

All these countries, even Germany, are just trying to deal with the financing costs of their pensions. The United States is much better off than many of these countries, but it is coming fast for us.

Do hard things today. Maximize prosperity tomorrow for every working person but also for my kids and maybe for your pension, your retirement.

Mr. Speaker, getting older isn't Republican or Democratic. It is math. Go to CBO's data and tell the truth: 100 percent of the debt for the next 30 years is Social Security and Medicare. The rest of the government actually grows slower than tax receipts. It is like \$124 trillion of borrowing, but everything is basically what we call discretionary. Military is actually squeezed to grow slower than the tax receipts. It actually has what they calculate as a positive balance.

This isn't mean because, the fact of the matter is, we have demonstrated here over and over that you could modernize how we deliver so many of these things to our brothers and sisters who have earned their benefits. You just have to be willing to tell the bureaucracy and the deliverers of those services, saying: We expect you to modernize.

Those of us with a fixation on watching the bond futures, the debt markets, today's interest rates are almost a full point higher than they were December 1. If that 1 percent works its way into U.S. bonds over the next 10 years, it is almost \$3 trillion of additional spending. It is almost everything we are talking about trying to cut.

Grow up. Figure out how to actually act like we are the board of directors of the biggest economy in the world, understand math, and start being fiscally disciplined. It doesn't mean cruel. It is not cutting and slashing. If you don't communicate to the world, who we ask for money, they raise our interest rates, and those interest rates are much more cruel than anything we could possibly do.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Before we go to our next speaker, may I please remind the gallery to close the door if there are conversations outside the gallery.

#### PARDONING RIOTERS WHO ASSAULTED 140 POLICE OFFICERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, here we are on the final legislative day of inauguration week.

As a Democrat, this was a week of mixed feelings for me and for my colleagues on this side of the aisle. I am also a genetic optimist, so on Monday, I went to the inauguration, yes, concerned, but also optimistic about new possibilities, committed as I always have been to finding ways to work with my Republican colleagues for the benefit of my constituents, and celebrating the peaceful transfer of power this time.

This time because, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, 4 years and 17 days ago today, in this Chamber, a brutal, violent, criminal attempt was made to prevent the peaceful transfer of power in our democracy.

Thousands of people rioted and descended on the Capitol. They broke windows, and they attacked police officers with heavy objects, with bear spray, with their fists, with anything at hand. Several carried firearms.

There were 140 police officers who were assaulted. Let me say that again: There were 140 police officers who were assaulted that day.

All of us have memories of that day. I started the day up in that corner of the gallery, and when it became clear that we had to evacuate, because I was in the gallery with some colleagues, it took a long time. We saw what was happening on the floor.

We saw the Capitol Police with weapons drawn as an object broke the window of the main door to the House. We watched the Capitol Police move a heavy article of furniture. In this country, it was an article of furniture that prevented the rioters from getting into this Chamber.

We have all seen those images. This time, we had a peaceful transfer of power.

Now, on Inauguration Day, I kept that optimism until the moment that the new President took the decision to pardon not those who were wrongly convicted for their actions on that day, not those who just got caught up in the frenzy and maybe didn't know that they were committing an offense by trespassing on the Capitol Grounds. The new President pardoned every single person, including those involved in those assaults on 140 police officers—every single one of them.

That was an uncomfortable moment for some of my colleagues, particularly on the Republican side. They were asked, and, well, they hadn't read the pardons, hadn't heard the story. It was an uncomfortable moment.

The Speaker responded by saying, yeah, we are not looking backward; we are looking forward. Then, very shortly thereafter, he reconstituted a committee to investigate the people who investigated what happened here on January 6.

□ 1715

The Speaker of the House said, House Republicans are proud of our work so far in exposing the false narratives peddled by the politically-motivated January 6th Select Committee during the 117th Congress; the false narratives.

Mr. Speaker, I get it. I get it. Sometimes people on my side of the aisle do things with which I do not agree, and I try to have the principle and the integrity to call them out for it.

You have two choices when people on your side do things that are wrong: You can call them out, you can stand with principle, and you can be clear; that is what leaders do. You can also obfuscate and try to change history, try to suggest that what we all saw and experienced traumatically wasn't what we all saw and experienced.

