

their retirement at the age of zero as opposed to typically at the age of 30 when we finally get around to doing that.

No one has given credit to our bill last year that literally established investment accounts for children, for babies, for babies born in the next 4 years to get a seeded \$1,000 to start an investment account to give them opportunities to help them along the path of life.

Of course, people aren't drawing that correlation. They are not making that connection. We are not hearing from my colleagues on the left that we are doing things that are actually pro-family and actually pro-life. This particular issue just becomes a very toxic and horrible debate back and forth. However, when we actually look at what we have done, we are trying to focus on that next generation.

Sincerely, giving investment accounts to children, Trump accounts, starting them off on the path towards accruing something that they would have otherwise maybe never even invested in, they are going to start that when they are zero. All they have to do is sign up for it.

We are focused on life, and we are focused on improving families. There is no question about it. Our policies are directly related towards it.

As a member of both the House Values Action Team and Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, I have stood up to attempts to increase access to abortion, advocated for language restricting Federal funding for abortion, and signed legal briefs opposing mail-order abortion pills and requirements for employers to give time off for abortions.

Our focus in Congress should be focused on ensuring that every child has opportunities, no matter the circumstances of their conception or birth, and that pregnant women and mothers have the resources they need to be supported throughout pregnancy and postpartum.

I am proud of the progress we have made since that decision 4 years ago. We have passed legislation to support critical, comprehensive services for women in need, make it easier for working-class families to earn money and raise children, and support the rights and dignity of our most vulnerable.

Yes, we have much more work to do. The right to life is paramount, and I am eager to continue our work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who have all shared messages tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTS HOPEFUL NEW BEGINNINGS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mrs. RAMIREZ of Illinois was recognized for 60 minutes.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I am proudly on this House floor going to talk about what brings me to this place.

Yes, I am the Congresswoman of Illinois' Third Congressional District. I am also the proud daughter of Guatemalan immigrants. I am a citizen by birthright. I am the wife of an incredible man who until recently was a DACA recipient, a Dreamer, and Congressista from a welcoming city, State, and district.

We know the story of our Nation wouldn't be complete without the joy, without the sweat, and without the struggles and resilience of those who, whether a couple of generations ago or 1 year ago, came to this country in search of safety, security, and opportunity.

□ 1820

Whether arriving through the southern border like my mother did 43 years ago or welcomed by the Mother of Exiles, the Statue of Liberty, like the ancestors of so many Members of Congress that I serve with, including the man in the Oval Office, our country has represented hopeful new beginnings for so many. Yet, too many have forgotten these histories.

As this country approaches the 250th anniversary of its founding, I rise during Immigrant Heritage Month asking us to reflect on this country's history, on this country's story, our progress and our failures, and our enduring but not yet fulfilled commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

When a government fails to secure these rights and liberties for all people, regardless of legal status, origin, nationality, religion, or economic condition, it is, in fact, the responsibility of Members of Congress to challenge and transform systems that deny our communities dignity and justice.

I am clear that we have not yet fully realized our country's founding ideals.

The policies passed by this body and the powers seized by Trump's administration have created barriers and hardships for asylum seekers, for refugees, and all immigrant communities, including conditions that undermine internationally recognized human rights and constitutional protections.

When the administration is unwilling to uphold our commitments to human rights and obligations under the Constitution, Members of Congress in this body must act. We must meet the moment, and we must legislate. Because we know that immigrant communities make significant social, cultural, economic, and civic contributions to our country, strengthening and enriching our collective future.

The 250th anniversary of America serves not only as a commemoration but also as a choice point. We can choose to honor the contributions of immigrants by bringing 11 million people out of the shadows. We can choose to recognize our shared commitment to never again turn our backs on those seeking refuge and safety. We can choose to create pathways to citizenship for DACA recipients, who have been in this country since the age of 2 who know no other country other than this one as their own, and those that are TPS holders and in mixed-status families.

We can choose to renew our commitment to building a more inclusive, equitable, and united future for all who call the United States home, or we can allow Trump and this administration to continue terrorizing our communities, denying relief, violating protections, and certainly separating the families that my colleague just a moment ago bragged about being the party of families.

