

valued that, really instilled in me that it was an honorable thing to do, to serve your country. If good people don't do it, guess what? The bad guys are going to do it. You really don't have a choice.

At least vote—I know some people don't even vote, but at least vote. That is just the minimum level.

I accepted the calling.

I thank my mother for her support over the years, not in only raising me but standing with me and always supporting me. She lives just a couple of miles away from me in West Virginia right now. She is 83 years old.

I think most politicians—really, not most. I will tell you every politician wishes they had a mother like mine. She goes to every event she can go to. She is always promoting me.

She even wrote a book called “Leaving Cuba: One Family’s Journey to Freedom.” She enjoys giving speeches about that. Still to this day, she runs around and gives speeches about it. My mom lives for her four children.

Thank you, Mom, for everything.

Well, last but not least, I would be remiss if I didn't at least thank one gentleman on my staff who has been with me for 8 years, my chief of staff, Michael Hough. He did leave earlier this year because I am leaving, but Mike has been with me through thick and thin, ups and downs, witch hunts, and successes. He was with me when I was a State senator.

Thank you, Mike, for everything you have done. Mike is one of my best friends and will continue to be a best friend.

He is not here to say anything about me yet, and I know he would be if he could, but my longest colleague, ANDY HARRIS, I am going to miss him. I am going to miss you all, but ANDY has been a good friend for a long time. He is sticking around.

As I close this chapter in my life, first and foremost, the constituents who elected me five times, thank you. I have fought hard. I have kept my word.

One of my mentors here, JIM JORDAN, just wrote a book. It was simply titled “Do What You Said You Would Do.” That is the name of the book. You don't even have to read the book. “Do what you said you would do,” it is right there if you would just do that.

People will say, what are you going to do when you get to Congress? Look at what I said when I was running for Congress over here, and then don't be surprised when I vote that way right here. That is what I am going to do. I am going to do what I said I would do, and I have done that.

To my constituents, thank you for the 10 years. I have done what I said I would do to the very best of my ability every time. We don't always agree. Not everybody agrees with their own family. No one is going to agree with every vote, but I voted my conscience. I have done the best I could. I thank you for the opportunity to do that.

To all of my staff, it has been the honor of a lifetime.

While I am leaving the House of Representatives, I am not leaving public service. I look forward to continuing to serve the people of West Virginia in whatever capacity in which I am called in the future.

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

#### FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to deliver my farewell address, but first, I would like to give some time to my colleagues to deliver some remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOWMAN).

Mr. BOWMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my sister CORI BUSH for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by sending peace and love to this Chamber, peace and love to the American people, and, most importantly, peace and love to my family and to the incredible people of New York-16.

I have to send a special shout-out to my lovely wife, Melissa Oppenheimer Bowman. Thank you for supporting me, loving me, and putting up with me over the last 4 years. Thank you for taking care of our beautiful children back home, Jelani, Marcel, and Maya.

It is hard for someone to be working class in this Chamber, and I know every time I came to Washington, you became a single mom, getting up very early in the morning, getting our kids ready for school, dropping them off at the bus stop, and then going to serve the people of the Bronx as a third grade teacher.

You would teach all day, get off of work, pick our kids up from school, bring them home, start cooking dinner, help them with their homework, plan your lessons for the next day for your kids, and then put our kids to bed.

Then, when I was here trying to do the job of the district and when I didn't go straight home after work, you made sure I heard about it. When I didn't call you when I got back home, you made sure I heard about that, too.

I love you. Thank you, Melissa, for all you have done.

I also thank my constituents, each of them, for trusting me to be their voice and allowing me to fight for them every single day in Congress.

Though I will be leaving Congress formally, I plan to continue to fight for the people in New York-16, particularly in the areas of Port Chester, Greenburgh, Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, and, of course, the Bronx.

If it weren't for the people in these particular communities, especially the Bronx, where I served as an educator

for 17 of the 20 years of my career, I would not have been prepared to come to Congress and serve the people.

Of course, I need to thank my team, both in New York and here in D.C., who worked every single day to do everything in their power to meet the needs of the people of New York-16.

Our case closure was exemplary. We brought tens of millions of dollars back to the district, and we did everything in our power to deal with the issues of affordability, gun violence, education, and so many other issues. I thank my staff and my team so much, and I thank them for their service.

In 2020, I became the first African American elected in the 16th District of New York in U.S. history. When I was running, I didn't even know that stat, which is pretty interesting.

As such, I stand on the shoulders of the giants who have come before me. My ancestors fought and died for me to have the opportunity to be here, and I am humbled by the immense honor and responsibility.

