

□ 1345

HONORING DR. NOA EMMETT  
AUWAE ALULI

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

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Dr. Noa Emmett Auwae Aluli, a pillar in the Native Hawaiian community who passed away on November 30, 2022, at the age of 78.

Born and raised in Kailua on the island of Oahu, Dr. Aluli was one of five Native Hawaiians in the first graduating class of the University of Hawaii's School of Medicine.

Even in the final days before his passing, Dr. Aluli mentored aspiring doctors, made house calls, and provided care to all generations, from keiki to kupuna.

Dr. Aluli was also a leader of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, forcing an end to the bombing practices on the island of Kaho'olawe and its return to the State of Hawaii.

I will work to continue his legacy to ensure access to healthcare in rural communities and strengthen pathways to health professions.

This weekend, I will fly to Molokai to celebrate his life with his extended 'ohana. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the legacy of a visionary, Dr. Emmett Aluli.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Black History Month.

It is particularly meaningful to me this year because I am so honored to represent the great people of North Carolina's First Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today to celebrate the integral roles that African Americans have played in every aspect of American life. I stand on the shoulders of giants who came before me despite the obstacles in their way and the glass ceilings they had to shatter.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate the ideals of Black History Month, I am reminded of the legacy of my predecessors, like the Honorable Eva M. Clayton, the first Black woman to represent North Carolina in the Congress. She and others, all fighting the good fight of faith to ensure young boys and girls can thrive in eastern North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, this moment is about taking a look at the past so that we can better shape tomorrow.

COVID STILL IMPACTS MANY

(Ms. PRESSLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to these cruel efforts to terminate emergency declarations for COVID-19.

We are still very much in the midst of a public health crisis. Moreover, one in five adults who have had COVID-19 are suffering from prolonged health impacts known as long COVID.

Those living with long COVID experience debilitating symptoms which impede their daily lives, from fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, muscle contractions, and heart palpitations. These symptoms are often hard to diagnose, leaving millions feeling as though their pain is invisible.

In Massachusetts' Seventh District, I hear these stories daily. Abruptly ending these public health declarations would jeopardize the health insurance of vulnerable community members, leaving many without barriers to care that quite literally threaten their lives.

As we strive for a healthcare system and an economy that works for all, it is imperative that we center the voices of COVID long-haulers still reeling from this pandemic.

EMBRACING AMERICA'S  
DIVERSITY

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the month of February that has been designated to not only educate but to embrace and confirm the wonderment of America's diversity, as we would in every single important aspect of American life, and it is from our Native Americans to our immigrants of the 1800s and 1900s and even today.

African Americans have their own special history, and so it is very important to rise today to speak specifically about H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Slavery and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. That legislation should be passed. It should be an executive order. It connotes the trajectory of the history of those who fought in every war, who shed their blood for this Nation, but walked in a second-class citizenship, but yet come today to educate and to have people embrace the richness of their history so that we can reconcile and heal.

That is what the Commission to Study Slavery and Develop Reparation Proposals is. It is about repairing. Added to that is the Emancipation National Historic Trail, which would create a historic pathway from Galveston to Houston to talk about the pathway of slaves.

Mr. Speaker, we are one country with many voices. Let us all be heard.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS  
TO GOVERNING BOARD OF THE  
OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL  
ETHICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment pursuant to section 4(d) of House Resolution 5, 118th Congress, and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, of the following individuals to serve as the Governing Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics:

Nominated by the Speaker after consultation with the minority leader:

Mr. Paul D. Vinovich, District of Columbia, Chair

Mr. Leon Acton Westmoreland, Georgia

Ms. Karen L. Haas, Maryland

Nominated by the minority leader after consultation with the Speaker:

Mr. Michael D. Barnes, Florida, Co-Chair

Mr. William Paul Luther, Minnesota

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Texas

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,  
AND TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, February 2, 2023.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER MCCARTHY: I am honored to be offered the opportunity to serve in the House Science, Space and Technology Committee for the 118th Congress. I was proud to have been chosen to temporarily serve in this Committee for several months during the 117th Congress. Unfortunately, at this time I am unable to accept this position giving the time conflicts with my two other Committee assignments. Therefore, I respectfully request to be removed from the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.

