

This picture beside me is her farewell surprise, a poster we made of her with one of the loves of her life, Magnum P.I. Although she didn't end up with Tom Selleck—my fraternity brother, he went to U.S.C., of course, and I went to the University of Tennessee many years later—in fact, she never met him, her retirement will allow her to spend more time with the actual love of her life, Tony, and her daughter Anne, who is just a wonderful, wonderful young lady.

Jenny, thank you so much for everything you have done for me and the folks of east Tennessee. I always appreciate you. You were always good to my folks, and you have been my buddy. You will be missed.

#### CELEBRATING VICTORY OVER CORRUPTION

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today I am celebrating justice and a victory over big corruption in Ohio.

A jury in Federal court in Ohio found guilty and convicted the Republican Ohio Speaker, Larry Householder, and former Ohio Republican Party Chair, Matt Borges. Guilty of illegally selling off the Ohio statehouse through bribery, conspiracy, racketeering, and wire fraud, involving taking \$61 million in bribes through FirstEnergy's dark money fund called Generation Now.

Their conspiracy involved forcing \$1.3 billion of FirstEnergy losses on the ratepayers of Ohio. Shame on them.

What they were not tried for but should have been is their dangerous malfeasance in allowing FirstEnergy's nuclear plant in my district to operate in the most dangerous manner, creating the most serious set of nuclear accidents in this country's history since Three Mile Island.

Onward justice. Onward new clean energy for Ohio and America.

#### FEDERAL EXCISE TAX IS BURDENSOME

(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, the Federal excise tax is a 12 percent surcharge on the price of new heavy duty trucks, truck chassis, trailers, and semitrailers used for highway haulage. It was first instituted more than a century ago to pay for World War I for the wartime mobilization.

The FET is the highest percentage excise tax on anything in this country. The tax has really outlived its original purpose, unless you like spending. It disincentivizes truckers and trucking companies from purchasing new up-to-date rigs because the tax can add as many as \$20,000 to even \$30,000 on a high-end rig by itself, just for the tax.

Ever-increasing Federal and State emissions regulations often make it necessary for truckers to buy new trucks, especially in my home State of California. This burdensome tax hinders the ability of our truck drivers to acquire the most modern, safest, highest tech equipment.

Repealing this tax would make it easier to ship goods across the country at lower prices for consumers, saving businesses and consumers money. It will also allow our trucking fleet to modernize at a lower cost to the poor folks who are just trying to do their job.

At a time when our economy is reeling from inflation and high prices, Congress must do all it can to lower costs for small businesses and consumers.

□ 1715

#### COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JUDY HEUMANN

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of Judy Heumann, an internationally recognized activist and trailblazer who I am also fortunate enough to have called a friend.

As a young girl in a wheelchair, Judy was denied entry to her local public high school because she was considered a "fire hazard."

Years later after graduating from college with a degree in education, she was again discriminated against and denied the opportunity to teach. She challenged the city in court and went on to become the first teacher in a wheelchair in New York.

Her passion for justice and inclusion persisted throughout her lifetime. I was honored to work with her to craft and pass disability legislation of my own in recent years.

Judy once said: "Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to save lives."

I will continue to pursue disability advocacy in Congress with her quote and her legacy top of mind and close to heart.

#### SUPPORTING A STRONG PARTNER- SHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND TAIWAN

(Mr. AUCHINCLOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a strong partnership between the United States and Taiwan.

I recently returned from a bipartisan congressional delegation to Taiwan, where I met with the president and government officials of both parties, business executives, and military commanders.

The scope and severity of the threat from the Chinese Communist Party is crystallized in the Taiwan Strait, which is under constant harassment. But so also does Taiwan's vibrant democracy and strong economy represent opportunity in the Indo-Pacific.

The United States and Taiwan should help support each other's democracies through collaboration on countering disinformation and propaganda. We should also strengthen one another's economies through increased flows of trade and investment by negotiating expanded market access, common rules, and the end of double taxation on Taiwanese investment in the United States, which is especially critical as we seek to revive U.S. semiconductor manufacturing.

As the United States seeks to strengthen our position in the Indo-Pacific, let us commit to Taiwan as a long-term ally.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF ALFRED HOFFMEISTER

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Alfred "Al" Hoffmeister.

Throughout his life, Al had shown incredible dedication to his community and his country. He was a World War II veteran, serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps, and later in life when he returned home to California, he worked as a metal trading manager at Kaiser Aluminum of Oakland, California.

Al worked for Kaiser for 25 years, retiring in 1989. In his retirement, he was a strong advocate for our community's youth, serving as a leader with the YMCA and the Concord American Little League board. He also worked with the Boy and Girl Scouts of America.

Al was dedicated to his faith and was an original member of the St. Bonaventure Catholic Church in Concord where he served as an usher for many years.

Sadly, Al passed away recently, but he will be remembered for his humility, hardworking nature, and devotion to his family, his community, and this country.

Please join me in honoring Alfred Hoffmeister for his many contributions to our country.

#### GROWING THREATS AND HARMS FROM THE RIGHTWING JUDICIARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all

Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to convene this Special Order hour today to discuss the growing threats and harms that we have seen from our rightwing judiciary.

From student loan debt to reproductive justice and rights, millions of Americans have found their rights stripped or their prosperity or their interests impeded.