Here is the thing: I know where I stand, and I know where Trump, Noem, and now Markwayne, Homan, Miller, and Republicans in Congress stand. Trump and his cronies want to define who gets to be American and who is not American enough for them. He wants to define who is worthy of stability, of safety, of security, of opportunity, and who gets to be included in our Nation's founding ideals.

I, on this House floor, reject his white supremacist, xenophobic, bigoted agenda. It is important for us as Members of Congress to continue to fight for the opportunity that this Nation represents for so many of us like the opportunity to buy the first pair of shoes for your children, the opportunity to receive an education, to get a family-sustaining job, to establish a small business, and, for me, to become the very first Latina in the entire Midwest to serve in Congress.

I am the daughter of Maria Elvira Ramirez Guerra, a "powerful"; "poderosa" woman "that fought for me"; "que luchó por mí," and carried that legacy that I get to carry now every single day in these Halls of Congress.

For us on Immigrant Heritage Month and in this Special Order hour, it is important as Members of Congress, those of us who are unapologetically children of immigrants, to remind everyone that our experiences, that the experience of refugees, that the experience of immigrants are also part of this Nation.

We belong, and we will not let anyone tell us that we are not the inheritors of the promise of America, just like so many of my colleagues' ancestors were for them.

Today, I say no bans, no walls, no raids, no kidnappings, no masked agents terrorizing our communities, no military attacking our neighbors, and no authoritarians in the Oval Office. "Period"; "Punto."

Mr. Speaker, I will yield to some of my colleagues who will recognize and uplift the stories of the immigrant communities they represent and hold President Trump and Republicans accountable for the continued attacks on our immigrant communities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA).

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I stood on a farm in Haleiwa for the blessing of the Pacific Gateway Center's new land. I looked out at the fields and at the farmers and families gathered there ready to work, grow food, and to build something of their own. It was immigrants focused on strengthening their community, our economy, and creating a better life for their children.

As I stood there, I could not stop thinking: This is it. This is America. This is what a true celebration of 250 years of America looks like. It is a more honest portrait of our country than any gilded ballroom or caged fight on the White House lawn could ever offer: hands in the soil, families laying down roots, people arriving with hope, working hard, and building a life for their children and their grandchildren.

That is my family's story, too. I am a Yonsei, a fourth-generation of Okinawan descent. Like so many other Japanese, Filipino, Chinese families in Hawaii, agriculture and the plantations were the gateway that allowed us to come, to work, to lay down our roots, and to build a real future for our children.

I would not be standing here today as a Member of Congress if my family had not been given that chance, had that pathway not existed for so many immigrants like us.

For so many, somewhere in our family's story, someone got here. Someone arrived with the same hope, the same courage, and the same belief that tomorrow could be a better day than today, that their children could go further than they did, that this country could be a place where hard work, sacrifice, and community still meant something.

That is where this administration has twisted the story. They want us to believe immigrants are the enemy, but when you attack immigrant children and women and workers and families, you are attacking the very people who helped create our American identity.

When you detain families, separate children, strip people of their rights, and tell whole communities they do not belong, you are not protecting America. You are betraying her promise. They can try to paint over the truth. They can try to dress it up, cover the cracks with gold, or write immigrants out of the story, but the truth is carved into America's foundation: America's heritage is, in fact, immigration.

It is arrival. It is hard work. It is sacrifice. It is the belief that tomorrow can be better than today. That is what America first should mean, not pitting immigrant against nonimmigrant.

By the way, unless you are indigenous to this land, you are, in fact, an immigrant. Not turning families into targets, but creating opportunities and pathways for the people who came here, laid down their roots, helped build this country, and still carry it forward every single day. That is what gives me hope.

Because there are still people in this country who have not lost sight of that dream. I saw them in Haleiwa. I saw people and families choosing work, choosing community, choosing to build, and choosing courage. I saw people making sure that pathway is still there for the next family, the next generation, and the next person looking for a chance.

That is the America I believe in. An America where immigrant families are not treated as threats, but recognized as part of who we are. An America that understands the American Dream has never been about where you came from. It is about what you are willing to build when you get here.

As we celebrate National Immigrant Heritage Month and prepare to mark 250 years of this country, let us tell the truth: Immigrants are not outside America's story. They are the story. They are not a threat to America's heritage. They are America's heritage.