Sincerely,

JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE

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

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

I rise with a message related to the month. This is, indeed, Black History Month. But I rise with a message that goes far beyond this month, a message that carries with it a moral imperative to do certain things that are on the conscience agenda.

Today, I will first thank the leadership for allowing me to have this time,

this privilege to come to the floor and speak on these issues. I am grateful to the leadership on both sides of the aisle.

I am grateful because it is a rare privilege that one is accorded when one can stand in the well of the Congress and literally speak to the world. Each time I do it, Mr. Speaker, I ask myself, could you have ever imagined this happening to you? And the answer is always the same. Never.

So I don't take for granted this privilege that I have, and I am honored to stand here and represent the 9th Congressional District of Texas, but as a United States Congressman, I do represent everyone in the country because my votes impact the entirety of the Nation.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about several issues that are our moral imperative. These issues will include, first, August 20 as an annual day wherein we will recognize slavery remembrance. We want to inculcate this into the fiber and fabric of our country.

Slavery Remembrance Day is important because it is unlike any other day. There are many holidays in this country, and I recognize them, I have no quarrel with them, but in this country we have certain days that are set aside for us to remember certain events, certain events that have been similar moments in time:

9/11, a similar moment in time, a day to be remembered;

Pearl Harbor, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, December 7, a similar moment in time, a day to be remembered;

The Holocaust, a similar moment in time that has impacted the rest of time, should be remembered.

All of these are remembrance days, days that we have set aside in this country to remember.

Well, August 20, 1619, the White Lion landed—docked, if you will—at Point Comfort, and the White Lion had on it 20 persons of African ancestry, 20 people who were traded. They traded cargo. They had other things that were desired by the colonists, and they traded, they exchanged these things, but they also had 20 people that were exchanged for goods that they desired.

These 20 people became the persons that we know as slaves, slaves who were among the first, if not the first, in this country. There may be some debate about some other circumstance, but generally speaking, August 20, 1619, is acknowledged as the date that slavery had its ugly face shown in our country.

August 20, 1619, 20 people, human beings treated like cattle called chattels. Treated like cattle called chattels, chattel slavery. We want to commemorate their lives and all of the millions of lives that followed, commemorate their lives, and commemorate their contributions to the success of this country.

America is a great country, but it is great because of these humble hands. There were others who contributed to

the greatness, and they have been acknowledged, and many are going to be acknowledged, but the humble hands of slaves have not been properly acknowledged for what they have done to make America the great nation that it is.

These humble hands helped to construct this Capitol. They helped to raise the Statue of Freedom that is on top of the Capitol. These humble hands helped to build roads and bridges. They planted the crops. They harvested. They literally were the means by which the Nation was fed.

These persons were worked, some of them, for their entire lives without remuneration, without compensation. They were kept alive. They were given clothing; they were given food; they were given the necessities of life only such that many of them could continue to slave their lives away.

We don't recognize them for what they have done for this country. The truth is, we revile them. We revile the slaves, those who were enslaved to be more appropriate. We revile them and we revere the enslavers.

□ 1400

Confederate soldiers have been revered across the length and breadth of this country.

Confederate soldiers who fought to maintain slavery have been honored and celebrated and appreciated.

Confederate soldiers who took the lives of many people, many of whom were not slaves, in the Civil War.

Confederate soldiers have been honored, celebrated, and appreciated, but not so with the enslaved persons who are the foundational mothers and fathers and children of this country. They haven't been properly recognized.

I mentioned that the Confederate soldiers have been lionized by having their names placed on schools and statues around the country. There is no statue honoring Nat Turner, no statue that I know of; there may be one or two someplace that is unknown to me. Those who fought to liberate the slaves have been demonized.

I remember well what I was taught when I was in grade school, how Nat Turner was a bad man. Nat Turner was a liberator. How John Brown was crazy; he was a White man who was a liberator. We have been taught to demonize the liberators, lionize those who would maintain slavery, and literally overlook, marginalize—literally try as best as we can to reshape history as it relates to those who were enslaved.