Indeed, I stand here today on behalf of the more than 40 million working- and middle-class Americans eligible for relief under President Biden's student debt cancellation plan, who might never see that relief because a Republican-appointed Supreme Court majority chose to take up a politically motivated lawsuit brought by a network of rightwing billionaires.

To the 1.7 million Pennsylvanians afraid that SCOTUS could rip up your debt relief, I feel your pain.

As a Black woman and a first-generation college student, and a Pell grant recipient that is still in a mountain of student debt myself, I am right there with you—angry and exhausted by a system that is failing us miserably.

Like you, every single decision I make is shaped by the obscene amount of student debt I carry because I had the audacity to pursue a higher education—as the daughter of a working-class single mom from the Mon Valley, indeed.

Millions of folks can't start their lives because of the suffocating burden of their student loan debt; and yet in 2023, only 44 out of the 435 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives carry any student loan debt.

While I hope there are more of us with that lived expertise, I want the rest of my colleagues to hear about the people closest to the pain, like my sister Representative AYANNA PRESSLEY would say.

For poor and working-class folks, crushing student debt is preventing us from buying homes, for saving for retirement, starting businesses, starting families, and building generational wealth.

For all Black college graduates who owe an average of \$25,000 more in student loan debt, and for all Black women who carry the highest student debt burdens, it is an even greater barrier.

It is an economic crisis for all poor and working-class folks, and Black and Brown folks are getting hit the hardest.

In western Pennsylvania, the student debt crisis is a regional crisis holding our future hostage by preventing students and workers from accessing the

training they need for our region to become the innovation hub and leader in STEM that hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs depend on right now.

Under President Biden's plan, one in four Black borrowers will see their debt fully eliminated, and nearly half of all Latino borrowers will be entirely debt free.

This is our best shot at addressing the systemic inequities that have forced communities of color to take on higher debt for the chance at a college degree.

On the day the Supreme Court began hearing the case that could rip away relief from this crisis, I met with a group of student organizers from western Pennsylvania on the frontlines of this fight.

Those students who camped out overnight in front of the Supreme Court in the rain to have their voices heard told me what student debt relief would mean to them. They asked me what insight I had in my first 2 months in Congress. I told them these problems are systemic, systemic both in who is behind these attacks and who they hurt the most.

My community will be punished for getting an education for the same reason half of this country doesn't have the freedom to control our bodies and our futures, and the same reason a Federal judge in Texas is expected to outlaw abortion pills.

It is the same reason that corporations are allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money on elections and the same reason corporate PACs are able to come in and blow Black women out of the water when we run for office.

It is because an unelected rightwing Republican-appointed judiciary is waging a full-on assault on our freedoms.

Those folks whose forebearers were enslaved are the folks who today are shackled by tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loan debt.

It is those who are denied access to adequate maternal healthcare by the wealthiest country on Earth that are subjected to forced birth. It is those whose loved ones fled violence for a better life but are separated from their children and locked up at the border.

The most marginalized folks bear the brunt of the reactionary rightwing judiciary's attacks—Black folks, Brown folks, trans folks, poor folks, and otherwise marginalized folks.

Our communities deserve leaders who will fight back as hard as the organizers back home fight every single day; leaders who carry student debt, who have depended on food stamps, leaders who lack access to reproductive healthcare on Medicaid, who went to public schools that were divested, who lived with poor air quality because of unregulated industry. We deserve those sorts of leaders in office to tackle these issues.

That is why I was sent to Congress.

Now I will yield to my colleagues with the lived expertise to fight for you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. PRESSLEY.)

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and my dear friend from Pennsylvania for making this Special Order hour a priority. I know your constituents and the people of this country appreciate it.

I rise today on behalf of the people across our Nation seeking access to abortion care. While there are many forces and people at work who seek to spread lies and misinformation, let me set the record straight. Abortion care is routine medical care. Abortion care is safe. Abortion care is a fundamental human right. Abortion care is healthcare.

One in four women in this country seek abortion, women that you know, love, work, and worship with. Right now, a pending court case in Texas aims to restrict access to medication abortion across the entire Nation.

Over 40 percent of abortion care in this Nation is medication abortion, a simple and safe protocol where patients are prescribed two medications to end a pregnancy.

A single man—a far right Trump-appointed judge in Texas—stands to make a decision that could strike down the FDA's approval of one of these drugs and restrict access to care to millions; a frightening precedent.

Imagine for a moment if a judge was poised to strike down access to another safe and effective drug routinely used as part of medical care like Tylenol or Advil. We would call it out for exactly what it is: inappropriate overreach, overreach that will cause harm.

Mifepristone was first approved by the FDA more than 20 years ago and has since been used by more than 5 million people to safely end their pregnancies both in their homes and at health centers.

Earlier this year, following dedicated advocacy by myself, my colleagues, and advocates across our Nation, the Biden administration permanently lifted in-person dispensing requirements for mifepristone, allowing retail pharmacies to stock the medication and further expand access to medication abortion.

This medication is safe and necessary. Not only should abortion care be available, but what type of abortion care a patient receives should be decided between a patient and their doctor, not some partisan court.

At a time when abortion access is already out of reach for millions after the fall of Roe, taking mifepristone off the market would further compromise abortion access across the country, including in States where the right to an abortion is protected, like my home State of Massachusetts.

This case is another emboldened rightwing judge trying to take away our bodily autonomy. Again, mifepristone is safe, it is effective.

For people across our Nation who are seeking care, you can go to

AbortionFinder.org to navigate how to get the medical care which you seek.