My ancestors built this place and built the strongest economy in the world as enslaved Africans in this country, and though we didn't pass any legislation related to reparations, we will continue to fight for reparations for Black people in this country.

I cannot go further without giving honor to my late mother, Ms. Pauline Bowman. My mother raised me and my three sisters alone. She was a civil servant in the post office for 33 years. She worked 6 days, sometimes 7 days a week and all the overtime she could muster to make sure that I was the first person in our family to go to college.

When I was very young, she told me—and I remember this story very clearly. We were coloring in a coloring book at the dining room table, and I could not color in between the lines. She could, and I thought it was like magic that she could.

I started crying. I was pretty upset. My mother looked me in the eye and told me I can be whatever I wanted to be.

It was that love and that confidence that she instilled in me that guided me and propelled me to win a historic election. She got to see me run. She got to see me win. She got to see me on her favorite news programs, CNN and MSNBC.

I would like to think that I made her proud before my sisters and I lost her to COVID on Valentine's Day in 2021.

Mom, Pauline Bowman, I love you. I thank you, and please continue to guide and watch over me.

It is a challenging world we live in, and I want to be the best example for my children and the people who I will continue to serve outside of this Chamber.

Mom, I love you. I always will love you. This place is better because of you and because of what you raised me to be.

Prior to being elected to Congress, I worked in education for 20 years as a

teacher, counselor, and middle school principal. My mission was to do everything in my power to unlock the unlimited potential of our kids.

My mission in Congress was to unlock the unlimited potential of a district that had been left behind for so long. I am proud of the transformational legislation we introduced and fought for that would uplift hardworking families across the country, particularly the most marginalized. From lowering costs to revolutionizing public education as we know it, the bills we introduced will be life-changing, and I am going to name a few.

□ 1130

My Green New Deal for public schools would heal and strengthen our schools and address the holistic needs of students to support healthy, safe, and high-quality learning opportunities. It is well past time that we put young people and public education at the center of our national response to the climate crisis, systemic racism, and economic inequality by passing this bill.

My Care for All Agenda would urge Federal investments to strengthen and expand the care economy, anchoring a transformation toward an economic system grounded in care for ourselves, our communities, and our planet instead of one grounded in money and power.

My Ending Corporate Greed Act would institute a windfall tax profits tax on corporations to penalize companies that use inflation as an excuse to raise prices and profit off the backs of hardworking Americans.

If we want to talk about truly transformational legislation that provides economic relief to the American people, puts money back in people's pockets, and charts a visionary path toward combating the challenges of the 21st century, then these bills are the place to start.

I hope that in the next Congress, my colleagues will have the courage to fight for these transformational pieces of legislation.

Otherwise, we have to ask ourselves, why are we here? What are we here for?

I will take a moment to talk about wealth inequality. The staggering wealth inequality we face today is not just a statistic; it is a reflection of decades of policy decisions and systemic failures that have left millions struggling while a few prosper.

Today, the two wealthiest individuals own more wealth than the bottom half of the country combined. This isn't because they worked harder than everyone else; it is the result of a system that prioritizes corporate profits over fair wages, tax cuts for the rich over investments in public goods, and financial markets over working families.

Wages for the average worker have barely risen in 40 years, while the cost of healthcare, housing, and education has skyrocketed. Meanwhile, those

with generational wealth have used their influence to shape policies that protect their fortunes, while communities across America are left behind. This is not inevitable. It is a choice.

I will talk briefly about military spending for a moment. Tupac Shakur's words ring true today: "They got money for wars but can't feed the poor."

The U.S. spends over \$886 billion annually on defense, more than the next 10 countries combined. Yet, millions of Americans struggle with poverty, housing insecurity, and access to childcare and education. Billions of dollars are wasted on over-budget weapons programs, failed projects, and unnecessary overseas military bases. We can and must reinvest our money in the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with this: Never in my life did I think I would be elected to any office, let alone the United States House of Representatives. It was not on my to-do list or on my bucket list. I don't even know how I got here, quite frankly. I will say it was my work in education and my work with children and families over 20 years that helped me understand, on a visceral level, the deep, historic, systemic inequalities we have in our country that are policy decisions rooted in systemic discrimination.

To quote my sister, the great AYANNA PRESSLEY: This body has committed policy violence toward communities of color and working-class people in our country. So my crazy butt decided I am going to run for office in 2019.

The reason why I got the confidence to do so is because I saw 4 incredible women run and win in 2018: RASHIDA TLAIB, ILHAN OMAR, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, and AYANNA PRESSLEY. Four young women of color, a couple of them dark skinned, a couple of them Muslim, one wearing a hijab, transformed America in 2018 and they will continue to transform America for generations to come.