If we are serious about honoring 250 years of America, then we have a responsibility to fight for the people still reaching for that same promise—to lay down roots, to build a better life, to raise a family in safety and dignity, and to contribute, and with hope to belong to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I saw hope that day in Haleiwa. I saw the American Dream. That is what I am holding on to.

It is up to each and every one of us to carry on the dream of our forefathers. As long as there are people who carry that dream forward, and as long as we have the courage to protect it, that dream will continue.

□ 1830

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to echo something that Ms. TOKUDA said that I often remind my colleagues at Homeland Security as they continue to vilify immigrants: Unless you are indigenous, or you were forced to come here, you, too, are an immigrant. Whether your family came in the 1800s or the early 1900s, we must not forget that this country is built by immigrants. Yet, so many people have such a short memory of history.

Immigrants are, in fact, the story of this country. To talk a little bit more about that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington State (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman RAMIREZ for her leadership and for consistently fighting for immigrants across this country.

Today, as we recognize Immigrant Heritage Month, immigrants and people of all statuses face horrific, unprecedented attacks from the Trump ad-

ministration. Even as this administration does everything possible to attack immigrants and those who stand with them, what we see is incredible strength, resilience, organizing, and leadership.

What is the message of all of that? The message is that immigration and immigrants have and always will make us better as a country.

I am very proud to be the first Indian American—in fact, the first South Asian-American woman elected to the House and one of just two dozen naturalized citizens to serve in Congress.

I came to this country alone when I was 16 years old. My parents had very meager savings, but they used all of it to send me to this country because they believed so much that this was the place that I would have the best education and the most opportunities.

Well, it took me 17 years to get my citizenship. I was on an alphabet soup of visas for that time. Now, I am so proud to be the first naturalized citizen to serve as the ranking member of the Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement Subcommittee.

In that role, I have held accountability hearings and roundtables here in Washington, D.C., and across the country to hear people's stories and to shine a light on how the administration is harming our communities and how we can fight back.

What I have heard overwhelmingly, no matter where I am, is people from all walks of life saying no to these anti-immigrant actions from this administration. People are determined to ensure that our country remains a welcoming place for people around the globe.

We see neighbors organizing food delivery and carpools for families who are afraid to leave their homes. We see gatherings at schools for dropoff and pickup to keep kids safe. We see organizing in communities to be prepared to document ICE and CBP abuses and hold this administration accountable.

I have heard from a young man who is Active-Duty military serving his country despite this country deporting his father, and a young woman trying to juggle pursuing her education while caring for her young sibling after ICE detained her mother.

I know organizational leaders across the country who are citizens and should have nothing to fear but have been forced to move their families into safe houses. They are determined to continue demanding justice nevertheless. I was moved to hear from one person in the Twin Cities that they need to have their neighbors' backs because their communities are not whole without them.

These sentiments, again, reflect the love and generosity of the American people and their understanding that immigrants are vital to all of our communities.

In my hometown of Seattle, immigrants contribute to every sector of our economy, just like they do across

the country. Seattle is a hub of creation, developing and advancing cutting-edge technology and research. Nearly 160,000 immigrants in Seattle work in STEM. Over 40 percent of people in Seattle with STEM degrees are immigrants.

Immigrants also make tremendous contributions in construction and housing. We are an agricultural State, and we have immigrants working across our farms everywhere—and in manufacturing and business.

As Republicans raise costs and destroy our safety net, it is immigrants who are keeping Social Security afloat. A report from the Social Security trustees shows that immigration improves the Social Security trust fund's solvency, specifically showing that when immigration increases, the trust fund's deficit decreases.

Just looking at 2022, undocumented immigrants paid \$25.7 billion in Social Security taxes that take care of our seniors who are receiving Social Security today. They contribute even as they have no expectation of ever benefiting.

Donald Trump and Stephen Miller always claimed that they were going after the worst of the worst. That is clearly not what has happened. Rather, they have been about ending all immigration to this country of any kind.

Since Trump came into office, 400,000 people have been detained across the interior of our country. That includes parents of U.S. citizen children, which has harmed over 11,000 kids.

USCIS data shows sharp declines in approvals for all kinds of immigration benefits, including work visas and family reunification. In 2025, overall approvals dropped 27 percent. We don't have full data on student visas yet, but what we do have shows a 31-percent decrease.