This is a deeply volatile and hostile time to be a person in America in need of reproductive healthcare.

I will never stop pressing for our full humanity and bodily autonomy. My body, my choice. Your body, your choice.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, I thank, once again, my dear colleague, SUMMER LEE of Pennsylvania. We are so glad you are here in Congress. Again, I am grateful for this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of over 40 million people from all walks of life burdened by our unjust student debt crisis—the grandparents, the Black and Brown folks, women, students, members of the LGBTQ community, workers, parents, teachers, young people, and more, everyone who organized, mobilized, and shared their stories to make the case for national student debt cancellation.

After years of advocacy, President Biden heeded our calls. With the stroke of a pen and clear legal authority, he canceled student debt and opened a path for millions to get ahead, make ends meet, build generational wealth, grow their families, purchase homes, and narrow our shameful and growing racial wealth gap.

But callous and spiteful Republican officials and their allies on the courts are, once again, poised to stand in the way of progress. They see the transformative power of canceling student debt. They see how sorely needed it is. They see how powerful it is. So, they are choosing obstruction, even for their own constituents.

While this far-right Supreme Court deliberates and continues to leave our borrowers in limbo, let me make it plain: Student debt cancellation will change and save lives. While there are those who seek to play with your life, Democrats are here fighting to change and save lives with policies that go as far and as deep as the hurt is.

The President's authority to cancel student debt is clear. The administration's legal case is sound. The only question is, will the Supreme Court uphold the law? It must.

Mr. Speaker, 40 million people stand to benefit from this transformative plan, including over 100,000 people in my district, the Massachusetts Seventh. We can't stop and we won't stop fighting to deliver this critical relief the President promised.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important topic that we are here tonight to discuss, the rightwing reactionary judiciary.

I will start by reading a quote that was set out in an article written by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein and published in *The Washington Post* back in June 2022. They cited President

George Washington, our Nation's first President, in his 1796 Farewell Address, where he cautioned that American democracy was fragile. "Cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government," he warned.

He was warning us about what could happen to our democracy. The article that Woodward and Bernstein wrote in June 2022 was talking about the scandal that they broke back in the 1970s involving Republican President Richard Nixon and how he tried to subvert the electoral process by burglarizing the Democratic Party headquarters and, by espionage, sabotage, and false information, how he used that to arrive at his opponent in the general election, how he subverted the Democratic primary process to select the candidate that he wanted to run against, and he was successful.

It was Woodward and Bernstein who revealed what is known as the Watergate scandal, which led to the resignation of Richard Nixon. In his wake, he left a game plan as to the weaknesses in our democracy that he was able to exploit.

Then along comes Donald Trump. This is what the June 2022 article was about, how Trump took it to the next level, another Republican President. What Trump tried to do in subverting our electoral process was to actually subvert the electoral college count process, first by the fake electors scheme and then using them to force the Vice President to stop the count and send the fake electors and the electoral count back to the States so that he could win the election.

When that failed, President Trump dispatched an armed and violent mob to the Capitol to actually stop the counting of the electoral votes. That is our history.

It was the United States Supreme Court that stopped Richard Nixon, but if it had been Donald Trump and today, I am not sure that today's Supreme Court would have stopped Trump. Why? Because our Court has been captured by rightwing extremists. Our United States Supreme Court has been packed by Donald Trump and MITCH MCCONNELL with extreme rightwing ideologues who are intent on taking us back into an archaic time in the Nation's history when women had no rights, Blacks had no rights, anyone other than White males in America had no rights, not equal rights.

This Court was packed with these rightwing extremist ideologues when MITCH MCCONNELL refused to engage in the appointment and confirmation process for Merrick Garland 10 months before the Presidential election, announcing the theory that there is a new rule that, during an election year, we can't appoint a new Justice to the Supreme Court.

That position, caused by the death of Scalia, was left vacant until such time as Republicans won the Senate and

Donald Trump came into office and was able to appoint a Justice to the Supreme Court that should have been a Justice appointed by President Obama.

He got two more picks during his years, and he picked Federalist Society judges. He had made a campaign pledge to appoint them. These are Justices that come from a political organization, the Federalist Society, with political ideals and objectives.

They have three new Justices appointed. They already had two that were on there, so now we have a supermajority, every one of which belongs to the Federalist Society and every one of which was selected by the Federalist Society for their seat. These Justices have a program that they are carrying out. It is the Republican playbook.

One of the things they want to do is take away power from President Trump, not because of any lofty ideal but simply because it is President Biden who announced the policy.

One of the things that is getting ready to happen is the Court is prepared to strike down student debt relief for millions of Americans, despite the fact that the clear language in the statute allows for the President to have that discretion. The Supreme Court will find a way, as the lower courts have done, to prevent the President, this President, from exercising that executive authority.

It is another demonstration of why the public has lost confidence in the United States Supreme Court. With that loss of confidence in the Court comes a loss of confidence in the rule of law.

Justice and the rule of law are bedrocks of our democracy. If the people lose confidence, it doesn't work.

What is the solution to this dilemma that we face? I have a couple that I have proposed. One would expand this United States Supreme Court, unpack it. They say that you are trying to pack it, but no, we are trying to unpack it. They packed it. Republicans packed it. We are trying to unpack it.

It is for the sake of our democracy that we need to pass legislation that unpacks the Court and expands it with four additional seats.

