only because of the filibuster rule. Depending upon what happens in the elections in November, one could easily see the PRO Act become law.

□ 1800

The American public does not know what is in the PRO Act. Lobbyists in this building, who should know better, don't know about the PRO Act. We are very close to changing the labor laws in this country where you can wind up having an election to unionize with only 14 days' advance notice. These elections would take place with an open ballot. You fill out your ballot, and people can know how you vote. If it is perceived that the management team did something untoward during the election, the labor relations board can deem there to be a union, even though nobody even voted to be unionized.

It can create a situation in which different franchisees can be lumped together, and even though no employees in one location want to unionize, they can be forced into a union.

It would be a fundamental change in the way we do business in this country. I have nothing against people who belong to a union, but this would overwhelmingly shift the bias toward forcing people to join a union when they don't necessarily want to. It is something our business groups, whatever association it is, should familiarize themselves with and make sure their members know what could very easily happen.

I also think the PRO Act has been very underpublicized by our press corps. If it turns out in January that we begin down a process of mass unionization and we go down a path in which all employees' numbers have to be turned over—their address, their email address, their phone number—without their say so, the American public ought to know what they are voting for in November.

I don't believe the press corps in this country has adequately explained to both management, employees, everybody, how close we are to that PRO Act becoming law. Everybody ought to know it. I think it would be devastating for American business, particularly American business that has to compete abroad, if the PRO Act were to pass. But if it passes, I bet very few people will understand what effect this election has on it.

There is another significant bill that is being held back only because of the filibuster rule in the Senate. Even though this bill passed this session, the average American does not know how close we are to this becoming law. I speak about the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act.

In this act, both for the purpose of censuses and other government forms, American citizens and American children will be asked to declare a sexual preference or sexual identity, be it bisexual, be it binary, be it transgender, what-have-you. I think this is highly offensive. There was a time when the gay rights movement meant we weren't supposed to ask what people do in bed. Now, it is going to be the government's business, and you are going to be asked to declare your sexual preference, which by itself is outlandish.

But just as outlandish is this declaring goes all the way down to kids who are 7 or 6 or 5 years old. Now, there the form may be filled out by parents or by a teacher. It includes forms other than just the census, forms that school districts are required to fill out.

Nevertheless, I think it is a fundamental change in America that we are going to be collecting data on sexual preferences from any age group. Outlandish for age 5; outlandish for age 12. But this, to me, is a fundamental change in the way America operates, and the information that people are supposed to turn over to the government is a fundamental change.

I would be surprised if one out of 300 Americans knew we are so close to making that requirement in the United States. I hope that our slumbering press corps—I don't mean to refer to them that way—but I hope that the average American knows how close we are to that bill becoming law.

The next issue that I think we ought to look at a little bit concerns the continued effort to claim we have a huge racism problem in this country. I do not believe we have a racism problem in the country. The easiest way to see that is when you look and see how well the immigrants who just come here are able to do, despite the fact that many of the immigrants who come here don't even know English.

I have recently spoken to people from the Hmong community, from the Indian community, and from the Filipino community, and all of them are so happy to be in America and think America is the land of opportunity, that people do so well in America.

I talked to a Hmong individual recently, and he had between himself, his children, and his siblings' children, about 30 children or nieces or nephews. Every one of them is thriving in America. Nobody has broken any laws. They all have decent jobs. They are educated in one fashion or another. These are people who came here from an entirely different culture. Many were not Christian. Their parents or grandparents did not know English when they came here, but they thrive in America.

I have been talking to some Indian immigrants, and they say how wonderful the opportunity is here. Again, I talked to somebody recently who came here, didn't know any English. He had to start out as a dishwasher. He worked his way up and is doing fantastically well in America. The fact that he is of Indian heritage had no effect on him whatsoever, and he couldn't think of any way in which he had been discriminated against. Same thing is true with somebody from the Philippines.

But what do we get here out of Washington? We get Joe Biden talking about we have to pass a bill—I will talk about in a second—we have to make it easier to sue police, in part, because we perceive the police are prejudiced.

We continue to promote the Black Lives Matter movement, which is built on the lie that we have a huge problem with racist police in this country. But nevertheless, we coddle them, people give them money, and they are treated with respect.

In our election law, we are told we have to get rid of photo ID, something that many other countries have, because it is racist to require photo ID. That is some horrible slander that Joe Biden has against the people of this country.

I would ask that the press begin to treat these claims of racism a little more skeptically. I think they should ask people details when they claim racism is a big problem, because it is not without harm. I think it causes people to walk around with a chip on their shoulder. I think that it causes unnecessary divisions in Americans. I think America has been a melting pot my whole life and well before I was born.

People come here from all around the globe. I should point out that insofar as there are ethnic problems, they are frequently greater in other countries. That is one thing that people from India pointed out to me, that there are problems between different religious groups or ethnic groups in India in which people even get killed. There is nothing like that in the United States.

It is time the politicians of this building, rather than trying to take political advantage of the grievances that they try to bring up, they should tell people that anybody who works hard in America has an opportunity to succeed and that that is something they can be proud of about of America. They can just use their common sense.

If you are down at the border, the people who come here, come here from all around the globe, because they know that despite the fact they might not know the native language, despite the fact that they don't have a job lined up when they get here—whether you are coming here from Peru or Cuba or Ecuador or Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, anywhere—you are going to be better off in the United States. Not Christian, not northern European, not European at all, you are still going to be better off in the United States.

So many immigrants have told me there is unlimited opportunity in the

United States. That is why they are here. One of the major reasons, I think, why some people don't succeed in taking advantage of that opportunity is because they are told by opportunistic politicians that America is a racist country and you cannot succeed in America.

