

LGBT Americans and allies, like my brother Jamie and my mother, Mitzi Henderson.

□ 1015

Don't Ask, Don't Tell is a thing of the past, and it no longer forces our men and women in uniform to choose between serving this Nation and being open about who they are and who they love. Marriage equality is now a reality in 37 States and in Washington, D.C. That covers 70 percent of all Americans. During LGBT Pride Month, we celebrate the progress we have made, but we also recommit to the continued fight for full equality.

Congress needs to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, ENDA, to ensure that no one is fired because of one's gender identity or sexual orientation. Congress needs to pass the SAME Act, which I had the honor of helping to introduce, to ensure that all couples can receive the Social Security benefits that they have earned. Congress needs to pass the Respect for Marriage Act so that all couples are treated with equality and fairness no matter where they live or who they love.

At this very moment, the pursuit of national marriage equality continues. The Supreme Court is currently considering a case that affords the Court a rare opportunity, the opportunity to make history while advancing justice. The Court may and—I hope—will rule that the Constitution's guarantee of the right to marry extends to same-sex couples throughout the United States.

No matter how the Court rules in the days ahead, I know we still have a long road ahead to advance equal rights for all Americans, but I also know we will prevail. We will prevail because we will continue to have those courageous conversations one at a time. We will prevail because we advocate for something far more powerful than politics; we advocate for love.

I am honored to join with Americans across this great country to celebrate national LGBT Pride Month and to stand with those who stand up every day to defend the right of all Americans to be proud of who they are, to be proud of who they love, and to proudly work together for the ongoing cause of true equality under the law.

KIPP GENERATIONS COLLEGIATE GRADUATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise today in honor of the graduates from the KIPP Generations Collegiate High School, KGC, in Houston, Texas. KIPP is a charter school that partners with our Houston area public school system.

Last Sunday, I was honored to speak at their commencement ceremony. I have followed the success of KIPP students for 20 years. From their begin-

nings in elementary school, Mike Feinberg and his excellent staff have taught thousands of children in Texas. KGC's main focus is to build a rigorous learning environment to better equip its students for college.

This school has upheld its mission by empowering its graduates to take ownership of their education by approaching learning with curiosity, with a sense of responsibility, and by putting their knowledge into action in the service of others. Hailing under the motto of "We Lift as We Climb," KGC is truly a model of success for the entire country.

KGC's values of hope, empowerment, grit, and citizenship are tools that every student needs to succeed in the 21st century. Because of this learning environment, every graduate from this program has been accepted into a college or a university. KGC continues to perform well above the State in district averages.

I would like to congratulate the students, the parents, the teachers, and the administrators for their success now and in the future.

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 10 o'clock and 19 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2015 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Jim Walsh, vice president of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:06 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of history, we thank You for this day when former Members return to Congress to continue, in a less official manner, their service to our Nation and to this noble institution.

May their presence here bring a moment of pause where current Members consider the profiles they now form for future generations of Americans.

May all former Members be rewarded for their contributions to this constitutional Republic and continue to work and pray that the goodness and justice of this beloved country be proclaimed to the nations.

Bless all former Members who have died since last year's meeting, 30 in all. May their families and their constituents be comforted during a time of mourning and forever know our gratitude for the sacrifices made in service to the House.

Finally, bless those here gathered that they might bring joy and hope to the present age in supportive compan-

ionship to one another. Together, we call upon Your holy name now and forever.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Jim Walsh led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. WALSH. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I was glad to be here with Jim Walsh.

I looked at the list. As I look around—I am not sure this is accurate—but I saw in the list there are about, I would say, 30 names on this list, and I think there are only two on the list, although that may be not accurate, with whom I have not served. Ron, you are one of them, and I think Lou Frey. Where is Lou?

Mr. FREY. Over here.

Mr. HOYER. The two of you, I think, are the only two former Members with whom I have not served.

And, unfortunately, I never served with Speaker Michel. I served with Minority Leader Michel, but I wish I had served with Speaker Michel, one of the great Americans with whom I have served.

I think Bob Michel is the quintessential example of what a Member of Congress ought to be: civil, committed to his party and to his principles, but committed above all to his country and to his family.

Bob, it was an honor to serve with you, and it is an honor to be your friend. Thank you very much for your service.

To all of you who made this institution what it is today and those of us who are continuing to make it what it ought to be, we are not doing that job very well, for the most part. Although, I will say this, that Speaker BOEHNER is trying to make that happen and, to the extent that we work together, we do. But it is harder and harder, as you know, because the ideological differences between the parties have become more substantial than they were, certainly when I came here in 1981.

Jim Blanchard and I served on the Financial Services Committee together. It was then the Banking Committee. But we are trying to work together to do what is best for our country. I think the country believes its board of directors is not working nearly as well as it ought to.

I want to thank all of you for staying engaged and for continuing to send the message to your colleagues, your friends, your neighbors who have great respect for you. And you have something that very few people have. You know, there are only about a little short of 11,000 of us who have served in this House of Representatives since the founding of the Republic, which is an