Something else we need to do is that we have reached a point where lifetime tenure does not work anymore. We have Federalist Society Justices on the Court and Federalist Society judges throughout the Federal courts who have lifetime tenure. They are young. They can change our society for the next 30, 40, 50 years, so we have to have reform in our courts.

We have to expand the ranks of the Federal district court judges, the Federal circuit court judges, and, yes, the United States Supreme Court.

We need to add term limits to the United States Supreme Court so that there is a regular infusion of modernity and sensibility to the Court so that it does not grow old, stale, and stodgy. I have legislation that would create such a regimen of 18-year term limits for Supreme Court Justices.

Last but not least, you would be surprised to know that, unlike other Federal court judges who are bound by a code of conduct, the Supreme Court Justices are not bound by a code of conduct.

That is how you can have a situation where a Supreme Court Justice can have a wife that is taking money from interests with cases before the Court, putting that money in the pocketbook of that spouse which is enjoyed by her husband sitting on the Supreme Court.

They don't have a code of ethics, so we need a code of conduct that is applicable to the Justices on the Supreme Court, and I have legislation that would provide for that, which needs to be passed as well.

I know, Congresswoman LEE, that I have exhibited extreme wokeness today, and I apologize to this body for descending into wokeness, but I wouldn't really want to be any way other than woke.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK).

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us to address the floor this evening, and thank you to the Congressional Progressive Caucus for holding this Special Order hour.

I rise today on behalf of the millions of Americans whose student loan debt balances are at risk of escalating due to the rightwing reactionary judiciary.

Hundreds of borrowers from across the country gathered in front of the Supreme Court on February 28 to express their discontentment. West Palm Beach resident Kayla shared: I think President Biden's loan forgiveness plan is a good thing for college students who don't have funds to pay for college. Indeed, this is a good thing.

One important aspect of the debt relief program is that it addresses the unequal burden that student debt has placed on borrowers of color.

□ 1745

Mr. Speaker, 40.2 percent of White undergraduate students use student loan debt to pay for their school, while 50 percent of Black students use student loan debt. In addition, approximately 72 percent of Latinx students take on debt.

By providing up to \$20,000 in debt relief to borrowers that received a Pell Grant, President Biden's plan would allow one in four Black borrowers to see their debt fully eliminated, and nearly half of all Latinx borrowers to be entirely debt free.

This is so important because Black and Brown college graduates owe an average of \$25,000 more in student loan debt than their White counterparts.

Furthermore, Black bachelor's degree holders have an average of \$52,000 in student loan debt. Over 50 percent of Black student borrowers report that their net worth is less than they owe in student loan debt.

The disparity between the amount owed by Black and White borrowers

quadruples 12 years after graduation. Four years after earning their degrees, 48 percent of Black students owe an average of 12.5 percent more than what they borrowed. After that same time period, 83 percent of White students owe 12 percent less than what they borrowed.

In addition, women hold nearly two-thirds of outstanding debt in this country. Black women carry the highest student loan debt burden of any race or ethnicity.

We must address the unequal burden that student loan debt has had on borrowers of color. I ask the majority of the Supreme Court to turn against the right-wing, reactionary agenda and to deliver for the 40 million people in June.

We rely on our education systems. Education and higher education is one of the pivotal equitable points that we have in this country. We must protect it for everyone.

The destiny of our country is dependent on everyone being able to matriculate through school, pursue their education, and give back to this country that we love so much.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for holding this Special Order hour. To the Congressional Progressive Black Caucus, and the anchor, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. LEE), it is an honor to be here this evening to speak on behalf of the student loan borrowers. But it is also a special honor to be here tonight with my Howard University alumna.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues with the Congressional Progressive Caucus for raising up the danger of the far-right court.

I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY), my colleague.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago this Monday, in the middle of the night, without warning, four Louisville Metro Police Department officers bashed in the door of a 26-year-old woman's home.

Startled and terrified, as any of us would be, she and her boyfriend leapt from bed. Her boyfriend grabbed his gun and fired a single shot in the direction of the intruders.

In the barrage of return fire, she was killed in her home, cowering by her bed from intruders she never knew were police.

Then silence.

It took 2 months before we learned that that woman was Breonna Taylor.

Laurie Anderson said:

You die three times. First, when your heart stops. Second, when you are cremated or buried. And third is the last time someone says your name.

Say her name. Breonna Taylor.

Breonna Taylor was a caregiver from a young age, an EMT who saved lives; a young woman looking for her American Dream, not just a nameless victim.

Breonna Taylor was loved and had so much to give. Breonna Taylor's math

teacher called her brilliant, saying, "she had a beautiful mind and she was very helpful to others."

Breonna Taylor was someone's sister. Breonna Taylor was someone's girlfriend.

Breonna Taylor was someone's daughter.

Breonna Taylor was someone.

Breonna Taylor was 26 years old, with dreams, plans, and her whole life in front of her.

We will never forget how Breonna Taylor died.

We also have to remember how she lived; that is the life that was taken that night: 26 years old, convicted of no crime, charged with no crime. Didn't even know it was the police who had broken into her home.

It took 2 months before we even knew to say Breonna Taylor's name.

It was 2 months of the LMPD hoping Breonna Taylor's death would be swept under the rug.

We know that LMPD was there without probable cause on a deliberately falsified warrant.

We know that this extreme tragic, horrific killing was not an isolated incident.

We know this because yesterday, 5 days before the third anniversary of Breonna Taylor's death, the United States Department of Justice released a report that unequivocally found disturbing patterns of systemic racism within the LMPD.