It is this body's responsibility to listen to them, learn from them, and follow their leadership because this country will never reach its full potential unless it follows the examples of these four women I just mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I thank them so much for giving me a space and a platform and a footprint to be myself as I ran for office and won that historic election.

Then 2 years later, I was able to win and my sister, CORI BUSH, was able to join me here in this incredible place. Then 2 years later, we got DELIA RAMIREZ, SUMMER LEE, GREG CASAR, and many others.

I am going to quote AYANNA PRESSLEY again: Our squad is big, y'all, and our squad includes the entire country.

I will do everything in my power to continue to be an example for young people, working-class people, and people of color. I will do everything in my power to continue to be an example for young men, especially young Black

men. We don't have to be rappers. We don't have to be athletes. We definitely don't have to be womanizers. Don't let the stereotypes drive you in that direction because we are fathers. We are husbands. We are sons. We are great people.

We will continue together to organize, mobilize, and build the movement rooted in love and humanity for ourselves, for our community, for this country, and for the world.

Mr. Speaker, I thank so much my sister, CORI, from St. Louis for allowing me a few words. I am excited for the work ahead of us. There is much more to come. Free Palestine, free the Bronx, and free all marginalized people, especially those locked up on trumped up marijuana charges. Let's also vacate the death row sentences of the 39 people on death row.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, I say to Congressman BOWMAN that I do believe his mother is very, very proud looking down on him today right here. She is very, very proud of him. We hope he takes that as he walks out of this Chamber and starts on his new journey. If my child was a Congressman and accomplished the things that he has accomplished, oh, how proud I would be.

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

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I address the people's House to honor the legacy of my friends, of my colleagues, and partners in the fight for justice and global peace, Congresswoman CORI BUSH and Congressman JAMAAL BOWMAN. BUSH and BOWMAN are the embodiment of courageous leadership.

Representative BUSH is a fighter for peoples' right to a dignified life. In the middle of the pandemic, when people were trying to figure out how to stay alive and how to continue to have a roof over their head, this courageous leader, as the eviction moratorium was about to expire said: I can't go home if others will not have a home tomorrow. She stood on these Capitol steps courageously taking a stand for hundreds of thousands of families across this country.

What she didn't know was that a little State representative from Chicago, Illinois, was watching what she and others were doing, as I was trying to concurrently negotiate legislation in the State of Illinois to help people stay housed.

Mr. Speaker, CORI BUSH will never know the number of people and families and children that she has saved because of her courageous leadership. She has enshrined the rights of women. She has promoted safety, well-being, and prosperity in our communities.

Representative JAMAAL BOWMAN, a lifelong educator and an advocate of

opportunity, accountability, and racial justice, has fought day and night and continues to fight day and night for accessible, culturally competent education for every single student in this country.

Mr. Speaker, while dark money in politics may have stripped this Chamber of two of its most authentic champions of working people, let me be very clear: They will not be silenced. I know them too well.

BOWMAN and BUSH, in or out of the Halls of Congress, will continue fighting like heaven and hell for our shared humanity because our work, it is not finished.

This “Congresswoman,” “Congresista” from Chicago, who has watched all of them with pride and honor, will continue in this Chamber and will continue working with them also outside of this Chamber and is ready to fight with them for humanity, not just in the United States, but globally.

Mr. Speaker, I end by saying, it has been the greatest honor of my life the last 2 years to serve with them. May their courage and their love for people be felt in every seat of this Chamber.

Every single moment we enter it, we are asking ourselves—perhaps physically they are not sitting in the second back row here—but what would CORI and JAMAAL do in this moment?

And what Cori and Jamaal would do in every single moment is to stand for the people that others have forgotten about. I thank them, and I look forward to the many things we will do together.

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman RAMIREZ came into Congress like a whirlwind. She has brought something that I feel so many of us needed and were missing. We appreciate her, and I thank her for coming in and being who she is and bringing Chicago into this space in a different way.

Mr. Speaker, I will offer my farewell address before the House.

Mr. Speaker, St. Louis and I rise just as we have risen so many times before over these last 4 historic years.

Together, we came into this work with a simple mission: to transform Missouri’s First District by taking care of the people.

On day one, we vowed to do the most for St. Louis, starting with those who had the greatest need. We were clear-eyed of what was in front of us, ahead of us, and behind us. We stayed focus. We stayed committed.

St. Louis and I came to Congress after unseating a 52-year political family dynasty. I ran for this seat twice to win it.

