

With the passage of this bill, our government is finally catching up to the American people. This is long overdue, but it is no less meaningful for my brother and sister-in-law and hundreds of thousands of other LGBTQ+ marriages across the country.

CONTINUING TO FIGHT FOR PAUL WHELEN

(Mrs. KIM of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the Whelan family to urge the Biden administration to get United States Marine veteran, Paul Whelan, safely home from being held hostage and wrongfully detained by Russia.

While we are glad to welcome Brittney Griner safely home to her family, to make it happen, the Biden administration ceded leverage and released a dangerous, convicted arms dealer who was in prison for conspiring to kill Americans.

This poses tremendous national security risks and will embolden Vladimir Putin to take more Americans hostage in the future.

Meanwhile, Paul Whelan and other wrongfully detained Americans remain imprisoned. I will continue to fight for their safe return home.

ONE OF THE PROUDEST VOTES I WILL EVER CAST

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today, I cast one of the proudest votes I will ever cast in this body. I was a "yea" on the Respect for Marriage Act.

When I was elected to this body, I became one of the first two openly gay Black Members ever to serve in Congress. Growing up closeted, I never imagined that Congress would pass a bill like this, or I would be in a position to introduce it with Representative NADLER.

I was too young to remember Congress passing the Defense of Marriage Act, but I know exactly where I was when the Supreme Court struck it down in the *United States v. Windsor*. I had just graduated law school, and I was studying for the bar exam. At the time, because of moderates like Justice Kennedy, I still had faith that the Supreme Court was committed to protecting my basic civil rights as a gay American.

That was a different Supreme Court than the one we have today. The far-right supermajority on the Supreme Court is on a rampage against fundamental rights. As members of the LGBTQ+ community prepare to face the worst assault on our rights in a decade, Congress must do whatever it takes to protect our humanity.

This bill is a great first step. It ensures that the Federal Government will

not discriminate against same-sex and interracial couples who have been legally married. But Congress must also pass other legislation to ensure marriage equality as the law of the land.

Mr. Speaker, I would conclude by simply saying that I am very grateful to this Congress and to be in this place.

BIG TECH CENSORSHIP

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, in 2019, Hunter Biden foolishly abandoned a laptop at a computer repair store, a laptop that revealed Joe Biden was fully aware of his son's foreign corrupt business dealings. Not only that, but Hunter's business also profited President Biden financially and influenced foreign policy.

But the American people weren't allowed to know this before electing Joe Biden to the Presidency. Why? Because Twitter, one of the most influential distributors of content in the world, deliberately and arbitrarily suppressed news coverage to suit the political persuasions of its employees.

We have undeniable proof that Big Tech censored bad press for the Biden administration right before the 2020 election and may have even profited from doing so. This despicable collusion between liberal politics and social media, put on full display in the Twitter files, must end.

Informed voters, not biased Twitter truth manipulators, must decide the outcomes of elections.

We will never know how many voters would have changed their mind if they knew of the corruption of the Biden family and their activities. Suppression of information is the real threat to our republic, not asking questions.

Now that Republicans are back in the majority in the House, we will investigate this interference and hold Big Tech, the FBI, and the Biden family accountable.

VOTING TO PROTECT MARRIAGE EQUALITY

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank this body for full support of, of course, H.R. 8404, the Respect for Marriage Act. I was so proud to support this bill.

I thank my good friend and colleague Chairman NADLER for his leadership and DAVID CICILLINE and Speaker PELOSI for bringing this important bill to the floor.

Today, I voted to protect marriage equality across the country. Following the Supreme Court's shameful decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, rightwing extremists, who have been visibly organizing for decades to curtail hard-won

rights, have set their sights on other freedoms.

We cannot let Justice Clarence Thomas even consider overturning the constitutional right to marriage equality. What is coming next?

Today, the bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act will enshrine marriage equality into Federal law.

As one of the founding members of the Equality Caucus, along with my good friend Congressman Barney Frank, today, I am reminded of Martin Luther King's profound insight when he said that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

I thank all those who voted for this. This is a historic day, and we did the right thing. Thank God we are moving forward in this country.

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PAT SMITH WILL BE GREATLY MISSED

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, there are many wonderful people who work in and around the House to help us do the people's business. Some are very visible, and some are less so. Often the less visible are some of the most valuable in many ways.

One of those people is Patricia Smith, Pat, who is a true patriot and works hard every day to serve others. Ms. Pat prepares and serves food in the Republican Cloakroom. She is unfailingly sweet and caring, not only to Members but to everyone.

In addition to her service in the House, Ms. Pat serves at her church and volunteers on weekends, feeding the homeless. She lives her faith every minute of every day.

As Saint Francis said: Preach a sermon every day. When necessary, use words.