This report is based on an exhaustive, nearly 2-year-long investigation into the LMPD. But there is nothing in these pages we didn't already know.

Still, the report is damning. It is heartbreaking to read.

However, this report is a beginning, and not an end. We should seize this moment to right past wrongs and protect everyone in our community.

But let's not forget, Breonna Taylor should be alive today. Her mom would rather have Breonna alive than a report.

Breonna Taylor's death should not have been the catalyst for change and accountability. We should have addressed this a long time ago.

Breonna Taylor deserves justice and, while we can't bring her back for her family and friends, we can help keep Breonna's spirit alive.

We should remember Breonna Taylor as the funny, bright, caring, and loving young woman she was, and carry her memory with us as we take action to demand real, lasting change.

Let's say her name. Breonna Taylor.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman MCGARVEY, particularly for lifting up and saying the name of Breonna Taylor here in this space and recognizing the continued struggle for accountability for the thousands, now, way too many, victims of police violence whose names we could not say in this short hour that we have here today.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania for her leadership. Hopefully, we have been able to share some very important thoughts. I thank her for presiding and leading us on this very important discussion.

We have a Constitution. I hope that I will be holding the Constitution in my hand in a short while.

Obviously, Article I is the Congress. We are to represent the people of this Nation.

Article II is the executive branch.

Article III are supposed to be unfettered, unbiased courts, the Federal courts. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes all over the region, all over the Nation. They are what we call Article III courts.

Certainly, there are State courts, and there are county courts, and there are city courts, but the Federal courts are the place where we believe that there should be the infrastructure of justice, where I can come, where no place else, I might find justice. I can even be pro se. That means, without counsel.

But the laws and the responsibility of the judges, clearly, are to make me feel that I will be receiving justice.

So it saddens me, as a member of the Bar, and someone who, through law school, viewed the Federal judiciary in the highest esteem.

I was an Earl Warren training fellow. Earl Warren, the Supreme Court Justice, Republican, appointed by Eisenhower, I recall, and who presided over the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education that opened the doors for many to be able to have an education that was not segregated, and many other cases that the Court presided over.

But there was something unique that, I believe, that held our consciousness. We always felt that the courts would render truthful judgments, or that they would look for the truth, and that they would discern, between the plaintiff and the defendant, who was telling the truth; and they would rule in justice and the law for those who told the truth.

I hold in my hand the Constitution that also includes the Declaration of Independence, where we all are created equal, with certain inalienable rights, of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I loved what the Founding Fathers said: The power under the Constitution will always be in the people and it is entrusted for certain defined purposes.

It is important to note that even though the men who have said these words were not perfect, the words epitomize who we are; that no matter who you are, what "unempowerment" you may have, you should have power in the courts. You should have power in this country, by the very essence of the Constitution.

So I watched with intensity, as a Member of this body, and as a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, all of the confirmation hearings where they were selecting a United States Supreme Court Justice.

What struck me most of all, to the last two Justices before Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, is the questioning after questioning to ask them, was Roe v. Wade sound law?

Was Roe v. Wade precedent?

Was Roe v. Wade, for them, a standard of the whole question of precedent that is a basic premise, tenet, basic foundation of the justice that we look to have rendered; that we can count on the Supreme Court's decision; whether it is Brown v. Topeka Board of Education—maybe that is not solid law, that you can no longer segregate, discriminate in education at all levels; break the chains of segregation in the one-story, one-room schoolhouse with no books, for the Colored children, the Negro children, the Black children, in that instance, which the South proceeded to try and go around by having these private schools.

So, your whole life is around getting justice; and Roe v. Wade was to indicate a stop to back-alley abortions; women dying; being maligned and disgraced; maybe not able to have children ever again. We were able to perceive that that was really a medical decision, and it was a decision that a woman's faith, doctor, and family would help her make; that no one could police your body; that Roe v. Wade was the law of the land.

Yet, in a matter of months—I thought it was just simply seconds—puff went Roe v. Wade, even in spite of the testimony of the two Justices promoted to the Supreme Court by the former President of the United States that, over and over again, in answer to the question, they said, Roe v. Wade was precedent. That it was the law of the land.

They were under oath, and they did not tell the truth because what happened is that when the Dobbs case came, they immediately jumped to their personal views, their personal beliefs, their personal dislikes, their personal cause and crusade, and ruled abortion, as defined by the Ninth Amendment, of which Roe v. Wade was based on, the right to privacy, unconstitutional.

I don't even know how that could be.

□ 1800

And States like Texas followed with the most heinous of abortion laws that you could ever imagine, criminalizing providers and criminalizing women; creating a havoc in our State; people having to flee across State lines because they could not get the honest and safe medical treatment needed, that was dictated by their physician, their healthcare provider; threatening healthcare providers; threatening Planned Parenthood; threatening clinics; misinterpreting medical procedures as abortions.

I, frankly, believe this MAGA extremism is the very reason why the great tsunami that was expected in the 2022 election did not happen. They did not pay attention to, in 2021, 861 women

died of maternal causes in the United States. In the U.S., two-thirds of those pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, and for every pregnancy-related death, there are 70 pregnancy-related near-death experiences.

It is extremely important that we tell it like it is: Women fleeing to get healthcare; doctors being arrested; nurses being arrested, under law, because of Dodd; and, of course, women themselves being threatened.