Today, I stand before you as the first Black woman and first nurse to represent Missouri in Congress, the first woman to represent Missouri’s First Congressional District, and the first activist from the movement to save Black lives to serve in Congress.

□ 1145

From the day that I was sworn in, I have brought you, my community, and my own lived experiences with me into every vote, every committee hearing, and every floor speech. St. Louis and I. I am proud to be the people I represent.

I am the young girl who grew up in a working-class household, where my father was a union meatcutter and my mother was a computer analyst. I am the teenager who had my first abortion at the age of 18 after being sexually assaulted at the age of 17. I am the young woman in her early 20s who endured an abusive relationship that nearly ended my life. I am the mother who endured pregnancy and childbirth complications, who encountered biased medical care that was dismissive of my pain. I am the formerly single mother to two beautiful children, Zion and Angel, who will always be my greatest accomplishment. I am the nurse and pastor who cared for others throughout our community. I am the asthmatic adult who understands the challenges of being uninsured. I am the activist from the front lines of Ferguson, the Ferguson uprising movement, who in 2014 was out on the streets for over 400 days protesting police violence after the killing of Michael Brown.

My life experiences are different from many of my colleagues here on Capitol Hill, but outside these walls, my experiences are all too familiar.

In Missouri and across the country, people are living multifaceted lives, and they endure the decisions we do and don’t make in this Chamber each and every day. Like me, one in four people of reproductive age have had an abortion before the age of 45 in the United States. Like I was, over 580,000 people in the U.S. experience homelessness on any given night, and in Missouri nearly 6,000 people are living without stable homes, almost a quarter of them unsheltered. Like I have been, nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the U.S. have been raped at some point in their lives, and in Missouri 1 in 3 women and 1 in 7 men have experienced sexual violence. Just like I have endured, approximately 41 percent of women and 26 percent of men across our country have reported that they have experienced a form of domestic violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime. In Missouri, our State has the third highest rate of domestic violence in the U.S.

St. Louis sent me to Congress because I reflect the struggles so many people in our community endure. Throughout my tenure in the people’s House, I have turned my pain into purpose. I have testified before the House Oversight Committee, sharing my abortion story for the first time. I know that there are others out there, like me, who never shared or may never share their truth with their family members or their friends, but are living through this reality, horrified.

It has led me to fight and put my body on the line to protect medication

abortion, to protect sexual and reproductive health, to stop the Comstock Act, to secure abortion justice, to finally finalize the equal rights amendment, which we are pushing President Biden to do in the next 39 days. On this point, I am so proud to be one of two Black women to ever sponsor legislation to ratify the ERA in its 101 years’ long history, to have cofounded and cochaired the first-ever Congressional Caucus for the equal rights amendment. Black women have always been integral to the fight for equal rights and so often relegated to its footnotes. Congresswoman AYANNA PRESSLEY and I have forever changed that.

My life experiences have shaped and informed this work. I have been violated. I have been shot at, raped, and assaulted by people I have known and people I have loved. I deeply understand the statistic that a woman is five times more likely to be murdered when her abuser has access to a gun because I am one of those women who have come close to joining that statistic. It is why I pushed so hard for the inclusion of ending the dating partner loophole in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act because I know safer communities doesn’t just mean safer streets. It means safer relationships, too.

I have been beaten, brutalized, and assaulted as a Ferguson front lines activist. I have grieved with my community for Mike Brown, Kajieme Powell, VonDerrit Myers, Anthony Lamar Smith, and so many others; so, so many others. I know that police brutality is a preventable crisis and that it is affecting Black and Brown communities disproportionately. It is what our movement to save Black lives is born out of. It is why I partnered with that same movement to author the People’s Response Act, to end police brutality, to end all police violence, to transform community safety, to treat public safety as the public health issue that it is.

I am one of just over 180 Black Representatives to ever serve in this institution, where over 1,700 Members of Congress who enslaved Black people have held office, and as the Congresswoman representing the very district where Dred Scott was denied citizenship because he was Black. I have seen how the legacy of enslavement, persists in the policies that govern our lives today, from housing and healthcare to education and economic inequality, to mass incarceration and police brutality. It is why I introduced the Reparations Now Resolution, laying out a historic framework for how our government can begin its moral and legal obligation to provide reparations to the descendants of chattel slavery in America because it isn’t enough just to acknowledge the past. We must work to reckon with its consequences and act to repair its harms.

I ran for this seat to deliver for St. Louis, for the people. Over the past 4 years, we have delivered over \$2 billion

in Federal investments for our communities, resources that will empower our district and create lasting change for generations. This includes over \$41 million which has gone toward community projects geared toward homelessness prevention, public health, youth engagement, environmental justice, and economic revitalization projects across St. Louis. We have helped to guide thousands of our constituents through Federal case work, and we established community programs such as Congress in Your Neighborhood and Congress in Your Classroom.