You can make stuff up, like maybe the FBI instigated it. Maybe it was really NANCY PELOSI's responsibility. Maybe it was antifa. Oh gosh, maybe the people who assaulted 140 police officers were just, like, tourists.

That is not the way of leadership. That is some dark, dark and evil way of proceeding. Why?

Because it dishonors the truth on which the stability of this Republic relies and maybe just as importantly: It dishonors all of us who were there that day and who saw with our own eyes what happened.

Maybe worst of all, it dishonors the brave men and women who put their lives on the line that day to protect us. Those of us who put up the signs on our office doors saying: Thank you, Capitol Police, only to turn around and remain silent when the attackers of the Capitol Police were pardoned on Monday.

These were people who put their lives on the line to protect us and the democracy. I think it is worth spending a minute or two, Mr. Speaker, to remind us who these people were and what happened.

Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, he stood outside the gates here and fended off the attackers as they bear sprayed him in the face and eyes.

The very next day, Officer Sicknick suffered two strokes and ultimately died, making him the first fatality of January 6. Officer Brian Sicknick was only the fourth Capitol Police officer to die in the line of duty.

Julian Khater pled guilty to pepper-spraying Brian Sicknick, and he was pardoned on Monday.

Officer Jeffrey Smith of the Metropolitan Police Department, he fought off rioters in the Capitol that day only to be struck in the face by a metal pole as the siege continued that night. You can imagine the trauma. We feel it. We didn't get struck in the face by a metal pole though. Days later, Officer Smith climbed into his Ford Mustang and shot himself in the head.

Those who assaulted Officer Jeffrey Smith are now pardoned.

Officer Howie Liebgood grew up in the Senate. He followed his father

around. His father, at the time, was the Senate Sergeant at Arms. On January 6, Officer Liebengood was posted to Senate security where he faced down the rioters.

He came back to work, despite what he had seen on January 6, on January 7, January 8, and January 9, unwilling to quit and inconvenience his fellow, similarly depleted and exhausted, officers. On the night of January 9, Howie Liebengood took out his service revolver and shot himself.

Officer Gunther Hashida was a decorated Metropolitan Police Department officer. Officer Hashida earned the Medal of Valor, the Lifesaving Medal, and a variety of other medals throughout his 18-year career. He served on the Department's emergency response team and responded here on January 6. Officer Hashida took his own life at home in July of 2021.

Officer Kyle DeFreitag was 26 years old. He had been on the job for 5 years when he deployed to the riot, to the insurrection. He was tasked with enforcing the curfew put in place that evening. He was 26 years old when he committed suicide.

The trauma suffered by these officers was not an accident. It wasn't an act of God or an act of nature. It was done to them by people, each and every one of whom has now been pardoned. Not just pardoned, but they are out there now celebrating and thinking about what is next.

I have three questions for my colleagues before I invite them to reflect on what this week has meant to them. The first question I have is: We put up the signs on the doors that say: Thank you, brave police officers.

Do we honor the heroic work of those who protected us, or do we denigrate it by suggesting that it just wasn't that big a deal?

Is this just about signs on office doors, or do we raise our voices and say: Those who attacked the people who protected us don't deserve a pardon and certainly don't deserve celebration.

Question number two: Are we—and when I say we, each and every one of us and each and every American—are we committed, without reservation or condition, to the idea that our differences are worked out in here with words and debate, not out there with bear spray and clubs?

Are we committed to that idea, or do we celebrate and pardon and elevate those who wield bear spray and clubs?

I hear all too often something that is pernicious in moral thinking and a corrosive of our political dialogue: the whataboutism. Yeah, I was bad on January 6, but what about Black Lives Matter throwing bricks through Starbucks' windows in Seattle? What about the Biden pardons?

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, I am not a fan of the Biden pardons either. I am not afraid to say so because of that thing about principles.

Yet, the whataboutisms that equates a violent attempt to change the peace-

ful transfer of power with some idiot who throws a brick through a Starbucks window in Seattle or Portland, that is a lack of discernment.

More to the point, what a moral failure. We don't let 3-year-olds defend themselves with the idea that somebody else did it too.

How has this become an exculpatory thing in our politics?

Third and last, Mr. Speaker, and this is something that I think each and every one of us should reflect on: Where is your line? At what point do you say no? At what point do you find the courage to say no, Mr. President, that is not right?

