

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Republicans are bringing a bill to the floor that seeks to ban trans women and girls from participating in women's sports. This bill is morally wrong, it is cruel, and it is discriminatory.

President Biden has already promised to veto it, but when the United States House of Representatives passes a bill, it sends a message. If you are a trans kid right now, the message coming from our government is that you don't belong.

This leads to bullying, isolation, depression, and even suicide. I want to speak to the trans kids in America today. I want to say you belong in the American family. We are proud of you. Democrats must not be quiet. We must speak clearly to uplift and protect trans kids. We must recognize that a harm to trans kids threatens a harm to everyone, and we must embrace our diversity as a unique American strength that has the ability to unite us.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this cruel discriminatory bill tomorrow.

□ 1730

ONE STEP CLOSER TO UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE AND THE AMERICAN DREAM AND PROMISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. RAMIREZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, tonight, I am convening a Special Order hour for the Congressional Progressive Caucus, where we are focused on our shared commitment and shared urgency to make comprehensive immigration reform and universal healthcare our reality. We are one step closer to doing so for DACA recipients, or Dreamers, who have been waiting and are still waiting for us to make good on our long-overdue commitment to a pathway to citizenship for them.

Healthcare is a human right, full stop. I know saying healthcare is a human right can feel more like a slogan or a hashtag than a call to action that anyone will actually do something about. I have certainly felt that myself and felt frustrated by the simplicity of that call to action contrasted with a deflating lack of change.

Some people think it is too lofty and that we should start smaller. What

does it mean, though, to start smaller? When it comes to healthcare, that means dividing people into who is worthy of healthcare and who is not.

I will take a quick moment to thank everyone who doesn't give in and doesn't give up on envisioning a better world that has more than enough resources for all of us because I know that you get pushback, doubt, and de-traction. It is those big, lofty goals that keep us rooted in our why and keep pushing us for better.

That is why, last week when President Biden announced his proposal to expand eligibility for Medicaid and Affordable Care Act benefits to Dreamers, we all celebrated.

DACA first started in 2012, over a decade ago. There are approximately 600,000 DACA recipients living across the United States. They are healthcare workers, they are teachers, they are parents, and they are neighbors.

About 35,000 Dreamers call my home State of Illinois their home. One of them is my husband, Boris Hernandez, who has lived in the U.S. since he was 14 years old. He has now lived in the U.S. more than he ever lived in Guatemala.

Collectively, Dreamers pay \$9.4 billion in State and Federal taxes every single year.

For all these years, access to healthcare through the ACA or through Medicaid hasn't been available to Dreamers. That is a policy failure with life and death consequences.

Right now, DACA recipients can mainly only access healthcare if their employer provides it. Otherwise, they are largely reliant upon the State they happen to live in to have a State-funded healthcare program.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, more than a third of DACA recipients don't have any healthcare insurance whatsoever. We know what happens when you deny access to affordable healthcare. People avoid going to the doctor as much as possible because they can't afford to go. Health conditions that may only need preventive care or some kind of medication go undiagnosed, untreated, and get worse and worse until it is a life or death emergency.

Before I came to Congress, I had the deep honor of serving in the Illinois House of Representatives, where I led legislation with the Latino Legislative Caucus, the Healthy Illinois coalition, and Governor J.B. Pritzker to create what is now State law that expands Medicaid coverage to all residents age 42 and up regardless of legal status. This made Illinois the first State in the entire country to provide healthcare coverage to immigrants, regardless of status.

By the time this passed into law, it reflected multiple rounds of negotiations. If I could have, I would have had eligibility start at the age of 19 to ensure that there was no break in healthcare coverage for our children who are now adults.

I now look forward to working with President Biden's proposed expansion of healthcare coverage to Dreamers and it going into effect so that we can continue to build on the work we have done in Illinois and across the country.

Hearing even one story of what expanding healthcare coverage for just one person has meant to them and their loved ones underscores what is true for all of us. We must recognize the importance of providing access to quality healthcare and services for all people, regardless of their citizenship status.

Olga, a resident in Illinois, who, because of this new State law, could access medical coverage for the first time, graciously shared her story with me. She said: "I was born in Mexico, and I came to Chicago in 2004. I came to the United States for a better life for my family. I encountered many obstacles, such as language, work, housing, school for my children, and health. I had to get a dental treatment, but due to the cost, I put off going. Then, it got complicated and more expensive. I managed to save \$8,000, but I had to choose between two options: pay for the dentist or pay for my son's university. Having access to medical coverage is a true relief because now I can go regularly to the doctor."

