

raise the minimum wage. If we do those three things, Equal Pay Day will not be today, it will be December 31 for everybody.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I see the time has come to recess for the caucuses, but I just wish to say that today is another important day. Today is the 150th anniversary of the date that Abraham Lincoln signed the law authorizing the institution we now know as Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. That was 150 years ago today. What began on April 8, 1864, as a school with just eight students has flourished into the world's first and only institution of higher education dedicated to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, renowned internationally for its outstanding academic programs and also for its leading research into the history, language, and culture of deaf people.

I take pride in the fact that it was Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa, then-chair of the Committee on the District of Columbia, who initiated that legislation allowing the school to confer degrees. Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, who is now the current distinguished president of Gallaudet, was born and raised in Sioux City, IA, not too far from the Presiding Officer's State of North Dakota. In fact, Dr. Hurwitz's father and my brother were classmates at the Iowa School for the Deaf. We are proud of the many Iowa students, including a recent intern in my office, Joseph Lewis, who are graduates of Gallaudet.

It is a wonderful school. If you have never been there, you ought to go and take a look at it. They do fantastic work at Gallaudet, attracting people from all around the globe to go there. In 1894 it was named after Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and then in 1886 it was conferred university status by the Congress. Again, 150 years ago today, on April 8, 1864, Abraham Lincoln signed it into law.

In 1864, the school was known as the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind. It was inspired by the work of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, who had traveled to Paris to study the successful work of French educators who pioneered the use of a manual communication method of instructing the deaf—in other words, sign language. In 1894, the name of the institution was changed to Gallaudet College in honor of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. In 1986, by act of Congress, the college was granted university status.

My brother Frank was deaf from an early age. During his childhood, in the 1940s and 1950s, most Americans had very backward, ignorant attitudes toward deaf people. It pained me to witness the brazen discrimination and prejudice that he faced on a daily basis and I promised that if I ever got into a

position of power, I would change things to prevent that kind of discrimination in the future.

As it turned out, I did rise to a position of power. I was determined to make good on my promise to pass legislation to end discrimination against people with disabilities, and an unexpected event gave a huge impetus to my legislative ambition.

In 1988, Gallaudet University was hiring a new president. At that time, the school had never had a deaf president. There were three candidates: one was deaf and two were hearing. The Board of Visitors selected a hearing president.

To the students at Gallaudet, who believed passionately that the time had come for a deaf president, this was unacceptable. They rose up in a movement that came to be known as Deaf President Now. They organized protests. They boycotted classes. Some 2,000 Gallaudet students marched from their campus to the U.S. Capitol Building. They demanded a president at Gallaudet who could relate to them in a way that no hearing person could.

I had the privilege of speaking to them. I told them, "You are my heroes." They are still my heroes because they kept up their protests until they won. Gallaudet got its first deaf president, I. King Jordan.

But that is not all those students won. The protests by the students at Gallaudet struck a chord with other people with disabilities all across America. Those students were like a spark that ignited a brushfire.

They rose up and said: Enough. No more second-class citizenship. No more discrimination. And other people with disabilities took up the same rallying cry.

As the chief Senate sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, there is no question in my mind that the students' successful protests at Gallaudet were one of the key reasons why we were able to pass the ADA 2 years later.

Today, Gallaudet University is a diverse, bilingual university dedicated to the intellectual and professional advancement of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals through American Sign Language and English. I have always been an admirer and supporter of Gallaudet. I respect it as a place that opens doors and creates opportunity. At Gallaudet, the focus is on ability, not disability, and, as with all schools, sometimes it is on extraordinary ability, such as Adham Talaat, the academic all-American defensive end who helped to lead the Gallaudet football team to a 9 and 1 record this past season or faculty member Dr. Laura-Ann Pettito and her Visual Language and Visual Learning Center, where she and her graduate students map the brain to better understand how we decode auditory and visual language or 2011 graduate James Caverly, who starred in the play "Tribes" about a hearing family with a deaf son.

Gallaudet aims not only to educate but also to empower, and this is an incredibly important gift to give to the men and women who attend Gallaudet. I join with my colleagues in the Senate in saluting this remarkable institution on its 150th anniversary.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3:15 p.m. will be controlled by the majority.

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise today to speak on paycheck fairness, the bill we will be voting on tomorrow in the Senate. During the next hour 11 Democratic women will be coming to the floor to speak. I am not going to introduce each one. We want to get right to the issue. Rather than talking flowery talk about each other, we want to talk about the need for paycheck fairness.

I ask unanimous consent that each Senator be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I am the leadoff speaker. I want to be very clear on why we are on the Senate floor. We believe women need a fair shot to get equal pay for equal work. We want the same pay for the same job. We want it in our lawbooks, and we want it in our checkbooks. We want to finish the job we began with Lilly Ledbetter 5 years ago.

Five years ago, one of the first bills that we passed in the Obama administration was the Lilly Ledbetter bill. We reopened the courthouse doors to women who wanted to seek redress for the way they were treated unequally in the workplace. But we need to finish the job. That is what paycheck fairness does.

What does "finish the job" mean? Well, right now in the United States of America, there is a veil of secrecy—a veil of secrecy. Where is it? In the workplace. Right now, in companies and businesses, employees are forbidden to talk about the pay they receive with another employee. In many places, when an employee seeks redress, she is retaliated against. Last but not at all least, there are loopholes