

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life of Thomas C. Strickland, Jr., who sadly passed away at the age of 81 after battling an extended illness.

Tommy was born and raised in Pooler, Georgia. He graduated from Georgia Southern in 1965 and from the John A. Guppton College of Mortuary Science in 1966. He was the son of T.C. Strickland and Birdie Strickland, who I knew well.

From 1966 until 1972, Tommy served his country in the Georgia Air National Guard. He was the first funeral director in the State of Georgia to be certified in eye enucleation.

In 1971, he purchased the Leslie Thompson Funeral Home, which later became the Thomas C. Strickland and Sons Funeral Home, with locations in Effingham County and Pooler.

Tommy was an active member at Pine Street Baptist Church and Springfield Oaks Church.

Tommy was the brother of Marvin and Mary Frances.

Tommy will be remembered for his love of family, community, and Jesus. He will be deeply missed by all.

CONGRATULATING CARSON FOSTER

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

Mr. LANDSMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and wish good luck to Carson Foster, a remarkable 22-year-old swimmer from southwest Ohio, who will be representing our Nation in the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Carson started his road to success by setting the national high school record in the 200 freestyle at Sycamore High School in my district. Go Aves.

Since then, he has been a 13-time All-American at the University of Texas and won national titles in the 200-meter butterfly, 200-meter individual medley, and the 400-meter individual medley at last summer's U.S. National Championships.

U.S. swimming is always a Summer Olympics highlight watched by millions of Americans, and I know our family will be tuning in to cheer on Carson and the rest of Team USA. We love the events.

We wish them the best of luck. Southwest Ohio is so very proud.

RECOGNIZING COACH GARY GILMORE

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

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the legendary Coastal Carolina University head baseball coach, Gary Gilmore, for an illustrious career and to wish him a happy retirement.

Coach Gilmore began his baseball career in the Grand Strand as a center fielder for the Chanticleers in 1979 before returning to serve as the head baseball coach in 1996.

Under his direction, the Chanticleers climbed to new heights. His career is a story of unprecedented success, including over a thousand wins, countless conference tournament titles, and numerous NCAA tournament appearances.

The 2016 season was particularly special, as Coach Gilmore, who was honored as the National Coach of the Year, led the Chanticleers to a victory at the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. This was Coastal Carolina's first-ever national championship in any sport.

Coach Gilmore has left a mark on Coastal Carolina University that will not soon be forgotten. I thank him for his dedication to his players, his alma mater, and the Chanticleer faithful. His success will leave a lasting legacy not only in the history books and the trophy cases of Coastal Carolina University but in the hearts of so many across South Carolina.

CONGRATULATING FLORIDA PANTHERS ON STANLEY CUP VICTORY

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the new 2024 Stanley Cup champions, the Florida Panthers. I proudly introduced a resolution commending the team for this historic win.

June 24, 2024, will forever be reminders of a monumental day for south Florida. For the first time in their 30-year franchise history, the Florida Panthers have won the Stanley Cup, defeating the Edmonton Oilers 2-1 in an exhilarating game 7.

For 30 seasons, Florida Panthers fans, myself included, have eagerly waited to see our favorite team raise the Stanley Cup. Led by the outstanding performance of Captain Aleksander Barkov and Head Coach Paul Maurice, our Panthers showcased the very best of south Florida's competitive spirit.

I also want to pay tribute to the devoted Panthers fans. Their unwavering support and enthusiasm were crucial in propelling the players forward game after game to finally finish the hunt.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the players, coaches, staff, and the entire Panthers organization. Let's bring the cup home again next year.

As always, go Cats.

HAPPY PRIDE MONTH

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

Ms. MANNING. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate Pride Month, a time to recognize the diversity, resilience, and joy of the LGBTQ community.

Pride is a celebration, but it didn't begin that way. In June 1969, Pride began with a protest as patrons of the Stonewall Inn fought back against a police raid targeting their community.

Fifty years later, our country has made significant progress toward equality, but there is much more work to be done. Last year alone, over 510 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in State legislatures.

As a member of the Equality Caucus, I am standing up to these attacks. This Pride Month, I am continuing to advocate for the Equality Act to secure comprehensive protections for LGBTQ+ people nationwide.

To the LGBTQ+ community in North Carolina and across the country, happy Pride. I see you and am honored to stand along your side in the fight for full equality.

CELEBRATING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF LANCASTER MUSIC COMPANY

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

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Lancaster Music Company.