I have refused to settle for crumbs handed to our communities. I have sat and listened to SEIU caregivers and so many other union workers and leaders. I have been in community with environmental organizers pushing for climate action. I have mourned with grieving families demanding an end to gun violence. I have been with the mom who couldn't afford childcare or who struggled to feed her family.

When the President asked us to fight for his economic agenda, his full economic agenda, I fought, we fought, those sitting behind me, we fought for his full economic agenda. If not for a few corporate Democrats, the Build Back Better Act would be the law of the land now. We would have stopped talking about rising inflation and instead delivered on universal pre-K and affordable childcare, a permanent monthly tax credit, paid leave, free school meals, investments in our caregivers, historic funding to build new affordable housing and rehabilitate crumbling housing stock, expanded Medicare benefits, taxes on billionaire corporations and ultra wealthy so they can finally pay their fair share and, lastly, removing every lead pipe poisoning our communities.

We may have lost that fight, but there must be a reckoning. The November election has shown that we were right to fight. We were right to fight as hard as we fought, to put everything we had for Build Back Better. This party must do better.

I have been unhoused. I know the trauma of that policy violence, of being forced out on the street, of not knowing if my two babies would survive the night in our car because of freezing temperatures. I know that. It is why I introduced the first of its kind legislation called the Unhoused Bill of Rights, which makes clear the basic human rights and dignity of our unhoused neighbors. It provides the roadmap for ending homelessness by 2027. Congress can do that. We can guarantee safe, affordable, and stable housing for all people, and we must.

I still remember also, which is what we just heard from Congresswoman RAMIREZ, the day in August 2021 when we were on the brink of the expiration of the Federal eviction moratorium; and with a bill waiting to be passed on the House floor, Congress actually gaveled out to head to the comforts of their own homes for the next 6 weeks. Know-

ing the indignity of being evicted myself, I could not leave, and I did not leave, and I have friends who stayed or who showed up and came back. The squad showed up.

For months prior, we had pushed the Biden administration and CDC to prevent a lapse in the pandemic-era Federal ban on evictions. I knew that so many lives in St. Louis and nationwide were at risk, so I did what I do. I led from my life experience and stayed put, right on the Capitol steps. For four nights and five days, through cold rain and summer heat, we pushed for our government to act. My team and I negotiated with the House and Senate leadership, with the White House, Biden administration officials, including HHS and Treasury, and worked in tandem with the Congressional Black Caucus and Progressive Caucus to keep people housed. The White House heeded our call, reinstating the eviction moratorium and keeping 11 million people housed. However, it shouldn't take such drastic action from lawmakers to act. The risk of harming a single person, when you have the power not to, should be enough. Again, as my time here comes to a close, I ask my colleagues here to do better.

The decisions we make here within these Halls do not exist in a vacuum. They ripple outward, touching the lives of millions. They impact the unhoused veteran searching for safety, the survivor waiting to be heard and believed, the child admitted to the emergency room because they are asthmatic and can't breathe. We must honor the humanity and circumstance of those we serve because being in Congress is a privilege.

Don't waste it and don't settle. Don't say: Well, we tried. Don't abuse the power we have been afforded to make a difference in people's lives. The people are depending on you to show up for them and their need. You have the power to change the world, so don't sit on that power. Use it to do good deeds and to save and transform lives. We are the United States of America. We are the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, so we can't act like the court jester. Do better. If you are not willing to do the hard work to shirk the corporate donors in service of everyday people, then how can you call yourself a Representative?

I understand this, and it is why I was one of the first Members of Congress, along with those sitting here with me today, to call for a cease-fire, and why I am the lead sponsor of the historic cease-fire now resolution. It is why I kept calling for a cease-fire even after the White House called us repugnant and disgraceful only to turn around and later adopt the same policy without an apology, without even so much as a phone call. It is why I will keep standing up for Palestinian liberation and against genocide, infanticide, femicide, and androicide. It is why I will fight for peace and against endless war, for our collective humanity and

against our collective demise, even when my persistence bought—and, yes, I said bought—my successor the seat with a whole lot of Republican money.

□ 1200

For me, when I came into office, I vowed to be the same person I was then as I am today, to lead with a heart that knows no borders. My love and my fight have always been for all the people.

When I was first elected, I toured John Lewis' office. I stood in the space where courage once sat, and I vowed to honor his legacy. I know many of us in this body have done the same.