This week, we learned that for most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the pardon of the attackers of these police officers was not outside that line.

At what point do you say no?

At what point do you remember that the Congress is here to be a check and a balance on the President, regardless of the President's party?

Mr. Speaker, if you can't answer that question, if you don't have that point, and if you don't have the commitment to principle and the courage to stand by that point, well, Mr. Speaker, I fear for the future of our Republic.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LANDSMAN).

Mr. LANDSMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman HIMES for doing this Special Order and including us. I appreciate his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I was legitimately shocked. I am certain that this is the first time ever the President of the United States, certainly in my lifetime, released hundreds of violent criminals from jails and sent them into our communities. These are people who have now said that they are determined to buy weapons to pursue more violence.

These are convicted criminals. They conspired to overthrow their own government. They stormed this Capitol. They destroyed property, sacred property. They attacked police officers.

On day one, a day that was supposed to be about fixing the economy, lowering prices, actual border security, and real immigration reform, the focus was on releasing these violent criminals.

Mr. Speaker, it is a betrayal to the American people, to law enforcement, and it has made us all less safe.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman HIMES for having this Special Order, and I thank him for his passion.

Mr. Speaker, I represent many of those people who protect us on Capitol Hill, members of the Capitol Police, the Metropolitan/Washington D.C. Police force, the Arlington County Police, police who live in my northern Virginia district.

January 6 was not some distant abstract event for my constituents. De-

mocracy was on the line that day, but so were their lives, their bodies, their physical safety, and well-being.

As events spiraled out of control on January 6, calls for help went out on police radios, and they were answered by men and women in uniform throughout the Metropolitan, Washington, Virginia, Maryland area, some of whom were off duty. Many were off duty. They chose to get dressed, jump in their cars, and race in to help us, to protect our Capitol, to protect all who work here.

Hundreds of those officers still bear the wounds seen and unseen that will never heal. The January 6 pardons and commutations were some of the worst things that Donald Trump has ever done. With these pardons, Trump embraced lawlessness and violence.

Trump pardoned the people who beat and tased my constituent, Officer Michael Fanone, who was tased repeatedly in the neck. He described it as being like torture, and it led him to have a heart attack at that very time.

Trump pardoned the people who gave a brain injury to my constituent, Officer Jeffrey Smith, days before he died by suicide. Congressman HIMES mentioned how he was beat in the head with a pole. His wife, Erin Smith, said those injuries changed him in his final days. He was a different person.

Officer Smith's death was later ruled as a line-of-duty death because it resulted from injuries suffered here on our behalf.

Trump pardoned the people who attacked my constituent, Officer Brian Sicknick. They sprayed him with pepper spray hours before his death from two strokes.

The medical examiner said his death was from natural causes, but what happened to Brian before his death during the attack on the Capitol clearly led to his death.

Trump pardoned the people who chanted Nazi slogans, who yelled racial slurs at our Black police officers, and those who called for the assassination of Speaker NANCY PELOSI and Trump's own Vice President, Mike Pence.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, Trump pardoned a man who was charged with throwing an explosive device at the police in the Capitol. This was a man who had previously been convicted of domestic violence, battery by strangulation.

Trump pardoned a man who stomped on an officer's head, who beat other officers with a flagpole, a crutch, pieces of furniture, and sprayed officers with pepper spray. Trump pardoned a man who ripped off the gas mask of a police officer, beat him in the face with it, and crushed him in a door.

Trump pardoned hundreds of people who pled guilty to assaulting law enforcement, many of them with deadly weapons. He pardoned or commuted the sentences of over a dozen violent criminals convicted of seditious conspiracy. By pardoning those who carry out

these heinous crimes, Trump has made our country less safe. He betrayed law enforcement heroes who protected the Capitol at great personal cost.

These pardons send a message that violent crime, even against law enforcement, will be sanctioned by Trump's government if it is carried out in his name.

I urge my colleagues to remember the families of the five police officers who died as a result of January 6: Officer Brian Sicknick, Jeffrey Smith, Howie Liebengood, Gunther Hashida, and Kyle DeFreitag.

I urge everyone to remember the officers who defended the Capitol on January 6, who put themselves at risk to protect us, and will carry the scars of the seen and unseen as long as they will live.