Mr. Speaker, this is all inflicting lasting harm on our economy and our country. Immigrants are an essential part of our history, our present, and our future. I will never stop fighting for a comprehensive, humane immigration system that recognizes the tremendous contributions, the values, and the threads that immigrants weave throughout this country to make us as a country whole.

This has never just been about immigration. It is about who we are as a country and what we are willing to stand up for.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, who are we as a nation? I thank Congresswoman JAYAPAL for powerfully reminding us that we cannot talk about having ideals and being a country that stands up for children and opportunity, and continue to dismiss those who contribute every single day in making that reality.

To continue this conversation around the contributions and the impact that immigrants make every single day in this Nation, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. GRIJALVA).

Mrs. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congressional Progressive

Caucus vice chair, Congresswoman RAMIREZ, for hosting this Special Order hour.

I rise today during Immigrant Heritage Month to honor our hardworking immigrant communities and call out the cruel and dangerous actions of the Trump administration.

While communities across America are honoring generations of immigrants who built our Nation, Trump and his administration are choosing fear, cruelty, and division.

This administration is carrying out a mass deportation agenda that is tearing through our communities, our barrios, and our families to target people who have lived in this country for decades, who own businesses, and who are students, leaders, teachers, and nurses in our community.

This administration wants to erase the contributions of immigrants while benefiting from their hard work, innovation, and sacrifices.

Let me remind them: Immigrants are not outsiders. They are the reason America looks the way it does.

I want to highlight Karla Toledo. She was brought to this country at 1 year old. She was violently pulled from her home and put in detention, inhumanely detained for 4 days. She was released on the lowest bond possible, and her charges were dropped.

□ 1840

The day before yesterday, ICE and DHS embarrassed by the spotlight and the black eye, are bringing new charges against her for deportation. We are sick as a community of being scapegoated. We are sick as a people of being scapegoated.

I am the granddaughter of a bracero, a guest worker, a hardworking Mexican immigrant who came to this country seeking opportunity.

I am the daughter of a Member of Congress, who spent his life fighting for immigrants and working families.

The Trump administration can attack immigrants, but they cannot erase their stories. They cannot erase our stories. They cannot erase our contributions, and they cannot erase the truth. Immigrants built this country.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

"Immigrants are part of our history, past, present, and future."

"Los inmigrantes son parte de nuestra historia, nuestro presente y nuestro futuro."

No amount of fear or cruelty will change that.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB), one of my colleagues who has been at the forefront, really pushing back on all the terror that we are seeing around the country, whether it is in detention, whether it is in the abductions that are happening on the ground, or if it is at check-ins and making sure that people feel safe to go to court.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good colleague from Chicago, Congress-

woman RAMIREZ, for her incredible advocacy and her sharing and vulnerability in expressing her lived experience or sharing her lived experience in this Chamber.

I am proud to be the daughter of Palestinian immigrants. My father came to this country at 19 years old. He was the guy in the 1970s that would pull up his arms and say: Which watch do you want? He never felt any kind of human dignity ever in his life until he joined the Ford Motor Company and became a member of the United Auto Workers.

My mother, who was 3 months pregnant with me on the airplane here to the United States from Palestine, came here with an eighth grade education.

Both of them could have never imagined in their lifetime that their eldest daughter would be the first in the family to graduate from high school, as well as achieve a college degree, and then later become one of the first Muslim women elected to the United States Congress.

These are the stories that I wish people would share more about our immigrant neighbors. I want to uplift those stories—the resilience, the contributions of so many of our immigrant neighbors across our country, especially in my district.

I grew up in southwest Detroit where there are 20 different ethnic groups. It taught me diversity. It made me a better person to be able to be around that type of strength, all of the different stories that were so similar to my parents' stories.

What I also love about my current 12th Congressional District is you can go in a community, and it is a huge, beautiful African diaspora, a Caribbean community, an Arab community. All throughout my district, there is so much love, and so many of our communities with immigrants are centered on family.

However, this Immigrant Heritage Month carries a heavier weight as this administration continues to target our immigrant neighbors day after day.