Here is how far we have gone with this.

In 1956, this Congress, the Congress of the United States of America accorded a Congressional Gold Medal to Confederate soldiers. The Congress of the United States of America honored Confederate soldiers. Never has this Congress bestowed any honor on the enslaved.

It is almost impossible for people of good will to comprehend that such a

thing occurred and is still occurring because we still have places around the country where Confederate soldiers are being lionized, but the slaves have not been recognized. No recognition, appreciable recognition for the slaves, the people who helped build the country, foundational mothers and fathers of the country, born into slavery.

Babies were slaves, for edification purposes.

Babies. Babies were slaves.

If you were born the child of a slave, you were a slave at birth. You lived your entire life as a slave. You died as a slave.

At some point this wrong has to be addressed. I believe that it should be addressed by according the slaves, the persons who were enslaved—they didn't place themselves in this condition—I believe that it should be addressed by according them a Congressional Gold Medal just as we accorded the Confederate soldiers who sought to maintain slavery a Congressional Gold Medal. That is not asking too much of the country.

In this Congress, we are going to give Congressional Gold Medals to people. Yes, last Congress we did. Why can't we give a Congressional Gold Medal to those who were enslaved?

Oh, because that happened centuries ago.

Because they are no longer with us.

Well, we have accorded Congressional Gold Medals posthumously. This would not be the first time.

We have done it for the code talkers, the Tuskegee Airmen, the soldiers who died in Afghanistan. We have done it.

The question is, do we have the decency to do for the people who helped build this country what we have done for so many others? Do we have the decency?

I believe that we can and we should do this. It would be historic but it would be meaningful to a good many people. It would say that we respect those people. We regret what happened to them but we respect them and we respect them enough to recognize their lives, not just the work, not the building of the country, but their lives that were sacrificed.

I believe it can be done. I believe it should be done. And I'm not alone in my belief. We opened the letter up and started circulating it today.

I will read the names of the persons who have similar beliefs. These are persons who are already on as original cosponsors and we will close the opportunity at the end of Black History Month. It is open now to everyone this Black History Month. This is a piece of Black history, a seminal piece of Black history.

I will tell you who agrees that a Congressional Gold Medal ought to be accorded to persons whose lives were sacrificed to make America the great country it is.

First on the list is the Honorable MAXINE WATERS; the Honorable BENNIE THOMPSON, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE, the Honorable DANNY DAVIS, the Honorable JIM MCGOVERN.

For fear that someone may just be tuning in or starting to follow what we are doing, I am announcing the names of persons who have allowed their names to be associated with the Congressional Gold Medal legislation that we will be filing at the end of this Black History Month.

I will continue with the names:

The Honorable BRAD SHERMAN, the Honorable BARBARA LEE, the Honorable EMANUEL CLEAVER, the Honorable YVETTE CLARKE, the Honorable HANK JOHNSON, the Honorable GERRY CONNOLLY, the Honorable KWEISI MFUME, the Honorable DAVID CICILLINE, the Honorable JOAQUIN CASTRO, the Honorable MARK VEASEY, the Honorable PETE AGUILAR, the Honorable TED LIEU, the Honorable ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, the Honorable COLIN ALLRED, the Honorable LIZZIE FLETCHER, the Honorable SYLVIA GARCIA, the Honorable ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, the Honorable ILHAN OMAR, the Honorable AYANNA PRESSLEY, the Honorable TROY CARTER, the Honorable GREG CASAR, the Honorable JASMINE CROCKETT, the Honorable BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN.

I trust that there would be more names that I would be permitted to announce at a future point in time.

Remember, historic legislation, original cosponsorship closes at the end of Black History Month, the last day. It will close at the end of this month. This legislation is designed to be brought to the attention of the House this month. So we will close it and we will file it on the last day of this month.

I believe that should we do this, and we should, if we do this, I believe that it will make a difference in the lives of all people in this country, because I think that in large part, the reason we had a person of African ancestry assaulted by other persons of African ancestry who are a part of the constabulary, police officers, is because there is little respect for Black lives. Not as much respect for Black lives.