I share Olga's story because her story is the story of many others, hundreds of thousands of immigrants, whether DACA or otherwise, who live all across our country and still don't have the ability to go to the doctor when they need it.

The immediate and tremendous impact she experienced once affordable healthcare was no longer denied is the same immediate and tremendous impact President Biden's proposal will have on all Dreamers.

It feels obvious to say, but the benefits of access to affordable healthcare for someone who is a DACA recipient are the same for all immigrants. It is not just Dreamers.

Yet, here is just one example of how we continue to divide and break up the immigrant community into politicized categories that we then use to weigh different members of the immigrant community against each other. Who is and isn't worthy of citizenship? Who is and isn't worthy of healthcare?

I say all this as the only Member of Congress in a mixed-status marriage. What I want to make absolutely clear is that our families and our communities cannot be conveniently divided into documentation status and, therefore, neither can our deservedness of healthcare as a human right.

That is why The New York Times' reporting this week that multiple staff at HHS warned the administration that migrant children were being hastily connected to sponsors who put them in grave danger cannot be seen as separate.

More than 250,000 migrant children have come alone to the United States in the last 2 years alone, and thousands

have ended up in grueling, dangerous, exploitive jobs all across the country, in complete violation of child labor laws. They are away from their families and caregivers. They are not in school, and they are doing graveyard shifts in factories.

You can't tell me that is healthy. You can't tell me these children and their families they have been separated from are not deserving of safe, caring sponsors who would prioritize their healthcare, education, wellness, and a pathway to citizenship.

I commend President Biden for his proposal for Dreamers. It marks a significant step forward for immigration reform, demonstrating our commitment to protecting Dreamers by providing them with access to quality healthcare and services.

But we must recognize this moment, which has been preceded by years of moments, that the brokenness of our immigration system is a failure we share on both sides of the aisle. Let us use this moment to rededicate ourselves to this shared responsibility to fix it humanely, comprehensively, and immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my colleagues, who will highlight the tremendous impact that President Biden's proposed expansion of healthcare to Dreamers will have and our shared responsibility to make universal healthcare and comprehensive immigration reform a reality after all these years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because I am ecstatic that we have a President who has chosen to lead with love and compassion when it comes to other humans in this country.

I thank President Biden for having the heart and courage to do what his predecessor never did: show respect and dignity to Dreamers and DACA recipients, who came to the United States through no choice of their own and are full-fledged Americans in every single way but one—on paper.

The Biden administration's move to expand healthcare coverage to DACA recipients is bold and historic and follows Democrats' commitment to helping immigrant communities that have spent their lives living in the shadows of this country.

There are over half a million Dreamers in the United States who were extended a literal lifeline through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, and over 20,000 DACA recipients who call my home State of Florida their home.

Though DACA has been a wonderful beacon of hope for so many, through his action, President Biden has acknowledged that more can be done to help this vulnerable community.

For years now, DACA recipients have been living with a weight on their shoulders. Constantly worried about losing their job means the end of being able to afford care, forcing them to

stay in working environments that perhaps mistreat them, backed into a corner where they have to decide between getting to see a doctor or having to push through the pain and the illness.

Let me be clear. No one should have to make that decision between access to medical care or putting food on the table or having a roof over their head. Healthcare in this country is and should be a human right for all people by virtue of being alive.

That is a scenario that is all too familiar for DACA recipients. I have read stories of young people from my hometown in central Florida who have gotten healthcare for the first time in their lives only then to lose that care because of a layoff or job cuts.

I am hard-pressed to find a working person or working family that can afford to pay \$500 or more a month for health insurance. I have always said that if you love somebody, you want them to have healthcare and a good-paying job that treats them fairly. If you love somebody, you want them to succeed and thrive. If you love somebody, you want them to be healthy and to be able to see a doctor or medical professional if, God forbid, they become sick.

Dreamers are people. DACA recipients are people. Immigrants are people. They deserve to be able to get their care through Medicaid and the ACA just like anybody else in this country.

We still have so much work left to do to ensure that we actually create a humane, compassionate immigration system that offers a real pathway to citizenship for the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers and DACA recipients who call Florida and this country home, but this action is a beacon of hope.

To the Dreamers across the country who are listening right now: Hear me when we say we won't stop fighting, not just for you but with you. Home is here. Healthcare is a human right.

I thank all the organizers, young people, advocacy groups, and allies across the country who have spent years fighting for this very moment. Let's get to work and continue to provide for all people.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB).

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and applaud the President. The President's recent announcement of a plan that would allow more than 800,000 Dreamers across our country to have access to healthcare is to be applauded.

I also thank Congresswoman RAMIREZ for her dedication and leadership and for hosting this important Special Order on this critical issue.