Ms. Pat does not need to use words. She lives the Gospel every day. She will soon be retiring, and she will be greatly missed.

Congratulations, Ms. Pat, on a life well lived. I will miss you and your example more than you can know.

TODAY IS HISTORIC

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this is a very historic day.

We overturned and dismissed the words of Justice Thomas that the rights of Americans should be denied.

We voted for the Respect for Marriage Act that will be signed by the President of the United States.

Then in the midst of darkness, Brittney Griner was swapped and is on her way home. Negotiations by the hostage negotiating team took months because Mr. Putin would not negotiate.

Finding our hostages and bringing them home is not a partisan issue. I love Paul Whelan and his family. We introduced legislation passed by the House that said to bring Brittney Griner home and bring Paul Whelan home.

I am happy for Cherelle, Brittney's mother and father, Houston, Phoenix, the Nation, and all the players in the WNBA, but we will continue to use the power of the sovereign United States to bring Paul Whelan home, as we did Trevor Reed and as we did those who came from Venezuela.

Let us unify together. Let us celebrate Brittney and fight to bring Paul Whelan home.

DARK DAYS OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise.

At this time, prior to going into my message, I yield such time as he may consume to the Honorable MARK TAKANO, the pride of California's 41st District and the chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

THANKING TORIA SULLIVAN

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his generous yield.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Toria Sullivan brought a deep passion for helping veterans to my committee and always provided a kind and empathetic ear to those who contacted our office seeking assistance.

She brought calm and order to a fast-moving office, where the next urgent move was always right around the corner. She was unfailingly helpful and went above and beyond expectations as part of the committee's communications team.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Toria's service, and she will be deeply missed.

THANKING HEATHER O'BEIRNE KELLY

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Dr. Heather O'Beirne Kelly brought 20 years of experience as a psychologist to her critical role with the Health Subcommittee. She spearheaded my committee's work on veterans' mental health and suicide prevention and drafted key portions of some of the most important legislation passed by the committee, including the Veterans

COMPACT Act, the STRONG Veterans Act, and the VIPER Act.

Even as she grappled with incredibly difficult policy challenges, Heather was a joyful presence in our office who made every day better for her coworkers.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Heather's service, and she will be deeply missed.

THANKING ESTI LAMONACA

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Esti Lamonaca is an Army veteran who lives and breathes veterans advocacy and who brought deep insight and tireless passion to the committee's efforts to support women veterans.

As the lead for the Women Veterans Task Force during this Congress, Esti organized a series of important task force events. The oversight work they undertook will guide the committee's work on behalf of women veterans for years to come, and Esti's commitment to this work will continue to inspire those who worked with them.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Esti's service, and they will be deeply missed.

THANKING MATT TYRELL

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Matt Tyrell came to our committee from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and his experience within that organization proved invaluable to our work. He spent months engaging with stakeholders, drafting language, and laying the careful groundwork needed to pass the Honoring our PACT Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation to come out of this Congress. Even while accomplishing such a Herculean task, he never failed to bring collegiality and good humor to his work.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Matt's service, and he will be deeply missed.

THANKING PETER TYLER

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Peter Tyler is a former member of the Navy Reserve and an experienced Hill staffer who brought considerable skill and oversight experience to my committee. He led many of our efforts to make the Veterans Administration a welcoming place for all who served our Nation and to protect veterans and their families from abusive debt collec-

tion practices by improving administrative processes at the VA.

Peter's passion for good government shone through in every task he took on for the committee.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Peter's service, and he will be deeply missed.

THANKING MATT HOROWITZ

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Matt Horowitz brought real-world experience in technology and cybersecurity to my committee's work and broadened the scope of our oversight efforts into this important, complex, and often overlooked area.

His deep knowledge, patience, and good humor also helped my committee become a model to others as Congress adjusted to the need for remote work and virtual hearings during the pandemic. He expanded the work the committee does and helped us do it better during a very challenging time.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Matt's service, and he will be deeply missed.

THANKING JOEL WALSH

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs who will not be continuing with us into the next Congress.

Joel Walsh has been an important part of my committee's oversight and investigations team, and he brought skills to his job that he honed while working as a journalist. His professionalism, writing and investigation skills, and work ethic proved invaluable to the committee as he helped lead hearings and draft important records.

Joel's sincerity and good humor made my committee a better place to work and also made our work better.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Joel's service, and he will be deeply missed.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his generosity of spirit and for his collegiality.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise, a proud, liberated Democrat, unbought, unbossed, and unafraid to speak truth to power as well as truth about power concerning the topic of slavery and the need for atonement.

Let's start with slavery and identify it for what it was. A proper identification of slavery would cause one to conclude that it was truly one of the greatest crimes ever committed against humanity.

Slavery was kidnapping. People were stolen from their homes. They were traversed across the oceans.