It has been incredibly painful, not just for myself and immigrants in our country, but for the American people, to watch our immigrant neighbors being abducted by masked DHS agents, our children being torn from their parents and some even zip-tied, and our disabled seniors being left to languish in detention camps. The images have been horrifying.

I wish to highlight one story of Maykol Duarte. He was from southwest Detroit. He was in high school. He was a high school student with only a few credits away from graduation. He was racially profiled by local police and handed over to ICE. He was on his way to a field trip, Mr. Speaker, with his friends, and now he was torn away from his loving community and deported to Colombia.

These are real-life stories, heart-breaking consequences of policies of this administration centered on cruelty.

We must acknowledge and recognize that not all immigrant communities, though, are impacted equally. I wish to take time to express my deepest fear that we are looking away from the impact on Black immigrants, which is the fastest growing immigrant group in the United States. Today, more than one in five Black Americans are immigrants or children of immigrants. Many of them face a huge impact or harm within our immigration system. They are more likely to be detained, more likely to be deported, and more likely to be denied asylum and relief.

These figures are not accidental. They are systemic and stem from a racist administration that continues to target African and Caribbean communities with no end in sight. This administration continues to separate our families and strip protections from those who need it most.

I ask my colleagues to not accept this broken, inhumane immigration system that treats people differently based on their race and on their origin. We must fight for fairness, dignity, and justice for all.

This Immigrant Heritage Month and every month, we all must stand with our immigrant neighbors and share the stories. I know Congresswoman RAMIREZ shared her story, and I shared my story.

This is the American Dream. There is no such thing as the Canadian dream, the German dream. There is only the American Dream, and all of us need to remember that we are a nation of immigrants.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. We are a nation of immigrants, and, unfortunately, many of our colleagues have forgotten that.

I do wonder if their grandparents when they came to this country, whether they were 5, whether they were 12, whether they were 17, if they were alive today, what would they say about their grandchildren that forgot the struggle and the challenges and what they needed when their grandparents came to this country.

I wish to take a moment to honor people who exemplify the power of immigrant heritage as so many of my colleagues have done today in our Special Order hour, because I know that we have a President who has done everything in his power to vilify the immigrant community, to call them criminals, to call them all sorts of other names, to negate their humanity, and forget about the names, the faces of women, of children, of hardworking people that, in fact, contribute to this community, to this country every single day.

HONORING DR. GLADYS FATIMA MARQUEZ

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Today, I rise to honor Dr. Gladys Fatima Marquez. Gladys is a high school bilingual English language learners teacher with over 20 years of classroom experience. She is also on the National Education Association's executive committee. She is a member and a past chair of the NEA Hispanic Caucus.

Gladys is the proud granddaughter of an immigrant from Zacatecas, Mexico. Her grandfather was a railroad worker on the Rock Island for 10 years before he was able to bring his family from Zacatecas in the 1960s.

Gladys' mother came here at the age of 13 and struggled to feel as though she belonged, especially at school. She, like thousands of other immigrant students, left school to join the workforce, taking a minimum wage factory job.

Her mother's experience inflamed her life's passion. Gladys worked to ensure every student believes in themselves, in their heritage, in who they are, and that they know that they can, in fact, achieve their dreams.

In addition to changing the world one child at a time, Gladys is a fierce advocate and defender of our immigrant neighbors. She has organized teach-ins at immigration detention centers, humanitarian missions to shelters at the border, and she has helped organize massive marches in protest of the national policy leading to separation of immigrant families and the incarceration of immigrant children. She lobbied and led efforts to support DACA recipients, and she has helped facilitate countless know-your-rights clinics.

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Dr. Gladys Fatima Marquez for her commitment to ensure that every member of our community, from our students and our immigrant neighbors, know that they belong.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Gladys.

HONORING SHAISKA MALCA

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to honor Shaiska Malca, a constituent of the Illinois Third Congressional District and an educator, children's book author, and entrepreneur.

Shaiska is a proud Panamanian immigrant and vice president of the DuPage Hispanic Alliance.

Inspired by her own multicultural family and her mother, who had her own impressive career in education, Shaiska founded Pura Vida Talk to nurture bilingualism in our communities.

Pura Vida Talk empowers children to embrace multiculturalism and build bridges across our communities.