I stand here before you as a child of immigrants but also the daughter of southwest Detroit, where I lived with 20 different ethnicities and backgrounds. Yes, many of my friends, many of my classmates, were Dreamers.

We know that many of the issues we work on in this Chamber are con-

nected. Immigration is connected to healthcare. Right now, in our country, we have a great need for comprehensive immigration reform and to ensure that every person has access to adequate healthcare in terms of coverage and care delivery.

As somebody who worked on immigration issues and immigration justice, I know that our system is broken. Too many of our families are living in fear. Too many Dreamers, our neighbors who only know the United States as their home, continue to live a life where their rights could be stripped at any moment.

I know how important it is to fix our broken immigration system instead of tearing families apart. Dreamers right here in our country deserve permanent protections and a dignified pathway for citizenship.

No human being, Mr. Speaker, is illegal. We must protect our neighbors. We must protect those who are here simply because they want to have a better quality of life.

We have immigrant communities, again, across our country who simply want a pathway to citizenship, a pathway that many of our parents, grandparents, and ancestors were afforded, a pathway that we enjoy and are proud of.

□ 1745

Why do many of my colleagues want to block this pathway in the land of opportunity?

I am not sure. However, I know I applaud the administration's action to ensure that many Dreamers have access to healthcare. I implore President Biden and many of my colleagues in this Chamber and in the Senate to reject divisive and xenophobic immigration policies that, again, do not move our country forward in a way that we can be proud of.

We cannot and should not embrace rhetoric and policies that only seek to pit communities against each other, tear families apart, and put immigrants in harm's way here in the United States and in their country of origin.

We must choose to be a welcoming country. We must work to create a robust pathway to citizenship. We must enact comprehensive immigration reform. We must ensure that every person in our country has comprehensive adequate healthcare. We must also pass Medicare for All.

Mr. Speaker, I am ready to get to work, and I cannot thank my amazing Progressive Caucus members enough, especially Congresswoman RAMIREZ, for this important Special Order.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman RAMIREZ for her incredible leadership and energy to provide a needed voice on an issue that is so critically important.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud President Biden and the Biden/Harris administration for the incredible steps that

they have taken. Thank you for believing and demonstrating action and not just words.

I firmly believe in delivering permanent protections for Dreamers because immigrant rights are, in fact, human rights. President Biden's announcement to expand healthcare coverage for DACA recipients will protect some of our most vulnerable neighbors, family, and friends.

Dreamers strengthen our economy and enrich our workplaces, our schools, and our communities. Over the last decade, DACA has brought stability, possibility, and progress to more than 800,000 people—these are our family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Even though this is their home, they are being denied the basic rights of healthcare, something that everyone, regardless of their station, should enjoy.

Secretary Becerra's new proposed rule will allow DACA recipients to purchase qualified health insurance coverage. This is a step toward justice for folks who have been forced to pay sky-high, out-of-pocket costs for healthcare, or worse still, to go without lifesaving treatments because they are just too expensive.

Fixing our broken immigration system will save lives and we must keep fighting to give Dreamers a permanent pathway to citizenship. A permanent pathway to citizenship. These actions from the Biden/Harris administration are vitally important for so many Louisianians in my home State and people across the United States who need these vital protections.

Any policy is penny-wise and pound-foolish if we don't take into consideration all people. When people can't get affordable health insurance, they don't get it. It is that simple. When they can't afford it, they don't get it. It puts the burden on our emergency rooms. It ends up costing more money on the back end. Emergency room visits are far more expensive, and it is much more difficult to provide the needed care that individuals should have.

Preventative care is a heck of a lot cheaper than after the fact. Providing resources is a heck of a lot cheaper on the front side than after the fact. Having a process that is clear for people who are here to abide by is a heck of a lot cheaper than after the fact.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this proposed rule being finalized, and I stand firmly with my friends in the Progressive Caucus. I stand firmly with the White House in providing resources that will deliver permanent protection for Dreamers because, again, immigration rights are, in fact, human rights. They are rights that we all should stand firm for, that we all should stand together on, that we all should recognize as a human issue and an American issue.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I too dream of that day. You see, half of my family is still undocumented. Half of my family has lived here for almost 40 years.

My uncle, Max Guerra, will be turning 70 in 2 years. He works at a diner. He works 65 to 70 hours a week, standing there preparing meals for others to be able to enjoy.

I asked him: Tio, you are almost 70, why are you still working so much?

He says to me: Delia, I have to make sure that all my four boys get through college. I have to help them pay for college because I have no way of guaranteeing that I will be here tomorrow or the day after because of my immigration status. I have to work like today is the last day that I will be able to provide for my family. My uncle, Max Miliano Guerra, is not alone.