Since Lancaster Music opened its doors in 1949, the family-owned business rooted in Gainesville, Georgia, has grown exponentially.

Currently, the company is managed by a third-generation Lancaster, Mrs. Emily Lancaster Barron, who loves music and working in the family business that is owned by Emily's father, Joey Lancaster.

Fun fact: In the early 2000s, Lancaster Music Company forged a relationship with the Bush administration, supplying pianos to the White House for its Christmas decor. The business went on to provide a new grand piano for the chapel at Camp David, which was custom-made in oak to match the interior during the Bush administration. Lancaster Music Company's pianos have been at Camp David now for the past four administrations.

The Lancaster family's commitment to filling our community events, our churches, and our lives with music is noteworthy.

I am truly honored to represent such an outstanding family-owned business that has provided pianos, guitars, trumpets, violins, and more to the Ninth District, the Peach State, and the country.

I congratulate Lancaster Music Company on 75 strong and successful years. May they have many more to come.

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEE of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the

gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER), my good friend and fellow freshman classmate from the 115th Congress.

IN MEMORY OF RANDY ALAN WALKER

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, thank my friend for yielding a few minutes of the Special Order.

I rise today, Madam Speaker, to honor the life and memory of Mr. Randy Alan Walker of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, who passed away last month after a 10-year battle with ALS. Randy had an exceptional impact on the lives that he touched.

Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with Randy and his wife, Lisa, earlier this year just days before Randy's passing. Randy shared with me his story in a letter that he wrote.

ALS is a devastating disease that takes a tremendous toll on those living with the disease as well as their families and caregivers. Despite this disease, Randy continued to live life to the fullest.

Following his diagnosis, he created a bucket list of all of the things he wished to accomplish, and he managed to complete every item on it.

In his own words, Randy told me his most exhilarating experience was skydiving with his daughter and his fondest memory was watching his son graduate high school and college.

Madam Speaker, Randy shared with me what his life was like with ALS. In his letter, he said: You can be me for just 1 hour. Get comfy on your couch. Put your phone down and remote out of reach. Standing for any reason is against the rules. I can't stand. Neither can you. Now, for the hard part, when you get an itch, and you will, there is no scratching. If you survive the hour, kudos to you. Imagine that 24/7. Welcome to my world.

Randy and his wife, Lisa, were tireless champions for individuals affected by ALS, traveling to Harrisburg and Washington, D.C., to share their story and advocate for a cure.

Their efforts extended beyond legislative halls as they supported ALS research initiatives, raised public awareness, and provided unwavering emotional and practical support to families affected by the disease. Through their dedicated activism, Randy and Lisa have profoundly impacted the ALS community.

Randy graduated from Ephrata High School in 1982 where he played football,

baseball, and was on the diving team. Following graduation, Randy joined the Marine Corps and served until 1985.

We extend our gratitude to Randy for his service and dedication to our country. He was a loving husband to Lisa, a father to Calvin and Victoria, a grandfather to two, and a friend to all. Randy will be deeply missed.

We wish those who are grieving comfort and give thanks for the opportunity to know Randy who positively impacted so many people during his 60 years.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I am honored to lead this Special Order today to discuss post-traumatic growth. I repeat: Post-traumatic growth.

June is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month, and today, June 27, is National PTSD Awareness Day.

Post-traumatic stress is a serious condition that impacts far too many members of the communities that we love and serve and especially among those who have served in uniform.

Raising awareness of PTSD has helped in our efforts to reduce stigma, recognize the struggles faced by many, and encourage those in need to seek help. However, it is also critical that we balance the story we tell about times of struggle and trauma.

For far too long, society has focused exclusively on the negative impacts of trauma and struggle and pushed a narrative dominated by ideas of dysfunction, disorder, and diagnosis. This language can feel debilitating, a label far too heavy to carry.

The result is we are left feeling permanently diminished and damaged and victims of the worst experiences of our lives.

It is time to change the conversation, to shine a light on the possibility of growth in the aftermath of trauma and how struggle can be a catalyst, a positive catalyst, for profound growth and transformation.

Last year, in partnership with the Boulder Crest Foundation, I introduced H. Res. 496, a resolution to proclaim June 13 as National Post-Traumatic Growth Day. This June 13, Boulder Crest launched the Choose Growth initiative, focused on proliferating the notion of post-traumatic growth, or PTG, across our country.

This initiative is intentionally brand and organization agnostic. The objective is to spread the word of growth, possibility, and hope to every corner of our country.