These scars were inflicted by people who will face no further legal consequences for those acts thanks to President Donald Trump. This injustice is a gross betrayal of their service and sacrifice but does not diminish their patriotism.

After January 6, many of my colleagues posted messages of support for law enforcement and the Capitol Police. It was on their doors. It was on their walls and in the halls of Longworth and Rayburn and Cannon. It was even on social media.

Members like Speaker JOHNSON called for the prosecution of those criminals who committed those acts of violence against the police who guard the Capitol. Let me quote Speaker JOHNSON: To the fullest extent of the law.

Republicans went on to hold votes on symbolic, nonbinding resolutions expressing support for police. They told us to back the blue. Back the blue. Their silence, or worse, their defense of Trump's pardons are unforgivable. They can never again claim to back the blue with any credibility.

Finally, a warning: With these pardons, Trump put violent, dangerous people back into our communities. Many of them did terrible things on other days besides January 6, 2021. All of them had just been emboldened by receiving get-out-of-jail-free cards from this President. Who knows what other criminal acts they will perpetrate next. Unfortunately, we are all about to find out.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for organizing this Special Order, appropriately so, because this is the conclusion of the inauguration efforts of this week.

On January 6, 2021, I expressed numerous times to my constituents and to my colleagues that it was the saddest day of the 20 years that I have had the privilege and honor to serve in the Congress. That day the world watched as a violent mob of insurrectionists

breached the Capitol, attacked the police viciously, and tried to overturn a fair and free election.

I was one of 25 Members trapped in the House gallery for 40 minutes as we observed the counting of the ballots as part of our responsibility every 4 years. Let me just say this was not a peaceful protest, as some have tried to portray it, including President Trump and Speaker JOHNSON.

Let me repeat this. The photos and the videos that we have all seen over the last 4 years make it very clear. This was no lovefest. It was not a peaceful protest. It was a violent insurrection attempt to overthrow a fair and free election. I feel very strongly about this, having been trapped up in that gallery with my colleagues here for 40 minutes.

On that day I came to the House Chamber with my colleagues to certify the 2020 Presidential election which President Joe Biden had won overwhelmingly. Four years later, this week, my colleagues and I are speaking out to ensure that no one rewrites history with a false narrative which we see being attempted to take place.

Just a handful of brave Capitol Police Officers up in that gallery that day stood between us and the violent mob that had already breached the Senate Chamber and now were trying to force their way in here to the people's House.

I took this photograph when I was crouched down there with my gas mask because of the attempt of this violent insurrectionist group of people. I remember crouching on the floor with my colleagues, thinking how could this be happening. I thought it was surreal and unbelievable that it would happen in the United States of America, the oldest democracy in the world.

As a student of American history, I thought to myself that as strong and as resilient as our democracy and our country has been historically during wars and depressions, it was a stark reminder to me, while we were up there wondering what our fate might be, how fragile our democracy can be.

This week President Trump pardoned over 1,500 perpetrators convicted for assaulting police officers and, as was noted by some of my colleagues here this afternoon, some who lost their lives. These are some of the folks, these Proud Boys, that were trying to break into the Chamber. The police had them on the ground. They had their hands bound.

We finally got out of this Chamber and walked out. As we were being escorted to a safe place, we saw people trying to break in to get us, to get the Speaker, to hang the Vice President at the direction of President Trump. They were trying to overthrow the results of the 2020 elections.

I do not believe these pardons that took place here this week were justified, and I think the majority of Americans don't believe they were either. We cannot allow history to be rewritten. The facts are the facts. The docu-

mentation, the hearings, and the videos are proof of what happened that day.

Four years ago those violent insurrectionists chose a different path at President Trump's direction. They shattered the sacred tradition of a peaceful transfer of power which has been the cornerstone of our democracy, dating back to our first President, George Washington.

Let's talk about this week. While I didn't agree with the outcome of last year's election, I respected it. That is the essence of a democracy. This Monday, at the inauguration, we had a peaceful transfer of power led by President Biden and the other former Presidents. That is the way it is supposed to be. It wasn't that way 4 years ago. No, it wasn't that way 4 years ago.

Let me just say something, and I wish more of my Republican colleagues had the profiles in courage that I think is required. Democrats are not election deniers. We may not have liked the results of last year's election, but we accepted them. We cannot allow history to be rewritten nor can we forget the sacrifices of the brave Capitol Police who risked everything to protect our democracy.