Let me just read some headlines that came about through this Dodd decision where the Justices would not adhere to the truth and the honesty of their testimony during confirmation hearings under oath where they said that Roe v. Wade was precedent.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article entitled: "Five women sued Texas over abortion access."

[From BBC News, Mar. 9, 2023]

FIVE WOMEN SUE TEXAS OVER ABORTION ACCESS

(By Holly Honderich)

Ms. Zurawski spent three days in intensive care, leaving the hospital after a week, the legal action says. The ordeal has made it harder for her to conceive in future, she said.

The four other women had to travel outside Texas for an abortion.

One of the plaintiffs, Ms. Miller, said: "Healthcare should not be determined by some politician with no understanding of medicine or the critical role that abortion care plays in pregnancy. How is it that I can get an abortion for a dog but not for me?"

Two of the women's fetuses had conditions that meant they did not develop a skull, according to the lawsuit.

These cases "are just tip of the iceberg", the Center for Reproductive Justice's Ms. Northup said.

Their 91-page complaint asks for a ruling that clarifies Texas' law and its stance on "medical emergencies" for pregnant women facing grave health risks.

"With the threat of losing their medical licences, fines of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and up to 99 years in prison lingering over their heads, it is no wonder that doctors and hospitals are turning patients away—even patients in medical emergencies," the lawsuit reads.

According to a survey by the Pew Research Center conducted last year, 61% of Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most circumstances, though the opinion poll found public support for the procedure fell as a pregnancy progressed.

Texas' legislature, which is under Republican control, has been at the forefront of anti-abortion legislation, becoming the first state to enact a near-total ban.

And the state will be home to another abortion battle soon: a Texas judge is expected to rule on a case about abortion pills this week.

The Trump-appointed US District Court Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk will decide whether Mifepristone—one of the two drugs used in an abortion pill regime—can continue to be sold in the US.

Five women who say they were denied abortions in Texas despite facing life-threatening health risks have sued the state over its abortion ban.

Texas bars abortions except for medical emergencies, with doctors facing punishment of up to 99 years in jail.

According to the lawsuit, doctors are refusing the procedure even in extreme cases out of fear of prosecution.

In a statement, the office of Attorney General Ken Paxton said he would “enforce the laws” of the state.

Mr. Paxton “is committed to doing everything in his power to protect mothers, families, and unborn children”, the statement said.

The Center for Reproductive Justice has filed the legal action on behalf of the five women—Ashley Brandt, Lauren Hall, Lauren Miller, Anna Zargarian and Amanda Zurawski—and two healthcare providers that are also plaintiffs.

The pro-choice group said it is the first time pregnant women themselves have taken action against anti-abortion laws passed across the US since the Supreme Court last year removed constitutional protection for abortion rights.

“It is now dangerous to be pregnant in Texas,” said Nancy Northup, the centre’s president on Tuesday.

With Ms. Northup outside the Texas Capitol in Austin on Tuesday, the plaintiffs—two pregnant—shared harrowing stories of their previous, lost pregnancies.

According to the legal action, all were told that their fetuses would not survive, but were not given the option of an abortion, which they described as “standard medical procedure” throughout the country and in the state before Texas’ ban came into effect.

Ms. Zurawski, 35, said she had become pregnant after 18 months of fertility treatments. She had just entered her second trimester when she was told she had dilated prematurely and that the loss of her fetus, whom she and her husband had named Willow, was “inevitable”.

“But even though we would, with complete certainty, lose Willow, my doctor could not intervene while her heart was still beating or until I was sick enough for the ethics board at the hospital to consider my life at risk,” Ms. Zurawski said.

For three days, trapped in a “bizarre and avoidable hell”, Ms. Zurawski was forced to wait until her body entered sepsis—also known as blood poisoning—and doctors were allowed to perform an abortion, according to the lawsuit.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, one of them could not get care until they got blood poisoning, when the doctor was willing to see them.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article from The Washington Post: “Woman says she carried dead fetus for 2 weeks after Texas abortion ban.”

[From the Washington Post, July 20, 2022]

WOMAN SAYS SHE CARRIED DEAD FETUS FOR 2 WEEKS AFTER TEXAS ABORTION BAN

(By Timothy Bella)

Marlena Stell’s happiness turned to heartbreak after she found out about 9½ weeks into her pregnancy that she had suffered a miscarriage.

After she was told last year that the fetus did not have a heartbeat and she no longer had a viable pregnancy, the Texas woman asked her doctor to perform a dilation and curettage, or D and C—a standard procedure to remove the fetus following a miscarriage to help prevent infection or long-term health problems. Stell had the procedure after her first miscarriage in 2018 in Washington state, when she felt so much pain that she could not walk, and she wanted to go through with it again before trying again for a second child, she told The Washington Post.

But Stell was even more devastated to learn that because the procedure is also used during abortions, which a Texas law had greatly restricted, the doctor did not want to perform a D and C. Stell would be forced to

carry her dead fetus for two weeks before she could find a provider to give her the medical intervention that physicians had denied her.

“My doctor had said that since the heartbeat bill had just passed, she didn’t want me to do a D and C. And she asked that I try to miscarry at home,” said Stell, 42, of Conroe, Tex. “It just was emotionally difficult walking around, knowing that I had a dead fetus inside.”

Stell, a beauty influencer with about 1.5 million YouTube subscribers, is sharing her story in the weeks after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade as a reminder that the restrictive abortion laws adopted by states such as Texas could affect those who have suffered miscarriages.