Through the Choose Growth community, we will increase support and awareness of the possibility of growth in the aftermath of trauma. We will encourage individuals to share their stories of turning their personal struggles into strength and positivity.

The initiative aims to foster a supportive community that embraces growth as part of the healing process. We must ensure that all of those who struggle, no matter who they are, and

those who love and care for them, realize that how things are isn't how they have to be, and that growth and strength are possible in the aftermath of trauma.

There is much more for us to do here in Washington and around the country in support of those who have experienced trauma. We hope you all will join us in raising awareness of post-traumatic growth as we continue these efforts.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON), a fellow classmate from the 115th Congress and fellow General officer.

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I thank Lieutenant General Bergman, the most senior officer ever elected to Congress. I am proud to serve with him.

I rise today to advocate in support of those fighting to transform trauma into triumph.

June is PTSD Awareness Month. I want to stop right there. I don't like to say PTSD because it is not a disorder. It is actually normal when someone encounters a traumatic situation in their life to have that kind of response. It is time to recognize a serious condition, though, that affects many veterans and civilian members of our community.

As part of this awareness, Post-Traumatic Growth Day, as General Bergman said, was June 13, a day to recognize the transformative power of resilience, strength, and courage, and an opportunity to embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with growth and transformation.

Research tells us that 70 percent of American adults have experienced at least one traumatic event in their life and that two-thirds of children experience trauma before the age of 16. Of the 6 million veterans served by the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal year 2021, about 10 out of every 100 men and 19 out of every 100 women were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress.

Many battle their demons alone, especially veterans, focused almost exclusively on negative impacts of trauma and struggle, trying to protect loved ones from their suffering. Feelings of hopelessness or failure often permeate their thoughts and add to the challenge of healing. This often leaves individuals feeling alone and victims of their own worst experiences.

It is time to change the conversation and highlight the possibility of growth after trauma, to show how struggle can be a catalyst for profound growth and transformation. It is time to advocate for success.

In Proverbs 4:23—one of my favorite books in the Bible—it tells us to "Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts." This is especially true for those trying to overcome horrific events in their lives, and it is the foundational message of the Choose Growth campaign, an initiative focused on raising awareness that trauma doesn't have to be the end of the story.

Awareness is necessary to remove the stigma and to encourage those suffering to seek proper and timely treatment that may save their lives and restore them to being productive and successful members of society.

Treatment can take many forms, from peer-related therapies to medications. The key is finding what works best for each individual. Support from loved ones and groups provides a positive impact on outcomes. That is why I share my own experience with PTS after spending 1 year in Iraq and having been on the receiving end of 3 to 30 rockets or mortars a day.

When I got home, I had reflexive instincts wherever I went to be ready to find cover. Even in Chicago, walking with my dad, my dad looked at me and said: What are you doing?

I said: I can't help it. I am looking for where I should dive if a mortar rocket comes in.

Though I know it is not going to happen, I did that every day multiple times for over a year. It is called muscle memory.

Thankfully, for me, this slowly ebbed away after 2 or 3 months, but I know others are not so fortunate. That is why we are here today.

The bottom line: In these trying times, I urge my colleagues to come together and advocate for those fighting to transform trauma into triumph and to reclaim their lives.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank General BACON for his words.

One of the first steps to healing is to be able to share stories. When you think about previous times of conflict in our country, the ability to de-stress was a lot simpler than it is now. I will deal with that here in a couple of minutes.

The topic of post-traumatic growth is an opportune time to discuss the promise of psychedelic-assisted therapies to treat mental health disorders like PTSD.

Just a couple weeks ago, I spoke here on this floor in support of two amendments that I had led with my friend Congressman LOU CORREA of California in support of psychedelic-assisted therapies at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

□ 1700

Both amendments were passed unanimously by this Chamber.

Psychedelic-assisted therapies have the potential to be the first genuine advancement in the treatment of veterans' mental health in decades. It is a true breakthrough therapy potential.

Unfortunately, just recently, the FDA's drug advisory committee recently voted against recommending approval of MDMA-assisted therapy to treat PTSD.

Many of us in Congress, and especially among those of us who have served in uniform, were deeply disappointed and frustrated by this, what I believe and what we believe to be, shortsighted decision.

The advisory panel chose to ignore the voices of veterans whose lives have been forever improved by MDMA-assisted therapy in favor of those who have been on a mission to discredit—and I repeat discredit—this promising treatment at all costs.

