

In the 1830s, it was the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and a legislator named Horace Mann who established the common school movement, pushing to extend free public education to poor and middle-class children. Yet, Black children across the Nation were still barred from learning and faced severe punishment and abuse if they tried.

By the 1870s, Reconstruction in the South gave way to Jim Crow laws that segregated public spaces, explicitly including our schools.

Additionally, child-labor exploitation was rampant; education for girls lagged far behind; and children with disabilities were far too often institutionalized and not educated at all.

A little more than 100 years later, our Department of Education in its modern-day form was championed by none other than the late, great President James Earl Carter. May he rest in peace and power.

He knew that fully implementing the civil rights legislation of the 1960s and fighting Jim Crow would require a well-resourced Federal role in education. This agency had existed for over a century in many iterations, but Carter explicitly understood that at the core of education was a vision of opportunity and access for every child in America.

He and Congress resourced the Department accordingly, and this Department was tasked with implementing core tenets of the Civil Rights Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Federal funding through the Department of Education became integral to addressing disparities, hiring and training teachers, building accessible school facilities, enforcing civil rights protections, heating and powering those buildings, and, finally, living up to our ideals of education as a pathway to opportunity in America.

Madam Speaker, today, that progress is under attack. The Trump administration's attack on education is a fundamental attack on democracy and on every child who calls this country home.

Let's call it what it is: resegregation and a full-scale attack on civil rights. Dictating what can be taught is shameful.

Madam Speaker, I stand firmly on the side of our public school babies and our educators and families today and always.

#### CONGRATULATING TEXAS' LONGEST SERVING SHERIFF, LIVE OAK COUNTY'S LARRY BUSBY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an extraordinary milestone for an extraordinary man, Live Oak County Sheriff Larry Busby.

Sworn in on New Year's Day for his 12th consecutive term, Sheriff Busby

has cemented his place in history as Texas' longest serving sheriff. With a remarkable 50 years in law enforcement, 44 of those years as sheriff of Live Oak County, he exemplifies dedication, resilience, and leadership.

Sheriff Busby's philosophy of treating everyone with respect has earned him not just the trust of his community but also their enduring support.

His history, rooted in cowboy values of hard work and responsibility, inspires all of us. Whether as a teacher, cowboy, or law enforcement officer, he has always served with honor and humility.

I congratulate Sheriff Busby on this historic achievement, and I thank him for his unwavering commitment to Live Oak County. Here is to the legacy he continues to build and the many lives he has touched along the way.

#### HONORING LIEUTENANT OSCAR TREVINO

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Oscar Trevino of the Edinburg Police Department in Texas. Lieutenant Trevino retired after an extraordinary 37 years of service.

On January 10, Lieutenant Trevino marked the conclusion of his remarkable career with an emotional last call over the radio, a powerful moment that symbolized his unwavering dedication to protecting and serving his community.

Lieutenant Trevino's legacy is one of courage, leadership, and selfless commitment. He has made an indelible impact on Edinburg, and his years of service will not be forgotten.

As he begins his well-deserved retirement, we express our deepest gratitude and wish him all the best in his upcoming retirement and new chapter of life.

We thank Lieutenant Trevino for his service and sacrifice.

#### CELEBRATING UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY'S CHESS TEAM

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the historic achievement of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley chess team, who claimed their first outright victory at the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Championship earlier this month.

Out of 91 teams, UTRGV's A team delivered a flawless performance, winning all six matches, a feat unmatched in the tournament. This victory exemplifies talent, teamwork, and the "vaquero," "cowboy," spirit.

This win secures UTRGV's spot in the prestigious President's Cup, where they will compete for their fourth national collegiate chess championship. Their success is a testament to the extraordinary caliber of UTRGV students.

I congratulate the team, their coach, and the entire UTRGV community. We are all so proud of them and look forward to cheering them on in April.

#### HONORING DR. MILTON LOUIS GONZALEZ

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my guest for this year's National Prayer Breakfast, Dr. Milton Gonzalez from McAllen, Texas.

For over 25 years, Dr. Milton Louis Gonzalez has taught and inspired south Texans. He has dedicated his life to ensuring that the next generation is able to reach their potential and live a life full of faith.

Not only has his gift for speaking touched many, many lives, but his insightful speeches have empowered people all across the United States and the world.

Outside of his incredible work, Dr. Gonzalez is a great man of faith, devoted husband, proud father of two, and grandfather.

I am honored to recognize Dr. Gonzalez. It was my pleasure to have him join me in praying for our Nation and our leaders at the National Prayer Breakfast.

#### UNELECTED BILLIONAIRE RUNNING OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NORMAN). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, President Trump was sworn into office. He won the popular vote and the electoral college. I didn't like the results, but I accepted them.

For the past 4 years, I have heard my colleagues on the other side of the aisle passionately defend Article I of the Constitution. Not anymore.

I heard them speak about the importance of Congress' power of the purse. Not anymore.

I heard them insist that only Congress can change laws and determine the structure of our government. Not anymore.

In the past 2 weeks, we have seen a familiar pattern emerge: The President creates an issue, causing a crisis. There is confusion. Then, he fixes the crisis, often by walking back the very same issue he created.

Just this week, he threatened tariffs against our closest neighbors, import taxes that would drive up the costs for American consumers. There was no real reason and no real justification, but after days of uncertainty for businesses across the country, President Trump backed down.

What did he get in return? Promises from Canada and Mexico that they were already planning to do around border security.