We say all lives matter. If we say that, then we have to say Black lives matter. You can't say all lives matter and not say Black lives matter. They do.

I do not believe that if that young man had been of European ancestry, what we would call an Anglo or White, whichever you prefer—I, quite frankly, don't like saying White—but if he had been an Anglo, a person of European ancestry, those officers wouldn't have behaved that way. They would not have disrespected his life to the extent that they disrespected that young man of African ancestry's life.

We have got to respect Black lives. If you say they matter, then you respect them.

And for further edification purposes, this is not the first time. If anybody thinks this is the last, you are mistaken. I want it to be the last. I don't want it to ever occur again, but it can and likely will because we don't respect Black lives to the same extent as many others, and we should.

This will go a long way toward our saying to the world: Black lives ought to be respected. I believe that Black lives when properly respected will not be abused as was the case with that young man.

What they did to him is unthinkable. I would say unforgivable but my religious teachings don't allow me to say that. I would say it but we forgive according to my religiosity. We forgive. But I assure you, it is the kind of thing you never forget. I have memory for a reason, to remember so that I can shape the future.

Black lives do matter, and I would like to think that we can pass this first thing on our list on this conscience agenda, the inculcating of August 20 annually as Slavery Remembrance Day.

I will move on to the next item on the list. All of these items are important. Some would say that some items are more important than the others but they are all important.

By the way, there are many more things that will be added to this list. This is not exhaustive of the things that are a moral imperative for this conscience agenda.

I have talked about the August 20 as Slavery Remembrance Day and I talked about awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslaved. The third item that I have listed is removing the name of Richard Russell from the Russell Senate Office Building.

Richard Russell was a self-proclaimed white supremacist. I don't go in the Russell Senate Office Building. I think I respect myself enough not to go in the Russell Senate Office Building. Others do what they may.

And I assure you, if that office building had on it a name associated with the Third Reich, lots of other people wouldn't go in too.

□ 1415

We would take that name off of that building. What Richard Russell did to people of color is not only sinful, it is so shameful as to not reward him with placing his name on a building paid for with tax dollars, maintained with tax dollars, knowing that people of color of necessity have to go in and out of the building.

Do you have no respect for us? Do you not care how we feel about things? Is it just another thing that we will get around to when we feel like it?

When things are harmful to us, our psyche, our well-being, can we not say when they should cease to exist? Do you have to always set the timetable for the people who suffer?

What is wrong with the Senate? The United States Senate can change this. Take his name off.

Richard Russell fought antilynching legislation. Richard Russell was the father of the Southern Manifesto. The man called himself a white supremacist.

What is wrong with us? Why do we disrespect Black people to this extent?

The Senate ought to immediately take it up, but it won't. This is Black History Month. It would be a great time to do it, but it won't.

There are people hiding behind, "Well, who do we name it after? Who do we honor? What name do you put on it?" I am not asking you to put Nat Turner's name on it. I am not asking you to put John Brown's name on it. I am not asking you to put Dr. King's name on it, Rosa Parks' name on it, Harriet Tubman's.

I am not asking you to put any name on it other than the name it had before it became the Russell Senate Office Building. That name was the Old Senate Office Building. Revert to the name it had, and then take all the time you desire, my dear brothers and sisters. Take as much time as God allows, ad infinitum. Go beyond the end of time if you so desire.

Richard Russell's name won't be there ad infinitum. It won't be there beyond the end of time. We will have done more than the right thing.

You can do the right thing. That would be a part of it, but we will do more than the right thing if we take his name off.

We will have done the righteous thing, the righteous thing. His name ought not be there. Richard Russell, notorious bigot, notorious white supremacist, his name ought not be on that building.

At some point in time, at some point along this infinite continuum that we call time, we all are going to have to account for our time.

Those of you who had it within your power to change these things, you are going to have to account for your time. At some point on the infinite continuum, you will account for it.

You will account for holding in your hands the ability to make righteous change and deciding that you will do it when you get good and ready and when it benefits you.

You ought to be concerned about the people adversely impacted and how it would benefit them as opposed to how it would benefit you.