“People need to understand how these laws affect all women, even cases like mine,” she said. “I feel like it’s very dangerous for government of any type to be intervening in a woman’s care because there’s multiple reasons of why she may need a procedure.”

Stell’s story is an example of what physicians and patients could face when it comes to care for miscarriages and maternal health almost a month after the Supreme Court’s ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization.

As The Post recently reported, doctors in multiple states say the standard of care for miscarriages, as well as ectopic pregnancies and other common complications, are being scrutinized, delayed, or even denied. In Texas—where Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) is suing the Biden administration over federal rules requiring abortions to be provided in medical emergencies to save the life of the mother—some doctors are reporting that pharmacists have begun questioning patients who they suspect could be using their miscarriage medications for abortions.

“It is traumatizing to stand in a pharmacy and have to tell them publicly that you are having a miscarriage, that there is not a heartbeat,” Rashmi Kudesia, a fertility specialist in Houston, told The Post on Saturday.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists estimates that more than 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage, the spontaneous demise of a fetus that commonly happens because of chromosomal abnormalities.

The methods of treatment for miscarriage and abortion are the same. A miscarriage can be treated using a mix of drugs such as mifepristone and misoprostol, or through a D and C, which includes dilating the cervix and clearing tissue from the uterus.

After her initial miscarriage in 2018, Stell and her husband had their first child, a daughter, in April 2020. When the couple moved from Washington state to Texas in 2021, they were trying to have a second child, Stell said, even though she knew she was at high risk because of her age, previous health problems and miscarriage. So when she found a doctor who specialized in high-risk pregnancies last summer, she was thrilled to find out that the early weeks of her pregnancy looked promising.

“I was about 7½ weeks pregnant, and everything looked great,” Stell said. “The doctor said there was some movements and fluttering, but everything with the pregnancy looked normal.”

Because she was at high risk, Stell was asked to come back about two weeks later for a follow-up appointment in late September 2021. Because coronavirus-related guidelines prevented her husband from accompanying her in the room, she planned to record on her cellphone what the doctor had to say about the ultrasound.

“I’m getting ready to record because I’m excited,” Stell recalled. “But as soon as she started the ultrasound, [the doctor] got really silent, and was just looking and looking

and didn’t see the fluttering or the movement or anything.”

Stell got the news she feared: She had lost the pregnancy. She was told she had a blighted ovum, which is when a fertilized egg implants in the uterus but does not develop into an embryo.

She was shocked to learn that the common procedure she got so easily in Washington state was anything but simply obtained in Texas. She said she was told she needed additional proof, or multiple ultrasounds, showing that her pregnancy was not viable before she could get a D and C. Nine days into carrying her dead fetus, the sorrow of her first miscarriage had returned.

“I felt like a walking coffin,” she said, fighting through tears. “You’re just walking around knowing that you have something that you hoped was going to be a baby for you, and it’s gone. And you’re just walking around carrying it.”

Stell eventually found an abortion services provider in downtown Houston who would give her the D and C on Oct. 4, 2021. After she was met by antiabortion protesters, Stell opened up about the experience on her YouTube channel. While Stell, a cosmetic brand owner and CEO, usually talks about makeup education and other beauty and lifestyle content, the influencer’s video on her miscarriage showed a different side.

“I get so angry that I was treated this way because of laws that were passed by men who have never been pregnant and never will be,” Stell told her followers at the time. “I’m frustrated, I’m angry, and I feel like the women here deserve better than that. It doesn’t matter what side of the fence that you want to sit on, laws like this affect all women regardless of what situation you’re in, and it’s not right.”

When Roe was overturned last month, Stell said it was her duty to share her story with those who might have similar experiences. After Stell told her story to CNN this week, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) was among those to cite her as an example of how “Republican politicians are risking women’s health and safety.”

Stell said on Twitter this week that the experience almost 10 months ago is the reason she and her husband have decided that they would not try to have additional children in Texas. She told The Post that her two miscarriages put her at higher risk for a third.

“Our fear is that if I get pregnant and miscarry again that something will happen,” she said. “We just do not feel confident at all that we’ll get the care that we need in Texas if something were to happen.”

If the miscarriage hadn’t happened, Stell and her husband would have had a boy in May. They would have named him Milan. She thinks about what could have been when she reflects on her own story, and how she said she was made to feel as though she had done something wrong when she was already grieving.

“It’s added trauma on top of trauma,” she said. “It’s important to share this story so people know how these laws affect all women.”

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, is there freedom in this Nation? Because of the Texas abortion law, her wanted pregnancy became a medical nightmare. The truth had been taken away.

“Texas woman almost dies because she could not get an abortion.” These are not willing activities. These are not persons who do not have loving relationships with children. These are not individuals who, in fact, are, if you will, persons who want to rush for an



abortion. These are individuals who have had children, who have loving children at home, but have a right, with their medical provider, to deal with their medical procedure.

It is important to take note of the fact that what happens in the courts can truly save lives or cause a loss of life.

In addition to due process under the Fifth Amendment, equal protection of the law under the 14th Amendment, and the right to privacy that this little book holds, the courts play a major role.

I thank Congresswoman LEE for leading us in a discussion that challenges the question of truth, the question of unbiased, unfettered decisions, and the question of adherence to the Constitution.

Right now, we are living in a land where the precedent of *Roe v. Wade*, the right to choose—I never call it the right to an abortion. It is the right to choose, and the medical procedure that you choose should never be limited.