To make matters worse, while President Trump plays the bully on the world stage, an unelected billionaire has been running our government. Elon Musk, who was never confirmed by the Senate, never elected by the American people, now wields immense power.

He has installed loyalists who stand to profit from unrestricted access to government records and the personal data of millions of Americans. He donated nearly \$300 million to elect President Trump, and now he is getting his return on investment.

He now has access to his competitors' financial information. He can dismantle agencies that have challenged

him or threatened his businesses. The value of Tesla and SpaceX are tied directly to government approvals. If he doesn't get his way, he stands to lose billions.

Elon Musk is not accountable to the American people, yet he is using his unchecked influence to reshape our government for his own gain.

The world's richest man has received over \$20 billion from the Federal Government in the past. He enriches himself by pretending to be a selfless innovator. He uses his social media empire to amplify voices that agree with him and to spread misinformation designed to divide and destabilize.

He is now trying to shut down or overturn funding approved by Congress. This is funding that saves lives. Bipartisan programs, like PEPFAR, which provides lifesaving HIV treatment to millions, have been thrown into uncertainty. Stop-work orders have frozen global health initiatives. New funding obligations and disbursements have been suspended.

Healthcare workers have been told to stop. Clinics are being forced to close. Essential medicine and supplies can no longer reach those in need. The impact is devastating, especially for women and children who rely on these programs for survival.

Here at home, this administration has found a new scapegoat for everything that goes wrong: diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A plane and helicopter crash in our Nation's Capital? Must be diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Wildfires in Los Angeles? Must be diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A major IT system failure? Must be DEI.

The collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge? Must be DEI.

Republicans blame DEI not because it is responsible but because it is an easy target because fear and division are their most effective tools. Yet, as the majority wages this culture war, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle ignore the real crises threatening our democracy and our communities.

WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO TEACH OUR HISTORY

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, we have entered Black History Month, but now Federal agencies are uncertain about how to recognize it due to new executive orders.

The Pentagon even paused training about the Tuskegee Airmen because they weren't sure if teaching American history violated the President's mandate.

We should not be afraid to teach our history to soldiers. We should not be afraid to teach our history to our children.

Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, John Lewis, Maya Angelou, A. Philip Randolph, and many more titans for diversity, equity, and inclusion played essential roles in shaping our Nation. Their contributions made America stronger, and their stories need to be

told. Yet, today, politicians are telling young Black and Brown children that they will never earn or deserve a place in this country because of the color of their skin.

We are at a crossroads. We can stand up for democracy, truth, and inclusion, or we can allow fear and division to dictate our future.

I choose to fight for a country where every person, regardless of race, religion, or background, has a fair shot.

I choose to stand against corruption and self-interest that puts lives at risk.

I choose to defend the values that make our Nation strong.

I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will remember their oath of office and that we answer to the U.S. Constitution, not a President.

The silence from the other side is deafening.

□ 1115

#### OUR GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE POSSIBLE FOR OUR CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, 88 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt stood before the American people in Philadelphia and warned of an economic aristocracy that sought to dominate not just our markets but our democracy.

He spoke of those who amassed great wealth and then used that wealth to shape the laws of our Nation to serve their own worldview rather than the public good. He pledged that the government must serve the people, not the privileged few.

That same challenge exists today, but now it is billionaires themselves taking over our government. They bankroll the campaigns, install their loyalists, and want to control government so they can make the rules.

They push for deep cuts to public education, including eliminating funding for decent schools in working-class neighborhoods to fund massive tax breaks for the investor class that we cannot afford.

They fight to deregulate social media platforms to grow the market value of companies in my district just as the railroad barons of the past fought against every piece of regulation to protect their profits.

They move fast and break things, treating our government like their own personal experiment, blind to the millions of Americans who rely on its services.

Why? Because they believe they are entitled to rule. They see themselves as an aristocracy of talent, a select few whose wealth and success make them the rightful decisionmakers for the rest of us.

In their eyes, business entrepreneurs, hedge fund managers, and tech tycoons are the engines of America's pros-

perity, while working families are expected to accept whatever scraps trickle down.

They believe that democracy should cater to their vision, their profits, and their power no matter what the cost to society. They even refuse to accept what separates human beings from God: mortality itself.

We must ask ourselves: Will we allow a handful of powerful interests to dictate the future of our economy, our jobs, and our democracy, or will we reclaim the promise of an America where anyone who works hard can thrive?

That is our task in this generation: to rebuild an economy that works for the many, not just for the mighty; to invest in American production, empower workers to share in the wealth they create, and ensure that people, not financial power, determine our Nation's course.

It is up to us to make good on the radical American belief that our genius lies in ordinary Americans, defying a world history in which national glory belonged only to kings, oligarchs, or politburos.

America's distinguishing excellence, unlike Russia or China, is our belief in the boundless potential of every citizen.

Today, our government must stand up against the impersonal economic forces that have snatched away livelihoods from those working in factory towns and concentrated wealth into a few cities.

Our government must make economic independence possible for citizens so they can assert control over their destiny.

Just as Franklin Delano Roosevelt stood up to the economic royalists of his time, we must stand up today to the unholy alliance of wealth and power not out of resentment but out of resolve, not to punish wealth but to ensure that prosperity is built by and for the people who make this country run.

Mr. Speaker, that is our mission. This is our moment. Let us make sure that together we meet it and believe in the American people again.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 19 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CRAWFORD) at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer: