

the killing to stop. We cannot sit idly by as Americans continue to live in fear.

Last week, I joined my colleagues in signing discharge petitions to demand House votes on several gun safety measures.

At the same time, House Republicans pushed through a measure to weaken regulations on stabilizing braces for firearms, an accessory used in several mass shootings across our country over the last decade.

Enough is enough. We demand an end to gun violence and a safer future for our “keiki,” “kids.”

RECOGNIZING THE SMALLEST CITY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the smallest city in the United States of America: the city of Parker in Armstrong County. Nestled in the beautiful Allegheny River Valley, Parker City is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

What started as a village with nearly 1,000 people grew almost overnight to become a booming oil metropolis with a population of more than 20,000 in the late 1800s.

For the next 10 years, Parker became a place of great activity with more than 1,000 oil wells, saloons, stores, hotels, and machine shops.

While the oil boom was short-lived, the spirit of Parker was strong. By the 1890s, the population of Parker was back to nearly 1,000.

Madam Speaker, today Parker is a great retreat for those wanting to enjoy the quiet river setting as a peaceful escape from urban life. The population stands at about 900 people, making it the smallest city in the USA.

Parker is celebrating 150 years as a city on July 15. They will have fireworks, parades, local vendors, and a river float.

Madam Speaker, if you ever find yourself in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains along the banks of the Allegheny River, I encourage you to visit Parker.

RECOGNIZING HENRY BERG-BROUSSEAU

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCGARVEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their re-

marks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to tell everybody about one of my former interns in the Kentucky State Senate, Henry Berg-Brousseau.

Henry was truly one of my favorite interns. He was one of those guys who was bright, curious, and had a smile that could light up the room.

In Kentucky, in the State senate, the Kentucky Capitol Annex is behind the capitol and we would make that walk across to the State capitol, just as we make the walk across here in Washington, D.C., from the House office buildings.

Henry was incessant, constantly peppering me with questions, asking me things: What are the policies we can do? What are the fights we can have? How do we make progress? How do we get things done in the seat of government?

Henry was brilliant. He was kind, ambitious, and really funny. Most importantly, Henry was a fighter. He had to be. Despite having two loving parents and a wonderful family, Henry's life wasn't easy. He was severely bullied as a kid and he battled with the trauma and the depression that went with it.

It wasn't coming from the kids either. Adults from all walks of life bullied and berated him incessantly until the end. Unfortunately, that end came way too soon.

Last December, on December 16, Henry died by suicide. He dedicated his life—his young life—to helping people like him. His work and legacy will continue to benefit youth all across this country. I can't help but think how much he would have given to this world if he had just been allowed the chance to exist and exist in peace.

Henry's mom, Karen, recently joined the President and First Lady on the South Lawn of the White House to celebrate Pride Month. That is not where she wanted to be. You never stop being a parent. She wants to be with her son.

Henry's story is truly tragic but, unfortunately, it is not unique. We can all agree that what I just described is a tragedy. It is a tragedy to lose a young person, a tragedy to lose somebody with so much potential, a tragedy for any parent to have to bury their baby.

Yet for some, when I tell you that Henry was trans, that tragedy goes away. His humanity is erased. Henry is erased. I can't accept that.

We can't bring Henry back, but we can continue his fight to end the suffering that he and way, way, way too many others have endured by people who refuse to acknowledge the humanity of trans people and try to criminalize their very existence.

More than 80 percent of transgender people have struggled with suicidal ide-

ation, and nearly half have attempted suicide. The Trevor Project estimates that one LGBTQ+ child attempts suicide every 45 seconds in the United States. Every 45 seconds a child tries to kill themselves—a child.

What has our response to this tragedy been?

In the first 6 months of Congress, House Republicans have passed legislation that actually makes it worse, that further harms LGBTQ+ kids, from the so-called Parents Bill of Rights, which unfairly targets our most vulnerable youth, to the national bans that deny decisionmaking abilities of doctors, coaches, and parents.

We have tried to complicate these issues. I want to make it really clear and really simple: Stop being mean to kids. Our children are not pieces in a political game. These anti-LGBTQ+ bills have real-life consequences.

Instead of legislating with the kindness and compassion that our kids need, House Republicans' legislative priorities have been overreaching, callous, and cruel.

We are not alone in that blame. Unfortunately, Congress isn't the only institution passing these heinous, heart-breaking, and harmful laws. State legislators across the country are following suit and are trying to legislate LGBTQ youth out of existence.

In my home State of Kentucky, Republicans in the general assembly made things worse and overrode the Governor's veto of one of the most oppressive trans laws in the Nation at the eleventh hour.

Senate Bill 150 tramples the rights of children and parents with exclusionary bathroom policies. It overrules the judgment of teachers by barring the discussion of gender identity or sexual orientation, and it barricades doctors from their patients by banning gender-affirming care, which is often life-saving care. It is cruel and it is not without consequence. It is hurting people across the Commonwealth of Kentucky and across our country right now.

Madam Speaker, I find it especially ironic that these overreaching policies come from the party of small government.

Last week, we kicked off the beginning of Pride Month. The impetus for pride goes back to Stonewall when the LGBTQ+ community transformed the fight for equality in the United States.

Pride Month is meant to be a joyous celebration of free expression, equality, inclusion, and resiliency. In just the time that I have been in public office, we have made huge strides, both big and small, at every level.

We have cemented marriage rights for everyone. In Kentucky, 24 cities have a fairness ordinance. Nationwide, 21 States have restricted conversion therapy. Also, 38 States allow trans people to update their name and gender identity on their drivers license, and 27 States allow the same for birth certificates.

Alongside members of the LGBTQ+ community and advocates, we have worked hard to move the needle toward a more loving, accepting, and inclusive world. What has been accomplished is important, but there is still so much to do. There is still so much more to fight for.

We are fighting for safety. We are fighting for equality. We are fighting for freedom. We just recently marked the seventh anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, where 49 people were killed just for being themselves.

Madam Speaker, on days like today when we talk about these issues, when it should be a celebration, I still can't help but think about some of the heartbreak. Today, I can't help but think about Henry. I think about the world that he was fighting for—a more compassionate, understanding, caring place for everyone.

These extremist Republican attacks against LGBTQ people are wrong. They are unacceptable. They are inhumane. Let me be perfectly clear: The words and acts coming from our colleagues are not harmless. They are not small. They are hurting innocent people and they are hurting children.

If we don't take a stand and change how we legislate, then we will see more kids like Henry—bright, energetic, enthusiastic, kind, caring, compassionate people who will struggle; who, despite the love from friends and family, will see no way out as these attacks become too painful to bear.

Madam Speaker, here in this Chamber, in this body, in life, our job is to fight for people. Our job is to fight for people in the margins. Our job is to fight for people like Henry and to fight to protect everyone's rights. It shouldn't matter who you are. It shouldn't matter who you love or where you come from. Everyone deserves to be treated equally.

□ 1815

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Vermont (Ms. BALINT) for her remarks.

Ms. BALINT. Madam Speaker, I just want to start by giving a heartfelt thank you to my colleague, MORGAN MCGARVEY, a dear friend whose family has become close to my family. Our wives have become close.

It just means so much to me to be standing here on the floor of the House. It is a place where I never thought I would be in a million years not just because I am a child of an immigrant and a working-class mom but because I am a gay American.

I knew at 11 years of age that I was gay. I also knew that it was not something that was accepted by my family or my community or my teachers or my friends, but it didn't matter. That is who I was.

I also knew that my calling in life was to alleviate suffering, first as a teacher—I taught middle school for many years—and then as a State legis-

lator, and now in Congress. That has been the through line of my life. It is using whatever position of power I have in order to alleviate suffering in all its forms.

Madam Speaker, I just want to tell you what it is like when you know at 17 years of age what you are called to do, and you do not see a path to do it, not only because I had nobody in my family who had ever run for office, but it was because as a gay American I knew the world had not changed enough for me to be able to safely run for office.

Even when I decided to run, it terrified my parents. They did not want me to be so public about being not just gay but having a family, a wife and children. Nor did they want me to open our lives up to the world to say: This is what a family can look like and not just survive but to thrive.

For the first few months when I was elected to be a State senator, my dad would start almost every single phone conversation with some version of: Have they vandalized your house yet?

Have they slashed your tires yet?

Are you getting a lot of hatred?

I would say: Dad, if I am getting that, I am not going to tell you because I don't want you to be worried.

Even today, I have to remind them constantly: Don't read the comments. Do not read the comments on social media about me because you will not see me reflected in those comments, and you will feel so heartbroken that your daughter, who is finally doing what she was always called to do, is going to be on the receiving end of hate. For what?

For standing up for marginalized people in my community. Sometimes that is members of the LGBT community. Sometimes that is the rural poor in my community who need me to stand up for them. Sometimes that is people of color who are being discriminated against or just regular families who can't put food on the table or pay for affordable housing. I would be a target for doing the work of an elected official, not because I am doing my job poorly, but simply because of who I am.

Madam Speaker, I will tell you who I am. I am a very proud American citizen who contributes deeply to her community, her State, and her Nation.

That will never matter to some people. All they will see is that I am a gay American and, therefore, I am suspect and not to be trusted.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, this is the greatest honor of my life to be here in Congress. I never thought that I would get here.

It sickens me to my core when I sit in committee hearings or I listen to discussions on the floor and people say things about me and my community that are not just rooted in ignorance but often in hatred, distrust, and fear.

It doesn't have to be this way. It really doesn't.

Madam Speaker, in your communities, regardless of your Congressional

District, you have gay Americans and trans Americans. They may be in your family, and they don't feel comfortable telling you because they know how you feel. They see your votes and they hear what you say about us on C-SPAN.

MORGAN just gave voice to something that is at the heart of it for me and my constituents which is: Where is your love?

Where is your compassion?

I have had the opportunity to talk to two different sets of parents of trans kids who have come to the Capitol to say: Our own government is talking about our children as if they are demons and as if they are monsters. They are dehumanizing our children, and they are blaming us, the parents, saying that we are terrible people because we love our children, we support our children, and we want them to get the care that they need and that they deserve.

They said in both these meetings: We need you to speak for us because we are not in those rooms and we are not in those Halls when people are saying not just insensitive things but cruel things and uneducated things about our lives.

We have people in our LGBT community who are thinking of leaving their home States right now because they fear for their lives and for the lives of their children. It is not hyperbole.

Yesterday, I was at a leadership meeting for some young people who had won a wonderful award. I went to speak to them, and afterwards one of the moms came up to me. She gave me a hug.

She said: You don't know what it means to my kid to see you here as an openly gay woman serving in the House of Representatives.

She said: I am fearful for her, not because I don't love her and support her, because I do, but I fear because of the hatred that she receives on a daily basis.

She said: Not just from the community, but from elected officials.

As Morgan said, these are children.

Almost every week I have families come to visit me in Vermont. Some are parents of trans kids, some are parents of gay kids, and some are just parents of kids who want to be part of something powerful like elective government.

I can't tell you, Madam Speaker, how proud I am every time they say to me: I am so glad that I voted for you. I am so glad that you are sticking up for all of our kids.

They say: That gives me hope for the future that we are going to ride out this backlash.

What we see right now is what we saw when I was a kid, and instead of being on the receiving end, instead of it being about trans kids, it was about gay kids, and we were the bogeyman.

I hear some of our elected officials on TV talk about how they are protecting families by passing legislation like "don't say gay." This is absurd because these kids in Gen Z are so far ahead of

us. What they see are people and not labels.

I think about my own family. If we were not in Vermont, if we were in Florida or in Texas or somewhere else where people are passing these ridiculous bills about “don’t say gay,” my own children would be in school being ashamed or being made to feel ashamed of their family.

This is about real people. This isn’t about some slogan.

Madam Speaker, it shouldn’t be about playing to your base so that you can raise more money or drive people to the polls because you want to make them fearful of Americans who are just living their lives. That is all they want. That is all I ever wanted.

It is Pride Month, and we threw a big party in Vermont last week for pride. One of the young men who helped me organize it told me that the day before this event his car was completely and totally trashed and vandalized. It had hateful homophobic messages all over it.

I was so frustrated and sad that this was how we were ushering in pride. Even more than that, I hated that I could sit with him and say: I have had the same experience. I had to have my car repainted because someone decided to scratch “dyke” into the side of my car.

So I was grateful that I could sit with him, and I thought: Have we learned nothing?

Just the other day in Vermont a poet was harassed at a poetry reading because he is a man of color and he is gay. They basically chased him out of a poetry reading because somehow his poetry was going to be so dangerous for the people of that town.

We are talking about ideas.

Why are we policing ideas?

We have seen this before.

So I am here today, Madam Speaker, because I want you to know that pride is about going through the hard stuff too. It is about not glossing it over with rainbow flags, parades, drag queen story hours, and the things that are celebratory—yes, they are—but it is also about acknowledging that some people are trying to drag us back. They are trying to erase our experience, our identities, and our families.

I could not be more proud to not just represent my community but also all of the Vermonters who support me, who elected me, and who said: Yes, yes, we see the work that you do. We see the compassion that you bring to your work, and it doesn’t matter to us that you are a gay American. You are the right person for the job.

I need my colleagues here to understand that this is about real people. It is about real families. It is about promise and possibility. It is about every single kid believing that they have the right and opportunity every other kid has. It is about how families feel regardless of what their family looks like that the government is not going to come after them and infringe on their personal freedoms.

Pride is a month about freedom, about living your life true to yourself and to have a heart wide-open to the world and inviting other people in to celebrate.

We should have enough room in our hearts. We should make enough room in our hearts. We should be driven by compassion, love, empathy, and basic human dignity.

That is why I am standing up today. Madam Speaker, I love Representative MORGAN MCGARVEY, and I thank him for his leadership.

□ 1830

Mr. MCGARVEY. Madam Speaker, I can’t do better than the Congresswoman from Vermont, Congresswoman BECCA BALINT, who is not just an extraordinary person with incredible intellect, with incredible ability, with one of the biggest hearts I’ve ever seen, but as you have heard tonight, she is also so brave and so courageous. Do not let the little frame fool you. She is who you want in your foxhole.

I think her story shines a spotlight on something that is true in Vermont, it is true in Kentucky, and it is true across this country; that despite the incredible steps and strides we have taken and made, there is still so much left to do.

Congresswoman BALINT, I know you have been called to public service. I know you have alleviated, not only in Vermont, people’s suffering. You are going to do it here, and you are going to do it for every kid in the country. Thank you also for showing the way.

There are kids in this country tonight who see your speech and your example and know it is possible for them too, which is good. It is not good—it is great. It is a great thing because look at what we are talking about here.

We are talking about kindness and compassion, empathy, caring, inclusiveness, equality. Equality. When we don’t talk about those things, it is the opposite. It is hatred. It is division. It is inequality.

I know in my State, in Kentucky, 24 cities have passed a fairness ordinance. What is a fairness ordinance?

It simply means you can’t be discriminated against in your housing, your employment, or your accommodations. That is the fancy way of saying you get to live where you want to live. You get to work where you want to work. You get to eat where you want to eat.

We couldn’t pass it on a State-wide level in the Kentucky General Assembly.

What does that tell people? It says, in fact, they want to allow that discrimination. Why? Why? Think about the real and practical implications that has.

I talked about Henry, my intern; so full of promise, so full of life. He died by suicide on December 16. It was a Friday. His mom called me as I was sitting in a coffee shop meeting with somebody. I went over to her house that night and gave her a hug.

I knew Henry before I ever knew his mom. His mom served with me in the State senate, she was my colleague.

We hugged, and she sobbed because she just lost her son. Not a statistic. Not a number. Not a trans kid. Her son. Her baby. Her Henry.

Her colleagues all reached out and expressed sympathy and then turned around and passed a truly awful overreaching and heinous bill that targets youth in the State of Kentucky.

An interesting person came to testify. One of our former colleagues, a Republican State rep who just retired and also learned that one of his grandchildren is trans. He admitted he didn’t know how to handle it at first.

You know how you handle your kids or your grandkids? With love.

He testified that he is worried his kids and his grandchild will have to leave the State of Kentucky, where he served as a conservative lawmaker because of the overreaching effects of legislation like what they passed in Kentucky and like we have talked about passing and have, in fact, passed on the floor of this House.

If you don’t know how to deal with these situations in your own family, and you decide the best way to deal with them is love, isn’t that the best way to deal with it for every kid and every family in this country?

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I have made it very clear tonight that we will not stand for these extremist attacks against the LGBTQ community.

We will not let the majority threaten to legislate LGBTQ people out of existence and let them know that their harmful, extremist bills have real-life consequences.

We must and we will do everything in our power to support our LGBTQ+ community. We will show understanding over ignorance, kindness over callousness, and inclusivity over exclusion. We will save lives. We will work toward that more perfect Union.

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

JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ELLZEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ELLZEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as you know, from time to time I address the House floor with my version of a speech that my