How sad that we have this litany of women, only a few of the thousands impacted because the court refused to adhere to justice and truth.

We, as Members of Congress, need to be able to be the people's representatives, and we must find a way to bring dignity and truth and justice back to our courts.

I, for one, will continue to work to make sure that this is a living document, the Constitution, and that those who are poor or not can find their way to a courthouse under Article III and find justice, freedom, righteousness, and the opportunity to live freely without discrimination in education, to have civil rights and voting rights, and to be able to have jurisdiction over your own body as a woman and to adhere again to a law by the Supreme Court that said, in *Roe v. Wade*, that women do have that choice. For me, it is the law of the land, and Dodd is a masquerading factor of bias and untruth.

Mr. Speaker, I join my Congressional Progressive Caucus Colleagues here today to speak about the danger that is among us as a result of far-right rhetoric that has resulted in the take down of women's rights in America.

Republicans have continuously proven that they want to police women's bodies and take away our reproductive freedoms.

In the first week of the 118th Congress, extreme Republicans launched attacks on reproductive freedom, intruding on medical decision-making, and keeping their promise to criminalize abortion nationwide with no exceptions.

Now a Texas Federal Judge is attempting to get rid of the much-needed abortion pill.

Women's health is an issue that is very near to my heart.

With reproductive rights being stripped from us, maternal mortality at an all-time high, and violence against women that has surged since the pandemic started, there is growing concern that women's health will continue to suffer on a massive scale.

This attempt to remove medically necessary health care is a disgusting misuse of power and it extremely negligent.

Maternal mortality is an issue that continues to plague the United States health care system.

In 2020, 861 women died of maternal causes in the United States.

In the U.S., two-thirds of those pregnancy related deaths are preventable and for every pregnancy-related death, there are 70 pregnancy-related near-death experiences.

It's extremely important that we remove barriers in health care that may be contributing to these deaths.

Maternal mortality is caused by several issues such as cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, blood clots, and complications of labor and delivery.

Maternal mortality is caused by several issues such as cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, blood clots, and complications of labor and delivery. And Black Maternal mortality is a National Health crisis.

Women's health is an issue that is very near to my heart. With reproductive rights being stripped from us, maternal mortality at an all-time high, and violence against women that has surged since the pandemic started, there is growing concern that women's health will continue to suffer on a massive scale.

I thank the Congressional Progressive Caucus colleagues for having me here today to talk about this important issue.

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman. I thank, once again, my colleagues at the Congressional Progressive Caucus for raising the dangers of this far-right court but also for their leadership, their commitment to fighting back, to finding solutions and finding pathways to restore and protect the freedoms of millions of Americans and to create ethical pathways to opportunity.

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

#### INFLATION IS DEVASTATING TO AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, just getting ourselves set up. I was going to yield some time to a fellow Member for a moment, but I think that Member has disappeared.

We are going to try something tonight. And for anyone watching and listening, if you don't like lots of geeky conversation and lots of math, this isn't your night to watch.

We are going to try to walk through a handful of concepts. One is one we have been discussing with our economic team.

Look, I am blessed to be on Ways and Means, but I also am the senior Republican for Joint Economic. I have a handful of Ph.D. economists, and we have been sort of trying to understand what the Federal Reserve is doing on inflation and why it is becoming so difficult to crush inflation in our society and in our economy.

Then we are going to walk through some numbers so there is an absolute

understanding of what has happened, particularly to the working middle class in this country, demonstrate how much poorer they are today than even a couple years ago in purchasing power and the reality of just how devastating inflation is to people, people that save, people that tend to have a retirement, actually people who are just trying to make a living and survive. We are going to show some charts just demonstrating how much poorer Americans are.

Then we are going to do some walking through Democrat policy, particularly from the last couple of years, and sort of show the fact that their math is not lining up with what we are seeing and their math is not lining up with other economists. The reason for that is, at the same time, we are going to also talk about how much debt has been created in the last couple years, that what was demographics—we are getting older as a society—and actually what was just spending priorities of the left.

Much of this we are running and gunning. We got the President's budget a couple hours ago. We are trying to assemble an understanding. But just a demonstration of here are the tax hikes, here are the spending priorities, and trying to also run ahead of the propaganda mills that often what our modern media is on: "They are going to cut the deficit." No, they are not. They claim \$3 billion. Well, there is like \$3 trillion over the 10, but it is a time where there is going to be \$20 trillion of borrowing. So, okay, that is if every tax hike goes in and it does not slow down the economy.

So, first off, a concept. The Federal Reserve, when they are raising interest rates, when they are rolling off the book of bonds, all of the holdings they have, even mortgaged-backed paper, what are they doing? No, seriously, I need everyone to sort of think this through. What are they doing? They are basically pulling liquidity out of the economy by removing the cash. Because in the previous couple of years, pandemic, whatever excuse you want to give, this body pumped massive amounts of liquidity.

Here are checks; we are not going to ask you to work; you don't have to participate in the economy. All that cash is sitting out there. Then you hit everything from supply chain issues to manufacturing issues to people saying: I get money, I don't have to participate in the economy, so I don't have to work.

You get inflation. Remember our high school economics classes. What is inflation? Simplest definition: Too many dollars chasing too few goods and services.

So why has the interest rate hikes and the pulling of liquidity out—because, remember, the Federal Reserve is doing more than raising interest rates. They are letting their balance sheets roll off, and by rolling that off, that should also be stripping much liquidity—why isn't it working? There