Her work to share her culture and language encourages children across Illinois' Third Congressional District and beyond to become global citizens who appreciate and celebrate diversity; all while they are being equipped with the invaluable skill of bilingualism, a skill that I think is a superpower and more people should seek.

□ 1850

On behalf of Illinois' Third Congressional District, I commend Shaiska Malca for reminding us of the strength we can find in connecting to our roots, our language, and our heritage.

I thank and congratulate Shaiska for her work.

PROTECTING ALL CHILDREN

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, as we get closer to the end of the Special

Order hour, I want to go back to the children because in the previous Special Order hour, my colleagues to the right talked a lot about children. They talked about protecting children, protecting humanity, protecting family, and protecting the fiber of what it is to be an American.

While I sigh because I sense the hypocrisy that came from that Special Order hour, I do know that growing up, I, in fact, was taught that we take care of the children and families in our community not just by words but through action. I learned that we must honor our shared humanity to ensure that children and families, in fact, get to thrive.

But right now, we are living in times where too many children and families are living the indignity and the trauma of inhumane processing centers, inhumane detention facilities, and family separation.

Mr. Speaker, since the start of the Trump administration, at least 50 people have died in ICE detention. More than 6,200 children—children—have been arrested by ICE at traffic stops, home raids, routine check-in appointments, bus stops, hospitals, and airports. More than 100,000 children, including U.S. citizens, have been separated from their families through the Trump administration.

Mr. Speaker, these aren't just numbers. Every one of them is a beloved child that is being denied the ability to live a fulfilling life, a life where they get to really imagine who they can be.

I saw this terror and trauma firsthand when I visited Steven, my 14-year-old constituent with autism, and his father, Victor, who spent more than 60 days in Dilley's processing facility after being taken at an immigration check-in.

I saw it as he hugged me and he begged me to tell him that ICE would not detain him again and threaten him that he would never see his mother again as they did in that detention facility.

Mr. Speaker, I know the pain that families separated by a cruel, inhumane immigration system endure. Do you know why? It is because I watched as so many people around the world watched Kevin, my 18-year-old U.S. citizen constituent with stage IV terminal colon cancer cry, "Mama, Mama," as he was finally reunited with his mother and father. His parents had been detained for 1 whole month in Arizona at a detention facility after they had asked for a humanitarian visa to come see their child one last time. You see, Kevin, after we finally were able to get his parents released, died hours after finally seeing his parents for one last time.

I think of Ofelia, my 15-year-old constituent, whose life was cut short by a rare and aggressive form of cancer, but she continued to fight one more battle. She fought to have her father's order of deportation canceled, ensuring he would no longer live in fear. You see,

she testified in court for her father, but less than 3 days later, Ofelia lost her battle to cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I get emotional because there is a hypocritical party who talks about children and families and standing up for them, but for some reason, Ofelia, Kevin, and Steven are not the kind of children they are willing to stand up for. They are United States citizen children, by the way.

Because I refuse to accept that we must endure these atrocities, we must reject the cruelty that is robbing our children and families of their future. Instead, we should be doing everything we can to ensure that children like Ofelia, like Steven, and like Kevin have everything they need to thrive.

Instead, we have children, until their dying moment, fighting for the livelihood of their parents. It is why I have said in the Committee on Homeland Security—and I am going to say it on this House floor—that we must abolish ICE. We must end immigrant detention, and we have to dismantle the Department of Homeland Security that under the premise of protecting us from domestic terrorism has abused our civil rights every single day and has killed U.S. citizens and more than 50 people this past year.

It is why I encourage my colleagues to join me as a cosponsor of H.R. 7190, the Melt ICE Act, as a meaningful step forward. The reality is that I can't have colleagues here saying that all people are created equal, but somehow immigrants don't fit that definition.

I cannot stand here and hear a party talk about being pro-family but deny the livelihood for so many families.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about this fourth anniversary of the Dobbs decision, but I want to talk to you about what is happening to pregnant women in detention right now. For the party that says that they want to protect unborn life at all costs, why is it that immigrant women in detention don't fit that definition?

We must confront a painful but necessary truth: DHS' violence and immigration enforcement have denied immigrants the right to personhood. Immigration detention denies people access to reproductive healthcare and represents forms of government control over immigrant bodies.