As we think about this broken immigration system and as we think about healthcare, I have to go back to that moment where I proudly stood on the statehouse floor and passed legislation to expand healthcare coverage to people who are undocumented and over the age of 42.

I remember receiving a letter from a young woman who had just become a citizen. Her letter to me said, Representative RAMIREZ, I wish you would have been in the statehouse just a few years before. I wish you would have been able to pass the legislation you passed a few years ago because if you had done that my father would still be alive today.

Her father was in this country for almost 40 whole years working at factories and small businesses, giving to the community, contributing every single day, paying taxes. He got very sick. He got cancer but had no healthcare. Her father worked until he could no longer work, which was days before he died because he had no access to healthcare in a country he contributed to for almost 40 years.

This is why when we talk about healthcare coverage and when we talk about this moment and immigration, we can't separate the issues. We understand that it is past time for us to be able to have a pathway to citizenship. It is past time that DACA Dreamers, like my own husband, have access to healthcare. They are healthcare workers, they are teachers, and during the pandemic they kept you and me alive. This is exactly why I applaud President Biden's administration and this proposal to finally provide healthcare to those who every single year provide more than \$9.4 billion of tax revenue to this country we love.

This is exactly why standing here as a Member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, as the daughter of a woman who crossed the border when she was pregnant with me in her first trimester—a woman who said to me, Delia, water was just a privilege. It was the ability to be able to keep on walking and recognizing that I needed you to have the life I never had. I needed you to wear your first pair of shoes before the age of seven, unlike me. I needed you to be able to get more than a third grade education. I risked everything in 1,811 miles of desert, walking

40 years ago so that you, inside my womb, could be born in a country where you would have the opportunities I never had.

That woman today is a citizen because of amnesty of 1987. One thing that woman never imagined was that her daughter, that life she fought so hard to keep alive in the Rio Grande, would be standing before you today in the same fight for immigration reform that so many for the last 40 years have had.

This is why we understand that we have to get past parties. We have to be in a position to be able to expand healthcare coverage to people regardless of their legal status.

As Congressman CARTER said, we need to recognize that it is actually quite more affordable to provide preventative care than to care for someone when they are nearly dying in a hospital, which is exactly what we saw in the State of Illinois.

By expanding healthcare coverage to people in Illinois, hospitals no longer have to take in people who are dying because they didn't get preventive care. This is why this proposal and this proposed rule will make such a difference—not just to Boris, but to all of those children that came so young and are no longer 13, 14, 15, they are 38, 39.

It has been the honor of my life to be sworn into the U.S. Congress. I recognize the responsibility we have and the commitment of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to ensure that we stop talking about immigration reform and do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of going back home and having to look at people that look like me, that carry my blood, and tell them: Maybe next Congress. Maybe next time. Maybe convince this person or convince the other.

It is past time that this country that I love, that I was born in, where I get to serve in Congress as the first Latina from the Midwest that proudly I represent, that we finally do what is right and what we all know is not just a moral obligation. It is also one that allows us to be able to continue to contribute and see the economic development and the contributions of our immigrants here in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues who have joined tonight's Progressive Caucus Special Order hour. What is absolutely clear to me is that the power of our collective voices, united in making comprehensive immigration reform and universal healthcare a reality now, not later—and not only for some while other members of the immigrant community suffer—must be our responsibility. I know that when there is a will there is always a way.

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

SINGING THE PRAISES OF
JENNIFER WICKRE

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

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity from leadership to be able to spend a little time this evening on what I define as a very, very important subject.

Mr. Speaker, in the rancorous world we live in these days there is a tendency for people who observe the United States Congress from afar to think that we have become a shrill, loud, unfocused rabble of people. Perhaps we have lost our sense of humanity, and even worse.

Tonight, I would like to talk about an individual, a person, a set of circumstances that refute that falsehood and the popular perception.

What do I mean by that?

Mr. Speaker, not many months ago, we, on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, both Republicans and Democrats alike, majority and minority, received some—what can only be described as devastating news—that a member of our family—and when I say family, I mean, our congressional family, the people who serve in this building, and in these buildings, and serve in the personal offices, and serve in the committee offices, and serve in the leadership offices.

These are people who are the individuals that you have known for months, years, or maybe sometimes decades that you have jostled with on issues and that you have crossed-referenced notes and you have debated with for extended periods in the various roles. Those are the people I define as our congressional family, and they could be Democrats, they could be Republicans, they could be senior staff, senior Members, or the most junior of all.