Let's be honest, too many of us recite his words without following his example. Too many of us who should be allies remain silent in the face of injustice.

Many of us, especially my Democratic colleagues, tout that we are the party for human rights, the party for justice, that we fight loud and proud for all people no matter their race, background, sexual orientation, faith, or ethnicity.

Yet, when it comes to Palestinian liberation, so many have chosen silence—silence in the face of bombed hospitals and schools, displaced families, starvation and illness, entire bloodlines wiped out, and the cries of mothers and children; silence in the face of apartheid; silence in the face of ethnic cleansing; silence in the face of oppression and racial subjugation that mirrors the systems of Jim Crow, systemic racism, and inequality that we fight against here in America. Silence.

Maybe for some it is because it is easy or because the politics are—what do we hear? Too complicated. Those are excuses. Those are copouts to doing the right thing, and as Members of Congress, they are hindrances to doing our job.

In the words of Dr. King: "The time is always right to do right," so I will keep leading with consistent love and consistent respect for all people, no matter their background, the color of their skin, or where they were born.

I will fight for every person's right to live, to love, and to thrive. I will keep standing up for a free Palestine, for a free Haiti, for a free Congo, for a free Sudan, for a free St. Louis, for a free America, for a free democracy.

I will always fight for the people in our country and world who have the greatest need; for those who are incarcerated, unhoused, unemployed, uninsured, food insecure, struggling to make ends meet; for our children and for our elders; for victims and survivors of violence; for those persecuted and villainized; for every person who has been historically excluded, marginalized, silenced, or cast aside by entrenched systems of violent oppression, repression, white supremacy, and systemic injustice.

If you think it is this consistency or this radical love that is a weakness, a mistake, or the reason why I won't be

here next year, think again. My radical and unconditional love for humanity is not a weakness; it is my superpower. The only reason why I will not be here next year is because I didn't bend my morals to special interests.

They tried to silence me, but it didn't work. They thought I would crack under the pressure, but they underestimated me. They tried to buy me, but you can't buy someone who refuses to be bought. No one can buy my silence. No one can pay me to be silent so their people can then go drop bombs on other people. I made a decision to be change, not chained.

I am reminded of a Scripture in Mark 8:36: For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

My colleagues, I share the words of Dr. King, who said: "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

Colleagues, special interests would have you believe that fighting for those who others deem unworthy—you know, justice—comes at a cost that you can't afford, that it isn't worth putting your reputation and livelihood on the line, that sometimes backing down or staying quiet is smart politics, that keeping the status quo is better than challenging it.

Well, my Christian colleagues should be familiar with this verse: "You are the salt of the Earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing."

If we are not bringing something to the situation to transform it for the better, if we are not being about the change, if we are not the reason why people are helped, if we can't season the problem and make it flavorful, if we can't bring that flavor to making that change that the people need where we leave a positive mark, then we have no purpose here in this work.

My words are not for condemnation but reconciliation—let me be clear—a reminder to love thy neighbor as myself. If you would not bomb yourself, we should not be bombing our neighbors. Let that word "love" be about your action. Reflect on your own actions or your inaction. Reckon with your own self, and then walk anew in this moment.

There are people in this country and around the world who need your voice, who need you to stand up and speak out, who need you to be who you say you are, but for all people, not just some of the people. Don't let them down. Never before have we seen such vital collective action on Palestine, or support for the cause of an arms embargo on Israel, and never before have we seen such brazen efforts by AIPAC and its affiliates to try to shut out our voices.

They wouldn't be coming for us if we weren't powerful. We won't back down. We won't go backward. We will keep fighting for equal rights, dignity, security, justice, and self-determination for all people. We understand what the word "all" means.

We will keep fighting to end the disastrous Citizens United to get dark money out of politics and for the representation that everyday people need, not billionaires and billionaire corporations.

Now, every elected official knows that the work we do, we don't do it alone. There are so many people who uplift us, support us, sustain us, who prop us up, and hold us down in this work. I will take the time to thank some of them now.

I thank my chairmen and their staff, Ranking Members RASKIN and NADLER and former Chairwoman Maloney. I thank them for believing in me and welcoming my perspective. Carolyn's mentorship on the ERA has helped me arrive at the point where I am today. JAMIE's work has inspired me, and his mentorship has meant the world to me.

I thank Democratic House leadership and their staff. I thank them for their support.

I thank every person who calls the Capitol their workplace, every single person who works in this place to keep it going.

I thank our OG Congresswoman BARBARA LEE for being a quintessential auntie, mentor, leader, and friend, for always having my back and showing that even if you have to stand alone, never compromise your values.