That is shameful. We can accept a "no," but it should be for the betterment of the greater good, in this case, of helping veterans and those who need different kinds of help. It should not be a shortsighted and potentially uninformed bureaucratic decision.

I have had the opportunity to personally meet with many of the researchers involved in this study and the veterans whose lives have been forever changed by these therapies in such a positive way.

That experience made the potential of this treatment clear to me, and many of the veterans told me that they would not be alive today were it not for this therapy.

I am confident that this will be a speed bump in our overall efforts to truly heal the invisible wounds like PTSD that millions of Americans face today.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS), who is another fellow leader in uniform and an esteemed member from the Iowa delegation.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, General BERGMAN, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today during PTSD Awareness Month to honor the millions of Americans, including thousands of veterans, who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. As a 24-year Army veteran and one of 82 military veterans serving in Congress, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work on legislation that helps veterans diagnosed with PTSD get the care and support they need.

One example is the Veterans Care Act, a bill I introduced that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct and support research on the effectiveness and safety of certain forms of cannabis and cannabis delivery for veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

As the chairwoman of the Health Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee along with General BERGMAN, I have also been able to host several key hearings and roundtables where we discussed effective treatment for PTSD, including emerging breakthrough therapies with psychedelic-assisted therapy.

I have also passed the VIP Act, or Veterans in Parks Act, which allows lifetime passes to our national parks for veterans, Gold Star family members, and even Active-Duty military because we know of the meditative qualities and healing qualities that can come about through outdoor activity and work within nature.

For far too long, society has focused on the negative impacts of trauma and

struggles caused by PTSD, especially among our veterans. It has reached a point where being labeled as someone with PTSD has become debilitating. While it is crucial to recognize these challenges and get appropriate care, it is equally important to reduce stigma and offer more hope to those diagnosed.

If you are someone with PTSD, I want you to know that you are not any less of a person because of your diagnosis. You are not a burden. Being diagnosed with PTSD isn't the end of your story. There is a pathway to extraordinary growth and transformation in your life.

As a veteran serving in Congress, I am dedicated to ensuring that you understand that and receive the treatment you need to continue living your life to the fullest.

God bless our veterans, and God bless General BERGMAN for bringing this to the attention of Congress and America.

ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month.

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month is a time to heighten awareness about the disease and to show our support for the one in nine people aged 65 and older who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. My mother was one of those.

Over 66,000 Iowans and nearly 7 million Americans are victims of this disease. As a doctor myself, I have advocated for affordable healthcare and doing everything we can to make medical research possible and to make medical research transferred into action.

I am committed to working on legislation that ensures Americans impacted by Alzheimer's disease receive the care they deserve, and I call upon my fellow Members of Congress to remember those who have Alzheimer's and their families during this month and join me in the fight to end Alzheimer's.

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Andrew Dong from West High School in Iowa City, Iowa, for being named a 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholar.

Andrew is one of 161 students from across the Nation being recognized for their remarkable academic achievements, contributions to their community, and success in fine arts. In his application, Andrew highlighted the incredible work he has done volunteering with mental health professionals and assisting them in developing guidelines for educators across the State of Iowa. As the youngest person in Iowa to be certified in Mental Health First Aid, Andrew is passionate about ensuring our communities have the tools necessary to face the ongoing mental health crisis head-on.

With that, I would like my colleagues to join me in celebrating Andrew and his amazing achievements and wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

FLOODS

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the recent floods impacting Iowa currently. After the recent supercell storms, Iowa suffered widespread damage, debris, and record flooding. Some areas received up to 15 inches of rain, and at least 1,900 properties were impacted, with hundreds destroyed. Over the weekend, at least 250 water rescues were conducted.

Rivers all across Iowa will be impacted with extra water moving downstream and cresting to come. With the potential for possible more bad weather tomorrow and this weekend, the entire Hawkeye State is keeping a watchful eye.

I urge my constituents to prepare in the event of flooding and bad storms impacting our communities. The entire Iowa delegation is working closely with Governor Reynolds and local officials during this difficult time.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the first responders working around the clock to help Iowans in need.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA BOASTS THE THIRD SMALLEST BABY BORN IN THE WORLD

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Eilers family of Solon, Iowa. Emily and Ted Eilers are parents to Evelyn Eilers who was born at the University of Iowa in September of 2023.

Evelyn was tied as the third smallest baby born in the world. Thanks to world-class care available at the University of Iowa, Evelyn was able to come home as the size of an average full-time newborn.