The Capitol Police stood on the front lines, giving their all to defend the ideals that we hold dear. They should be appropriately honored with more than simply a sign on our doors. We owe it to their families and to our constituents to ensure that the truth remains clear that justice is served and that we never let those who sought to tear us apart rewrite the story on January 6, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by expressing the simple, plain truth. As a young boy, my mother told me: The truth is the truth. America is a great country. Some of us like to say it is the greatest country in the world because we honor the truth. That is why we are here today. That is why this Special Order is important. That is why I want to thank my colleagues for speaking out. America is a great country because we honor and respect the truth.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his comments.

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

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because in light of the President's January 6 pardons, someone has to stand up for the people who defend this building, who defend the Representatives of the United States of America, and who defend this magnificent institution. I thank my esteemed colleague, Congressman HIMES, for reserving this Special Order hour because it is time that truth speaks.

Just the other day at the beginning of this week, the members of the Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police protected us once again as we engaged in inauguration ceremonies of the 47th President of the United States of America. The irony is that while they

were protecting us, the Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Government was preparing to undermine the spirit and the substance of that protection.

The very idea of pardoning people who violently attack police officers who were protecting the United States Capitol is anathema and should be offensive to every Member of this body. I simply cannot think of a more disgraceful act than to disrespect the life and blood and legacy of the men and women of the Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police who in some cases literally gave their lives to protect this institution and us as Representatives.

To pardon people who relished and participated in acts of political violence that led to the death of innocent people is something that cannot be and should not be overlooked. It cannot be explained away nor can it be facilitated by politics and regular parliamentary procedure.

What the 47th President of the United States has done in pardoning the people who attacked the police officers is simply wrong. I echo the words of my dear colleague, Congressman COSTA. We have been taught right versus wrong. Every Member of my esteemed party and Members on the opposite aisle should join us in raising their voice. We are setting a precedent. We should know and we should call out when character counts.

It is offensive, to say nothing of the fact that it is a violation of the moral law that makes this country one of the finest flowers in the gardens of the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the members of law enforcement who protect this building and who protect our lives that the Members of the Democratic Party see them. We understand them, and we respect them. We respect their character.

We are ashamed at the behavior of this institution. We are ashamed at the behavior of the 47th President of the United States of America. We are ashamed that our officers have been disgraced and humiliated while they come here to protect us every day. We have not afforded them the same protection that they give us every day.

We honor them. We respect them with giving them this hour to tell them that we have not forgotten those that have given their full measure of their duty to this country to protect us and to ensure that this democracy goes forward, even as they have been betrayed.

We do not support the unsolicited and unwarranted disrespect extended to them by the President of the United States of America. There were quotes given by Reverend Martin Luther King the other day. There is one quote I would like to share:

"Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?' Vanity asks the question, 'Is it popular?' But conscience asks the question, 'Is it right?'"

There comes a time that we must take a position that is neither with politics nor does it have to be popular.

We must ask the question that conscience raises: Is it right?

□ 1745

At some point, we have to stop functioning in this building as if political parties are the only thing that matters. At some point, we have to summon the courage to do what is right, even when it is not necessarily politically expedient. This is one of those times.

What happened on January 6 was violent. What happened on January 6 was a disgrace to the men and women who serve this institution honorably. Anybody who tries to make it out to be anything other than that, than actually what it was, is lying about what we saw with our very own eyes.

We shall know the truth, and the truth shall set us all free. How can we go forward if we cannot go forward in the truth? No lie can live forever.

The election of 2020 had been decided. The people who came here on January 6—that was not a day that most people in American history know what procedurally happens here. What happens here was supposed to be the transfer of power with the electoral college votes that we ceremoniously pass.

No, people were summoned. People were called. Who called them? What were they called to do? They came here and built a noose and gallows outside to hang the Vice President of the United States of America.

We sit here in silence? We act like it never happened?

What concerns me most now is that we are sowing the seeds for future anarchists. We are sowing the seeds for future insurrectionists. We are sowing the seeds for future levels of violence.

I would remind my colleagues that history is watching, the future is listening, and our children are observing everything that we do.