Do you know how I know this? I know this because of a report that at least a dozen pregnant girls, some who are as young as 13 years of age, and at least half of whom got pregnant because they were raped, are being held right now in a facility in San Benito, Texas, funded by American taxpayer dollars; and a report that at least 400 pregnant women were deported between January 2025 and February 2026.

It is critical that we acknowledge that immigrant and reproductive justice is interconnected. Both immigrant and reproductive justice is rooted in a shared struggle against the structural systems of racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, trans phobia, and eco-

nomic oppression that police bodies and restrict bodily autonomy.

We must affirm the dignity and humanity of all people, including our immigrant neighbors, and condemn any policies that treat people as unworthy or inadequate of healthcare and fundamental rights or bodily autonomy.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about where we are in this precise moment, I want to invite my colleagues to remember what we said are the founding ideals of this country, because we cannot talk about standing up for injustice and continue to fund the injustice we are seeing around the country when it comes to our immigrant communities.

It is why I thank my colleagues who joined today's Special Order honoring Immigrant Heritage Month, and I want to close with this message: The question isn't whether change is possible. It is whether we have the courage to demand it. I cannot understand how some people here can think it is acceptable to terrorize children and then say that they are the ones fighting for children in the same sentence.

Shame on every person in this country who wants to lock up children in cages, who wants to lock up children and separate them from their loved ones and their communities. Shame on those who are willing to deny children air, sun, play, laughter, joy, and every single thing a little one needs to be able to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, President Mandela said: "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

This House has to reckon with the reality that when it comes to immigrant children, you should be ashamed of yourself in the way that you are operating. Incarcerating children is an evil, morally bankrupt practice that calls into question any commitment our Nation claims to have about their preciousness.

□ 1900

We must unleash our collective outrage. We must demand that no other children experience what Steven, what Liam, and the more than 3,800 children detained by ICE have endured.

So let's demand an end to mandatory detention, to private detention facilities that are profiting off of the pain of our children, to family detention, to warehouse detention, and to the profiting off our pain by corporate billionaires and campaign donors to the President.

And may we remember that every child is our child, and a fight for affordable housing, universal healthcare, climate resilience, humane immigration reform, thriving wages, labor rights is our fight, as well.

I reject a world where, during Immigrant Heritage Month, Palestinians in need of medical care cannot get visas to access care in the United States; where children grieve detained fathers on Father's Day; where deported sons are tortured in prisons in El Salvador;

where children are held in U.S. for-profit detention centers; or where a mother in Durango, Mexico, cries in the lap of her dying 18-year-old son after being separated by a cruel and inhumane immigration system.

I refuse to accept that we must endure these atrocities. The suffering is too great. The pain is too great to bear.

So instead, Mr. Speaker, let us move forward with a loving wisdom that we are, in fact, precious and beloved; that we are bound together; that we belong to one another; and that every single child, regardless of legal status, is our child.

And may we honor our history by recognizing the human rights and constitutional protections afforded to all in this Nation and all those who seek refuge and protection.

I am ready to build that world together today, and to do so let's melt ICE, let's dismantle DHS because, frankly, Mr. Speaker, anything less is unacceptable.

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

REPUBLICAN UPDATE

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. ROY of Texas was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time here on the House floor. As always, I wish it was a little more filled with my colleagues involved in robust debate on the issues of our day and the issues that present our work here in the House to solve problems for the American people.

I want to say something quick that I think is really important as we are having a lot of debates this week, and a lot of people are raising questions about bills that we are bringing up and what we are moving and what we are not moving, the President making a decision today. I want to address where we are as a country because I think it is really important for us to establish what we have accomplished under this President over the last 18 months and under the leadership of this House and this Senate.

I am going to get into some disagreements in a minute, and I am going to get into some things that I think we ought to do. But let's be very clear about the State of this country and how much we have improved the State of our Nation over the last 18 months.

Mr. Speaker, 18 months ago, our borders were wide open. Eighteen months ago, the people of Texas that I represent were in danger. Eighteen months ago, we had criminals pouring into our communities in Texas and fentanyl pouring in and destroying homes and families.

The President came in and didn't need changes to the law to do the work of actually securing the border and did so. He did so with the great men and women of ICE and Border Patrol and the leadership of Tom Homan, the now two Secretaries of Homeland Security,