The minister talked about the Good Samaritan today. The Good Samaritan didn't ask the question, "What will happen to me if I cross over and help this person who has been beset upon by thieves?" That wasn't the question. The Good Samaritan wanted to know, "What will happen to him if I don't do it?"

Senate of the United States of America, ask what will happen to the many people who have to suffer knowing that there is a racist name on a Senate office building that is paid for with their tax dollars.

If the tables were turned, and he insulted European Anglos to the same extent that he has insulted Black people, his name wouldn't be there. They would have removed it long ago.

It is time for the name to come off the building. Let it revert to the Old Senate Office Building.

The fourth thing on the agenda: Enacting the Securities and Exchange Attonement Act.

Friends, our research has shown that financial institutions engaged in the slave trade—banks. Many of the big banks now had predecessor institutions, banks that literally, actually, made loans to people and allowed those loans to be secured with enslaved people, enslaved people treated like cattle, called chattels, like a piece of property, like you secure a loan now with a piece of property. They secured the loans with enslaved people and made money doing it.

Insurance companies' predecessor institutions literally insured enslaved people just as you would insure cattle, a horse, a cow. They insured them and made money.

They need to atone. They need to atone. Attonement has not been defined in the sense of "do a specific thing." One institution has made an effort, but there has to be atonement. There has to be some sort of atonement for that.

I assure you, if the tables were turned, if Anglos had been treated in the numbers and the same way, in a similar fashion to the way people of color were treated, Anglos would be demanding atonement.

I assure you. It is not even debatable. You would. You would. By the way, I would be there with you. I would stand with you because it would be the righteous thing to do.

I would stand with you if the tables were turned on any of these issues because it would be the righteous thing to do.

I plan to proceed with this legislation. We will be filing it in this Congress.

Finally: Establishing the department of reconciliation. We have not reconciled in this country.

By the way, I am of the opinion that there are many people who just don't care. They don't care. But there are many others who do, who do.

Those who care, people of good will, they know that we need to do more to reconcile. We need to cover this moral imperative.

We have a Department of Education with Under Secretaries of Education; a Department of Labor, Under Secretaries of Labor; a Department of Commerce.

Why, then, can we not have a department, a department of reconciliation; a department of reconciliation with a secretary of reconciliation and under secretaries, structured such that it will deal with the moral imperatives; a department of reconciliation such that at the end of the day, when one President leaves office and another comes in, the work of the department continues, just as the Department of Labor continues, the Department of Commerce continues? One President coming and leaving does not change the work of any of these departments.

It is not going to be easy to complete the moral imperative, the conscience

agenda. It is not going to be easy, but it is something that we must do.

We are not going to change history. Those who desire to no longer teach what actually happened to people in this country—there are people in Texas now who would have slavery become "involuntary relocation." That is true, "involuntary relocation."

Kidnapping? Involuntary relocation. Murder, rape? Involuntary relocation. Separating families at the auction block? Involuntary relocation.

No, you are not going to change history. You are not. There are people who want to, under some specious theory that the people who want to teach history are somehow wanting to harm the country by telling the truth.

Now, we are a country that believes in truth. We preach truth in this country. Somewhere it is written, "You shall know truth, and the truth will set you free."

There is a certain amount of freedom associated with actualizing, realizing, the truth. We have to know the truth. You are not going to be able to hide it. But there are people who would say that by teaching truth, we are going to harm the country.

What about the people who suffered and still suffer as a result of the truth not being told? People have to know what happened.

Black History Month is not nearly enough time to explain what happened. We pick out certain things that happened, certain meaningful moments in time, but that is not Black history.

Black history is more than the civil rights movement. It really is. It is more than the history of Africans in the Americas.

Yes, Black history is American history, but it is also world history. It is world history. Just as the history of others who are global, they have a global history, too.

I remember, in my history book, there was an indication that the reason the nations or countries in Africa were not mentioned in world history was because they made little contribution to history. I had to grow up with that—little contribution to history.

Friends—I say "friends," and I am very sincere when I say it. I consider people friends who may not consider me a friend.