Evelyn's survival and the survival outcomes for other extremely premature infants at the University of Iowa Health Care Stead Family Children's Hospital are among the best in the world. This is yet another demonstration of the phenomenal care available to Iowans through the university's hospital.

As a former doctor at the University of Iowa Hospital, I am proud to celebrate the incredible work and the recent homecoming of Evelyn Eilers, and, more importantly, support a culture of life.

God bless the Eilers family.

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF IOWA TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the seven athletes from the University of Iowa track and field program on their appearance at the Olympic trials this past weekend.

I would like to give a special congratulations to Kalen Walker, the brother of one of our legislative interns. Kalen Walker is a three-time, all-American record-holding athlete who competed in the 100-meter dash at the semifinal round at the Olympic trials this weekend.

Kalen is from rural Iowa and graduated from Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont High School in 2020. He attended

Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa, Iowa, and then transferred to the University of Iowa as a walk-on.

Kalen embodies what it means to be a true, hardworking Iowan. He came to the University of Iowa to fulfill his dream of running as a Hawkeye, and this weekend was a step toward fulfilling his dream of being an Olympian.

I am proud to congratulate him and his teammates on their honor of representing Iowa and America.

As always, go Hawks.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, in closing, I am extremely grateful for all of my colleagues who have spoken here today and shared their stories and also celebrated the people who have gone through tough times, whether it be, if you will, something as simple as weather related, but, more importantly, the stresses related to life.

We are the greatest nation in the world because we treat people right, and we expect the same in return.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to raise awareness of post-traumatic growth, and I want to repeat that: post-traumatic growth, a positive way forward and not a negative ending.

It is my sincere hope that those of us in Congress and Americans across our country can work to help those who have experienced trauma, that they can find growth, purpose, and connection.

I say as a veteran and a marine: Our veterans never quit on us. We will never quit on them.

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

PRIDE MONTH

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. It is an honor to host this Special Order hour in collaboration with the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Equality Caucus. As Congress' first out person of color, it is an honor to lead this time on the floor.

As we near the end of Pride Month, it is important to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community's contributions to our country, our fight for equal rights, and the work that still has to be done.

I am proud to be joined by several of my colleagues in this House, and I appreciate their commitment to the LGBTQ+ community.

Last year, I was joined by Leader HAKEEM JEFFRIES, the co-chairs of the

Congressional Equality Caucus, and the LGBTQ+ activists to reintroduce the Equality Act. We stood together in solidarity and on the shoulders of many pioneers of the LGBTQ+ movement to demand equal protections for LGBTQ+ people. Former Congressman David Cicilline entrusted me with this landmark piece of legislation that would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, and I take that responsibility very seriously.

The Equality Act was passed twice under the leadership of Speaker Emerita NANCY PELOSI, and today it has the support of every House Democrat.

The story of LGBTQ+ equality is not complete without the passage of this legislation. From the Stonewall riots in 1969 to protest the over-policing and criminalization of the LGBTQ+ community, to the lives lost to the AIDS crisis, to the heroes of this movement like Marsha P. Johnson and Harvey Milk, our community has endured adversity, prejudice, and bigotry.

Unfortunately, the ugliness of hatred persists. Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people is still active, and violence against more vulnerable members of our community is increasing.

The Equality Act would send a message to all LGBTQ+ Americans that their government wants to ensure their dignified existence while honoring those who came before us. In a political moment where the LGBTQ+ community is used to stoke fear and distrust, the Equality Act stands as a way to unite us under principles that this country was founded: liberty and justice for all.

I am proud to come to the floor to during Pride Month to highlight this legislation and to send a message to not only the LGBTQ+ people who are living as their authentic selves and who have enjoyed the celebrations and festivities that this month has to offer but, also, those who, for whatever reason, cannot live or love in a way that is true to themselves out of fear of retaliation.

To those individuals, I want to say: you are not alone, and you have allies in places you may not expect. You have allies in the nine out Members of the House of Representatives, and you have allies in all of the vice chairs and members of the Congressional Equality Caucus.

□ 1715

We cannot wait for the day when LGBTQ+ people don't have to make the impossible choice of choosing safety over living authentically. While I cannot remedy every situation or make every American understand the fear many LGBTQ+ people live in, I can ensure the Federal Government does not stand in their way.

That is why we need the Equality Act, for dignity for a group that has historically been suppressed and continues to be the target of attacks.