Before we get up and speak recklessly about a mob that violently attacked police officers, we would all be wise to consider how our words will age in years to come and whether future generations will condemn what we said or that we remained silent about this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is no lie can, will, or shall live forever. Whether today or tomorrow or whether in days or decades to come, truth will have its day. We shall know the truth, and the truth shall set us free.

Let us work to do what is right, even when it is hard. Let us affirm what is good, even when it is politically dangerous.

Just yesterday, in this same Chamber where the officers were defending us, insurrectionists of January 6 came in here and sat up in the gallery.

Just this past week, there were 32 miles of fencing all around our beautiful Capitol.

If we had known then what we know now, police should have had the day off so these people could have roamed this building freely. That was their intent, to destroy and kill.

The constitutional ideals that make this Nation as good as its promise are what each of us should be in service to do. When history calls, we must be available to something greater than ourselves.

I pray that we will answer this call. I pray we will not dishonor what is right. I pray we will stand up for those who consistently stand up for us.

I take a point of privilege to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to those officers who came to work on that dreadful day to do what was right and normal and moral but who had been betrayed.

Reverend Martin Luther King also said there comes a time when silence is betrayal. I feel that many of our officers have been betrayed.

We can fix this. We can stand up. We can speak up. We cannot betray the legacy of those officers who have been slain, violently killed. They did not give their life. Their life was taken from them. They should be with their loved ones today. Let us not curse their memory by not erecting a statue and a monument to their brave souls.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a very special thank-you to my colleague, Congressman HIMES, for having the courage and the fortitude to stand up. Let the record reflect in years to come that we did our best to make sure we honored our commitment to this country.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Vermont (Ms. BALINT), my fellow New Englander.

Ms. BALINT. Mr. Speaker, day one, our President made our country less safe. Day one, with an irresponsible stroke of his pen, Donald Trump released 500 violent felons back out onto our streets.

These are the criminals who brutally attacked cops who were protecting this building. These were the people who betrayed our country, our democracy. I am not talking about the people who merely showed up that day to protest and didn't commit crimes. This is about the attackers who beat cops with pipes and flagpoles and tasers and mace, who literally stomped on police and tried to poke their eyes out. These were the sweeping pardons that Donald Trump made on day one.

These pardons disproportionately benefited the most violent among the mob. Now, they are back out on the street, heading to our communities. A number of them have already publicly commented that they are going to go buy some more guns, that they are out for retribution and have no remorse for what they did.

Of course, Americans are angry by this, and rightly so. It is an awful thing that the President has done, and it puts Americans in danger.

Among those who are angry is the Fraternal Order of Police, the largest

police union in the U.S., and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. They understand, more than anyone, that this puts law enforcement at risk.

In a statement, they said: “When perpetrators of crimes, especially serious crimes, are not held fully accountable, it sends a dangerous message that the consequences for attacking law enforcement are not severe.” They further worried that it could encourage more violence against law enforcement.

If you can viciously attack a police officer and get off scot-free, what kind of message is that?

So, violence is acceptable if it is committed on Donald Trump’s behalf? It is okay to beat a cop if it is in the service of keeping him in power?

This is incredibly dangerous. I have to say, it looks an awful lot like the actions of someone who would like to be a dictator.

How can the officers who protect us believe that we actually value them if the President doesn’t believe in holding people accountable who attacked them? How?

Over the last 2 years, I have had the opportunity to get to know many of the officers on the Capitol Police force. They take their jobs incredibly seriously. They have our backs every day. They put their lives on the line not just to protect our flesh and blood but to protect the very democracy, to protect the ideals of this country.

Like many of those who spoke before me have said, it is important to make this connection. These pardons are part of a concerted effort to rewrite what happened on January 6. This desecrates the memory of Officer Brian Sicknick, who lost his life in defense of this building, and it diminishes the great sacrifices that were made by thousands of officers that day.

If we don’t push back on this perverted rewriting of history, we can look forward to our children and our grandchildren learning about the glories of January 6, 2021.

It has to be remembered for what it was. It was a domestic terrorist attack, plain and simple.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to be trapped in a lie that they can’t get out of. I know by the eye rolls. Actually, even before we went into the inauguration, I saw some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle doing impressions of the incoming President, making fun of him. They are now trapped in this lie that they have perpetuated for years now, and they don’t know how to get out of it.