The final comment that I think the press should be picking up going into the election cycle is a law that right now has passed the House twice but has only not passed the Senate because of the filibuster rule, which could change with a shift in just two votes in the U.S. Senate, is the law making it easier to sue police.

There are a variety of reasons why crime has gone up so dramatically in this country in the last 2 years, and there is no question that part of it is we are not adequately funding our police departments. But even more than that, we are not speaking positively about police. Now, we have a bill out there making it easier to sue police if they handcuff somebody or if they wrestle with somebody.

This rhetoric from politicians and also this proposed law causes police, I think, to be very reluctant to physically engage somebody, very reluctant to be aggressive. As a result, we have in Milwaukee, the city of my birth, and many other urban cities, including Washington and Baltimore, right up the freeway, dramatic increases in the number of homicides. It didn't just happen. It happened, in part, because of rhetoric from politicians tearing down police, encouraging lack of respect for the law.

The final highlight of this drive to dislike police could easily happen in January when we get rid of the limited immunity that police currently have if they have to engage someone. It would dramatically change policing, make it more difficult to find police, and make it easier to sue police.

I hope our press corps pays special attention to these laws, which did not pass out of this Congress, but passed only out of the House. But if there is a slight shift in the partisan makeup in January, they could easily become law. The American citizens ought to know about these laws before they go to vote in November. I am afraid they are not going to know it, because they are not adequately covered by our slumbering journalists.

I ask one more time that they pay attention to laws related to racism; laws related to suing police; laws related to the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act, in which they go around and try to collect data on sexual preferences from all Americans; and the PRO Act, in which we, I think, just shamefully tip the balance of the scales toward forcing people to become members of a union.

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

REFLECTIONS OF MY TIME IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) for 30 minutes.

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, I arrived in this storied Chamber 12-and-a-half years ago fresh off a Florida special election to fill former Representative Robert Wexler's seat. I was the lone freshman in the middle of the 111th Congress. I was eager. I was a little uncertain. I had a bit more hair. I wanted to do right by the people who sent me here.

It was during those first days that I met the late John Dingell, then the dean of the House, himself by all accounts a very important man. I don't know about you, Madam Speaker, but at that point, having secured the will of the American people to serve as their Representative in the House of Representatives, and having received my spiffy new congressional pin, I might have been feeling a little important myself, even with the novelty of my new job.

□ 1815

But John Dingell looked me square in the eye and gave me a piece of advice that I would never forget. He said: You are not important. It is what you can do for the people who sent you here, that is what is important. If you never confuse those two, he said, you will be fine.

Over the course of my time in Congress, as Mr. Dingell predicted, I have met some very important people, but those people, with all due respect to my colleagues, don't serve in this Chamber.

I met Mitch Libman, the childhood friend of Private First Class Leonard Kravitz, Company M, Fifth Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. For decades, Mitch worked to find out why Private First Class Kravitz, who sacrificed himself for his platoon during the Korean war in an extraordinary act of heroism, never received the Medal of Honor he was recommended for.

Mitch's efforts led to a 2002 congressional review to uncover soldiers of Jewish and Hispanic origin who were wrongfully denied the Medal of Honor due to prejudice. His tireless devotion to his late friend led me to introduce an amended version of the National Defense Authorization Act in the 113th Congress to ensure each and every soldier discovered during that review to deserve the Medal of Honor received their award.

I was proud to stand before President Obama surrounded by the families of these bravest Americans when the President awarded 24 recipients, including Private First Class Kravitz posthumously, with that deserved honor.

Mitch Libman and Private First Class Kravitz, and what we were able to do for them, that was important.

I met Mona Reis, the founder of the Presidential Women's Center. Outraged by the prevalence of unsafe, back-alley abortions, by the injustice of women having to travel across borders to access basic reproductive healthcare that is their right, Mona lobbied for legalized abortion here in Washington.

The day after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, she joined the first outpatient abortion clinic in Miami as a staff counselor, helping women in Florida finally access the care they needed. When she moved north to my district, she founded the Presidential Women's Center in Palm Beach County, a leading comprehensive reproductive care facility.

It is because of her dedication to women's basic human rights in south Florida, and her shining example nurturing patients through the most difficult decision of their lives, that I fought hard against efforts to attack women's bodily autonomy, first in Tallahassee and then in Washington.

It is why I became a task force chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus. Together with my colleagues, we passed the Women's Health Protection Act in the House to codify *Roe* into law and pushed for the repeal of the global gag rule. That was important, and especially in this moment, it continues to be important.

I met Robert Boo and Bruce Williams, CEO and active aging manager of the Pride Center at Equality Park in Wilton Manors, Florida. Every day, they work with their team to create a welcoming, empowering home with a wealth of resources for south Florida's LGBTQ+ community and particularly LGBTQ+ seniors. From art galleries to health workshops to education to counseling, Robert and Bruce ensure that the community's needs are met.

But the challenges that they face are tremendous. LGBTQ+ seniors have endured a lifetime of marginalization and discrimination, and their needs are many and unique.

Their work led me to Ruthie Berman, a lifelong advocate who fought alongside her wife, Connie, for the LGBTQ+ community. Even though Connie is no longer with us, Ruthie's activism has not let up. She is still briefing congressional staff and sharing her wisdom.

Ruthie and Connie, Bruce and Robert, all of their tireless efforts prompted me to introduce the Ruthie and Connie LGBT Elder Americans Act every Congress and to chair the Equality Caucus' Task Force on Aging. Because of them, Congress better understands the needs of this community and has the tools to take action. That is important.

I met David Hogg, Matt and Ryan Deitsch, Cameron Kasky, and X Gonzalez. I met Jackie Corin, Alex Wind, and dozens of their classmates. When 17 of their friends and teachers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas were murdered by a killer with access to an assault weapon, as our community was wracked with shock and grief, these