I thank CPC and CBC Chairs PRAMILA JAYAPAL, JOYCE BEATTY, and STEVEN HORSFORD for leading our caucuses with foresight and openness, and to their staff, including but not limited to Vincent Evans and Michael Darner.

I thank the late Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee for her friendship, mentorship, and commitment to securing justice for Black communities, particularly in the form of reparations. I will forever honor her memory.

I thank Senator BERNIE SANDERS for his leadership and unwavering consistency. If we can say anything, we can say consistency. I thank him for being a movement builder and an inspiration.

I thank Senator ELIZABETH WARREN for being a model for delivering for communities, for stepping out and embracing issues that help everyday people, and for embracing me during our action on the eviction moratorium.

I thank Senator MARKEY for being a steadfast partner in the work for environmental justice and protecting frontline communities. I am deeply appreciative that our first bicameral bill together made it into law to help prioritize resources to communities like St. Louis.

I am so grateful and so honored to have the greatest group of friends within these walls who are anything but silent: RASHIDA, AYANNA, DELIA, ILHAN, JAMAAL, SUMMER, ALEX, and so many others. Our squad was never small and never silent.

We have changed the course of history. Each of you have made history and made a difference in your own right, and you have made a difference in my life. I am going to speak for

Brother JAMAAL: He has made a difference in here.

I thank them for their friendship. I thank them for their partnership, their solidarity. I thank them for how they lead and how they taught me. I thank them for bringing all of themselves to Congress. I thank them for how they helped communities from Detroit to Minneapolis to Pittsburgh to Boston to the Bronx to Chicago to Puerto Rico to Central America to Somalia to Haiti to Palestine, and everywhere in between. I ask that they hold up our sister RASHIDA over these next 2 years in our absence.

To my brother JAMAAL, we came into Congress together in 2020. I am so proud to have served with him, served in such a time as this one. He is authentically him. He represented his district and his country with heart and with courage, and we are family. If nothing else, we will always be connected for our time right here in Congress together, our impact on our world, and for the experiences that we have endured together this cycle and the last. I thank him for not ever backing down in our work in protecting humanity, no matter the stakes.

I thank my remarkable staff: Amelia Letson, Caleb Ammon-Hahn, Christopher Key, Claire Shackelford, Isabella Siegel, Jessica Grandberry, Jacqueline Greco, Joi Benton, Karla Santillan, Kate Salamido, Kimberly Bryant, Marina Chafa, Rachell Nord Roseau, and Lynese Wallace, and all of our interns and all of our fellows, to Abbas Alawieh, Danielle Spradley, Stephanie Herndon, Kate Kelly, and all those past and present who are forever part of Team Rep. CORI.

I thank them. They all have never forgotten the mission to do the most for every single person in St. Louis, starting with those who have the greatest need, from responding to the toughest of days—two historic flooding events, a devastating school shooting, displaced housing incidents, verbal attacks, and death threats—to the best of days—securing the eviction moratorium, transforming people's engagement with government, delivering for our community.

For our collective liberation and building movement-based coalitions, Team Rep. Cori has delivered for St. Louis, and I am deeply appreciative of every single one of them for their love and dedication to the people, all the people, all of humanity, and for the betterment of our world.

I thank the Ferguson front line, the families, the whole of our movement to save lives. I thank them for entrusting me and my team and our work. Our work is unfinished. We will never tire. We will never back down until justice is won.

I thank my family, who have always been there with me. I thank my dad, Earl, superdad. I wish my mom a happy birthday today. Go 70. I thank my sister, Kelli, my brother, Perry, my aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and

nephews. I thank my incredible husband, our four kids, and our grandchild, and our in-love family.

They have endured missed holidays, the weight of public scrutiny, and the challenges that come with my calling. Without your unwavering encouragement, without your boundless grace and steadfast support, I would not be able to dedicate myself so fully to serving St. Louis and to this work. Their love has always been my foundation. Their love has always been my strength.

I say to my beloved St. Louis: This work was never about one single seat. It was always about the change that we need to feel, the dreams we dare to dream for ourselves and for our children, for our legacy, the hopes and the aspirations we have to move beyond struggle and hardship toward opportunity and prosperity for all of us.

We are the change that we seek. What we have accomplished together over the last 4 years is nothing short of extraordinary. We have witnessed history, and we have made history. We have laughed, and we have cried. We have stood in solidarity, and we stood our doggone ground.

We have turned our pain into power and our obstacles into opportunities. We have faced challenges head-on, and we have emerged stronger than ever. We are St. Louis, though we know that there is yet still much more work left to do. Together, we have shown that it is possible to lead with purpose and moral clarity and to fight with honor and love for all people.