□ 1800

That devastating news that I mentioned, and not all that many months ago, was that the deputy staff director for the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, the majority deputy staff director, Jennifer Wickre, had been diagnosed with cancer.

Now, that is always the most intimidating and shocking news that anyone could receive. Tonight I don't just want to talk about that—and we will because it is important to the struggles she is facing—but I want to talk about the person that this member of our congressional family has been and is. No matter what the struggles of the next few weeks or months turn out to be, she will always be a member of our family in our hearts and in our minds.

Jennifer Wickre—Jenn, as we call her—is originally from Medford, Oregon, a town in the southern part of the State. Her parents ran a local law practice. They are the kind of salt of the earth sort of people whom you

would want to live next door to you, Mr. Speaker.

Jenn earned a bachelor's degree in government from Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California, and a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

In her tenure, she has served in a variety of roles. I think the role that I speak of this evening is her role in Congress. She started her career on Capitol Hill as a scheduler for Congressman Jerry Lewis in 2003.

Now, for those of us who remember that wonderful individual, Jerry Lewis was a senior member of Appropriations and would be chairman of the committee. Jerry served in numerous senior leaderships in positions within the Republican Conference. He was a great Member to work for and to learn from.

Jennifer worked as a scheduler. Mr. Speaker, as any of you who have any interaction with Members of Congress or their offices know, one of the most difficult staff positions is to be a scheduler because you have got to balance the Member's limited time with the needs of the spouse, with the needs of the district staff, with the needs of the office staff, the committee staff, and all the important constituents back home.

She performed well—as all of us who know her would have expected nothing less—and she became a senior legislative assistant.

Now, she worked off the Hill for a little while, but then she came back to the Hill to be the professional staffer on the Research and Technology Subcommittee in 2015. She worked there diligently for 7 years and became the staff director of the Research and Technology Subcommittee and ultimately a senior policy adviser to Chairman Lamar Smith.

After I had the opportunity, she became the deputy staff director for the overall group.

Jennifer's personality—Jenn, again, as we all call her—was the kind of person who no matter who you were, the most senior member of the committee, the most junior member of the committee, the most well-informed member of the staff, or the newest member, she treated everyone with the same kind of respect and decency and would take the time to reason through and discuss with people the merits of their logic and also sometimes the challenges that that presented. She was ever the diplomat—ever the diplomat.

Now this evening, I think we have a few of the folks whom she has touched in this Congress, and they would like to offer a thought or two. I will yield shortly to several of my colleagues.

Before I do that, let me, again, return to the point. We are a congressional family. Jenn is one of our own, and she faces challenges that hopefully none of us will ever face. She has done it with the most amazing grace, strength, and determination. She has decided her own course of action, and that is always to be respected.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), who has had many opportunities to work with our wonderful friend.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Sadly, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I wish we weren't here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jennifer Wickre, a public servant and trailblazer in the science, space, and technology community.

When I got here in 2013, I was put on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee then, and I have been on it a long time. I have got to see a lot of staffers, though I think the gentleman from Oklahoma has, too.

I have had the privilege of getting to know Jenn during my time on the committee. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, her enthusiasm, her brilliance, and her commitment, as the chairman laid out, were second to none.

Her smile—she always laughed at my jokes. She always laughed at my jokes. I think she was trying to make me feel better. God knows I wish she felt better right now. I wish she felt better.

People don't often realize how impactful folks like Jenn are at drafting and moving the needle on very important legislation that has impacted the science, space, and technology community. Likewise, they don't often recognize or realize what the staff means to us when you have got somebody like Jenn—what a jewel. What an absolute jewel.

She is an avid Oregon Ducks football fan. I don't know why she wasn't for the Dallas Cowboys. I am trying to figure that out. Go Ducks.

She sings in the Congressional Chorus and loves to walk her rescue mutt named Finn. With a lot of the good humor that she had, the dog could have been named Huckleberry Finn for that matter.

All at the young age of 42 Jenn has achieved more than most people do in a lifetime. She should be proud of that, and I promise her that we are not only proud, but we are grateful.

We thank Jenn for the time she has invested in our great Nation, and we want her to know that we are rooting for her, we are praying for her, and we are in her corner.

We expect God to do a miracle from what little power we have in this House of Representatives—as I believe this country was ordained by God—to the throne of grace that He would heal Jenn.

Cancer sucks, and Miss Jenn is fighting the good fight. I pray she is at peace knowing the positive impact she has had not only in the Halls of Congress but on every single person and staff member she has come in contact with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge all my colleagues to keep Jenn and her family in their prayers.

I want to end with a Bible verse from Deuteronomy 3:16 that says: Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or terrified because of them; for the Lord