What Donald Trump has done on day one is to say to the Capitol Police: I value violent felons more than I value you.

I know I speak for so many Americans today when I say that makes me sick.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vermont for her words as we close this up.

As is so often true in this Chamber, we heard lots of words, and I think they were powerful words, honoring those who protected us and honoring the truth, but what can we do? What is the action? What can we actually do?

Under the law passed a few years ago, Congress is required to produce a plaque to honor those officers who sacrificed so much on that fateful day 4 years and 17 days ago.

I have a little photograph of it here. The plaque reads: “On behalf of a grateful Congress, this plaque honors the extraordinary individuals who bravely protected and defended this symbol of democracy on January 6, 2021. Their heroism will never be forgotten.”

You can only look at the photo of the plaque because the plaque has never been put up, as required by law, in the Capitol of the United States. It is a little curious. We say, “Their heroism will never be forgotten,” yet the plaque, as required by law, is not yet displayed in the Capitol of the United States.

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

#### PARDONING PRO-LIFE ACTIVISTS TARGETED BY DOJ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACKENZIE). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, today, the President of the United States issued 21 very important pardons of individuals who had been put in jail, prosecuted, persecuted, for their religious beliefs and exercise of their speech. These are individuals who are pro-life who had been put in jail because a weaponized Department of Justice was unleashed against these individuals, very specifically and purposefully because they were espousing their pro-life views.

In the President’s action to formally pardon these 21 individuals, he rights a wrong that was carried out against them. More importantly, he sends a loud message that the Department of Justice cannot and should not be targeted toward individuals for their political beliefs and their political actions. That is precisely what happened to those 21 individuals.

How do we know this? If you look at the application of the so-called FACE Act that was used to prosecute these individuals, to arrest and prosecute them, 97 percent of the FACE Act prosecutions between 1994 and 2024 were initiated against pro-life Americans.

I want you to pause and listen to that again. Ninety-seven percent of the prosecutions under this one act were carried out against pro-life Americans—this despite the fact that there have been numerous attacks on pro-life facilities and crisis pregnancy centers in the wake of Dobbs. Ninety-one pregnancy resource centers have been at-

tacked since the Dobbs opinion was leaked.

In 2022, pro-life activist Mark Houck was arrested by the FBI for FACE Act violations related to an incident outside of an abortion facility. They didn’t charge him in Pennsylvania—in fact, they passed—but the Feds went after him.

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, you have to ask yourself: Why is that true?

There have been 411 recorded attacks on Catholic churches since 2020.

Was the FACE Act used once by the Department of Justice against any of these Catholic churches?

No.

So what does that look like for these 21 individuals?

By the way, I think this is really important in the context of the speeches that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were just giving with respect to the treatment of those individuals incarcerated, charged, and prosecuted in the wake of January 6. I will come back to that in a minute.

Regarding these individuals whom I am talking about with respect to the pro-life prosecutions by the Department of Justice under Joe Biden, as one of the attorneys for one of the defendants put it:

“While Biden’s prosecutors almost entirely ignored the firebombing and vandalism of hundreds of pro-life churches and pregnancy centers, they viciously pursued pro-life Americans.”

“And had they been opposing anything but abortion, Joe Biden would have given them medals. Instead Biden wanted them branded as convicted felons and imprisoned for years in a Federal penitentiary.”

Eva Edl is an 89-year-old survivor of a Soviet concentration camp who sat in front of the entrance to an abortion clinic in a wheelchair. She was one of those targeted by the Biden Department of Justice.

Let’s be clear. She described how she was shipped off in cattle cars to concentration camps in Yugoslavia at age 9. They were packed in body to body with no food and no water. She lived through that. She is 89 years old.

Again, I want everybody to understand who is listening to this at home: An 89-year-old survivor of gulags in Europe was prosecuted by the Biden Department of Justice at age 89 for being in a wheelchair in front of an abortion clinic—a Federal crime, Federal Department of Justice.

Paulette Harlow is a 75-year-old grandmother from Kingston, Massachusetts. She has six children and is a grandmother to eight. She is suffering from health issues: liver disease and arthritis. She was prosecuted and sentenced to jail in a 25-month sentence in Texas, miles away from her home in Massachusetts. She is 75 years old.

Why?

It is because she was at an abortion clinic professing her faith and her hope