□ 1430

Friends, or as Dr. King might say it, brothers and sisters, we must reconcile. We will not reconcile without some structured department, something that has no end in sight. The end would be when reconciliation is ultimately achieved.

We need this department of reconciliation. The country needs it. It will benefit us all. It will make the country a better place.

Not everybody wants it. Not everybody wants to see the change in the status quo.

I know this is a very difficult thing for many people to embrace, and I am

very much aware of what Voltaire called to our attention, and it impacts many people. He reminded us that it is dangerous to be right in affairs where established men are wrong. It is dangerous to be right. Many people, they understand that, and because they understand that, they avoid this.

This is a righteous agenda. There is nothing on here that cannot be done and should not be done. Everything on here is a part of the righteous agenda.

Nothing wrong with inculcating August 20 as Slavery Remembrance Day because of what happened to the slaves, just as we have a 9/11 remembrance, just as we have a Pearl Harbor remembrance, a Holocaust remembrance—by the way, all recognized by the Congress. That would be the House and Senate, Congress as the House and Senate, not just the House, all recognized.

I do confess this, and I should have mentioned it earlier, but it is never too late to speak truth. The President of the United States has acknowledged August 20, has acknowledged Slavery Remembrance Day, the Honorable Joe Biden.

The House passed this resolution, by the way. Many Members are not aware of it. We did pass a resolution honoring August 20. I don't know what the Senate will do, but I am at a point where I just believe we need to go on and commemorate the day. Just commemorate the day.

Nobody gets paid. I am not asking does anybody get paid. Nobody should be paid. This is a day of commemoration, not celebration. No celebrations. I don't want the stores to give discounts, Slavery Remembrance Day discounts. That is not what this is about. This is sacred. This is not secular.

This, August 20, nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with it. The President has acknowledged it.

If I just may say so, the President, in his efforts to acknowledge that Black lives matter, and do so in a very positive way, the President appointed an African-American female to the Supreme Court of the United States of America, something that could have been done by many others but never achieved. He did it.

Now, if anybody thinks I am going to forget that the President did something as significant as that—see, it may not be important to other people, but to me it is probably one of the most important things that he has done. I will be eternally grateful, and there are a lot of other people who will be equally as grateful.

So, there is nothing wrong with this August 20 as Slavery Remembrance Day. Nothing wrong with according, giving, a Congressional Gold Medal to the enslaved people who built the country, laid the foundation for the economic success of the country. Nothing wrong with that.

If we can do it for the Confederate soldiers, surely we can do it for the enslaved people born into slavery, lived as slaves, many of them, and died as slaves.

Nothing wrong with removing the name of a self-proclaimed white supremacist from a building paid for with tax dollars.

Nothing wrong with saying that these companies, mega companies, nothing wrong with saying that these mega companies which profited enormously from the slave trade—nothing wrong with saying they should atone.

Good Christians understand atonement. People of good will understand atonement. All religions address atonement in some way. Nothing wrong with atonement.

Wanting to reconcile? Having a department of reconciliation, how does that hurt a country wherein we see circumstances necessitating reconciliation, our moral imperative?

Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor, it is a privilege, to have this freedom of speech. Freedom of speech may be the hallmark of our democracy. We don't have to agree. That is what freedom of speech is all about, freedom to say and not be persecuted for having said.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak without fear of persecution. I could be wrong, but I am not afraid. I am not afraid, and I am grateful.

I love my country. I try to conclude by saying this. I love my country. I salute the flag. Yes, I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I sing the national anthem. I stand when I sing it. I place my hand on my heart when I sing it. I place my hand on my heart when I say the Pledge of Allegiance. But I also defend those who choose not to.

That is the greatness of America. The greatness of America is not in my standing and saluting and singing. The greatness is in allowing those who choose not to. That is the greatness of the country, that we can accept those who would not do what others do, those who would say, "Look, I am not an automaton. I am not going to march in lockstep. I choose to take a different path."

I defend their right to do so. I do so because I love my country.

God bless you, Mr. Speaker. God bless the United States of America.