While my time in Congress may be coming to an end for now, know this: I came into Congress with my voice. Congress didn't give that to me, so Congress can't take that away when I leave, let's be clear.

It has been the honor of my life to be your Congresswoman for Missouri's First District.

To my mom and dad, I know they are proud. From St. Louis to Gaza and everywhere beyond and in between, I love and will always have their back, even if it means I lose something.

Until we rise again, I love St. Louis.

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

□ 1215

#### CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate California State officials, as tomorrow is the big day when the State's election results will be certified—tomorrow, December 13.

Of course, I say this in jest. There is absolutely no congratulations in order for finalizing election results 5 weeks after the election.

Because of California's glacial pace of counting votes, several races for Congress and the State legislature remain unresolved weeks following the November 5 election, not to mention countless local races—city council, school board, board of supervisors. Candidates had to wait in torturous suspense, unable to effectively begin a transition if they were on their way in or make plans for another job if they were on their way out.

Just to give you a sense of what folks who are waiting on election results had to go through, they would have to wait for these batches of votes to be unveiled maybe once a week, maybe twice a week, maybe three times a week, depending on the county, maybe hundreds of votes at a time.

Then you had to ask: What kinds of votes is it that are being counted right now? Is it the late absentee votes? Is it the voting center votes? Is it the drop box votes? Is it the provisional ballots? Is it conditional ballots? Is it cured ballots?

What do I mean by cured ballots? Well, you are familiar with precinct walking where you go out and knock on doors to try to convince people to vote for you. In California, that actually happens after the election, as well, because if signatures are deemed not to match the voter file, then there is an added amount of time to submit a new signature to cure your ballot. People actually go door to door saying that we need to get you to sign again to cure this ballot.

California also allows for votes that arrive at elections offices to be counted up to a week after the election. Folks who are on the ballot and their families and their supporters and everyone else are watching this process with tabs left open on their computer for different counties, having to wait to find out whether they have won or lost their race.

The implications go much further than those who are on the ballot because for a time, the entire balance of power here in Washington was left in doubt with control of the House of Representatives in doubt because of California's extremely slow vote counting.

Imagine if California were a swing State. The Presidential election could remain undecided for a month after election day. We could relive the 2000 recount experience every single election.

Adding to the absurdity, the California State Legislature actually began its new session, swearing in new Members on December 2. These are both in State law. We are going to swear in our new Members on December 2, but we are going to finish counting votes on December 13.

This farce has made California a national laughingstock. It is one thing to fail at basic governance tasks like building roads, storing water, or keeping the lights on. We should at least be able to expect our government to conduct the elementary arithmetic of tal-

lying ballots on which democracy depends.

As this process dragged on over the last several weeks, you had elections experts and people on all parts of the political spectrum calling for reform in California.

For example, one left-leaning election analyst said this. He said: I always vote straight ticket Democrat, but I will actually vote for any Secretary of State candidate, red or blue, who promises to streamline the election process in California and facilitates getting our ballots counted and reported faster. I am so done, he said, adding that the tabulation process is a joke.

I am working with Congressman JAY OBERNOLTE to set clear deadlines for counting votes. For example, 90 percent have to be counted within 3 days of the election. This will force State officials to make the necessary changes to meet those deadlines in a way that every other State, by the way, has already done. All 49 other States, red or blue, managed to count their votes much faster and more confidently than California.

This is a necessary change to restore trust in our election process, and I look forward to getting this legislation passed and signed into law in time for the 2026 election.

#### ENDING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, this week I announced legislation to end all Federal funding for California's high-speed rail project. This bill will make the project ineligible to receive any Federal funding going forward.

Simply put, it is time to stop throwing good money after bad. Currently, there remains a \$100 billion funding shortfall for the train. This is in the estimation of the High-Speed Rail Authority's own officials.

There is no viable plan for making up this gap other than continuing to demand it from taxpayers. There is simply no way to justify further expense to State or Federal taxpayers when even The New York Times reports that the project isn't on track to be completed this century. Not on track to be completed this century.

The billions in Federal funding that have gone to the nonexistent train is all the worse, considering the condition of California's roads and other transportation infrastructure which rank among the very worst in the country. Once we have high-speed rail off the table, we will be able to focus on our real transportation needs when it comes to Federal funds.

We can also abandon the pretense that this is somehow a high-tech, inspirational, visionary enterprise. The reality is that even if the train were to magically spring into existence at this very moment, it would fail to impress.

As we speak, Waymo is providing thousands upon thousands of driverless rides every week in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Tesla has autopilot and self-driving software deployed on millions of vehicles.