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

#### IMPORTANCE OF FREE SPEECH

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

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to use the full 60 minutes, but first, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the wonderful chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

#### DENOUNCING SOCIALISM

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank my great friend from Wisconsin, who serves on the Education and the Workforce Committee, and is a very valu-

able member of that committee, as well as the Oversight and Accountability Committee.

Mr. Speaker, today, the House rightfully condemned and denounced socialism in all forms and resolved to oppose socialist policies.

As the Bible says in Proverbs 14, "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."

Socialism is mere talk. Socialism is the idea that if you work hard, your neighbor will enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Socialist regimes, in just the last 100 years, have impoverished, enslaved, starved, and even killed over 100 million people. This is a horrific cost borne by far, far too many.

Socialism, no matter its form, will never have a place in our Republic.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I guess, after hearing the last speaker, I should kind of readjust my remarks and comment about the importance of free speech and the current flight from free speech which we have going on in the United States.

I have here a little graph, which I viewed with total alarm when my staff was able to come up with it. Of course, freedom of speech takes many forms in our society: the ability to write books, the ability to get on the radio, and now the ability to post things you want on the internet.

I hope my good friend from Texas looks at this—he left the floor right now—and sees how precarious the right to free speech is in America today.

We look here, and there is a question: The U.S. Government should take steps to protect false info online, even if it limits freedom of information.

Of course, we all can disagree about a lot of things. We can disagree on politics. We can disagree on elections. We can disagree on medical facts. That is why when we have something wrong with us medically, we sometimes get a second opinion, because one doctor thinks different than the other.

Of course, we all know people, you know: Should I take the shot? Should I not take the shot? Should I get surgery? Should I not get the surgery? Should I get remdesivir? Should I not get remdesivir? A lot of questions are up in the air.

There was a time when it could have had an effect on an election if the people found out that Hunter Biden took a lot of money from people in other countries and maybe had an underlying goal.

The question is, is free speech what this country is about or not?

With the Democratic Party—and this alarms me because I was a Democrat until I was 20 years old, and I thought Democrats were out in front on free speech and Republicans were the staid people.

We have a situation right now, over the last few years, in which 65 percent of the Democrats, a clear majority, almost 2 to 1: The U.S. Government should take steps to restrict false info

online even if this restricts freedom of information.

Only 28 percent of Republicans do.

Now, this graph shocks me. This weekend, I am going to be speaking to some Republicans back in the district. I will tell you, I am going to tell them how disappointed I am that 28 percent of the Republicans responding to the poll apparently don't want freedom of information.

I would hope my colleague from Texas goes back home and explodes at the people back home that 65 percent of the Democrats, or people leaning Democrats, want to restrict the free flow of information.

You could say they only want to prevent false things from being put out there, but, of course, who determines what is false and what is true?

If you look at the next one, another sign of if you believe in free speech or not: Should tech companies take steps to restrict false info online even if it limits freedom of information?

We all know things that some people agree with and some people don't agree with, and sometimes things we once thought were false turn out to be true.

Here again, it scares me. The Democrats when I was a Democrat and 20 years old, I will tell you, wouldn't have thought this way, but the Democrat Party has changed a lot. Seventy-six percent think tech companies should restrict false info even if it limits freedom of information. Only 37 percent of the Republicans feel that way. That is a very scary thing, scary for our country.

It comes down to what I think is the scariest thing of all: the way people think. It is not even things that the governments do. I don't know if we have bad schools out there or whatever, but the way people think is kind of scary.

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We know in Canada, to the north of us, which we thought was kind of a country like America, right now, they crack down on churches, if maybe they disagree with the party line on sexual behavior.

We mentioned in the last election, things began to come out about Hunter Biden taking money from foreign outfits, presumably just being given money because of the access he had to his dad. Oops, better not let that out there online, better not talk about that on TV. Oh, my goodness, that might affect the way people think.

So we have this restriction going on right now, like I said, on the COVID stuff. I don't know the degree to which it is influenced by campaign contributions from companies like Pfizer. I don't know whether it is the pride of the public health establishment.

But we are entering into an era in this country in which we are not going to be able to say certain things unless the American public realizes that the First Amendment is borderline absolute. The fact that such a huge party,