

Our nation is now stronger and our people are safer thanks to the sacrifices made by these brave Americans, who no longer need to choose between service and silence.

There have been other changes for the better.

In April 2015, President Obama issued a landmark Executive Order prohibiting discrimination against LGBTQ persons in the workplace.

This civil rights victory ensures the tax dollars used to pay government contractors support contractors that are committed to equal employment opportunity for all persons regardless of sexual orientation.

This legislation marks a major shift from a time when the U.S. Civil Service Commission prohibited the hiring of LGBTQ persons to a time when the Secretary of Defense has selected an openly gay man as his chief of staff.

And we are making progress in realizing the goal of making H.R. 2282, the "Equality Act of 2017," the law of the land so LGBTQ people will finally be guaranteed explicit, permanent protection under the nation's existing civil rights laws against discrimination in vital areas of life, like employment, access to public spaces, housing, credit, education, jury service, and federally-funded programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that in 31 states LGBTQ people can get married on Sunday and remain at risk of being fired or evicted on Monday simply because of who they are.

This year marks the 49th anniversary of the LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement, where activist such as Frank Kamney led the struggle for the voices of the LGBTQ community to be heard.

Frank Kamney's courageous demonstrations inspired others to resist mistreatment and we witnessed in 1969 what happens when a community says enough is enough.

Our country has made much progress since the Stonewall uprising of 1969 but more remains to be done to realize the full promise of America that all are equally treated and protected by the law.

So there is much reason for joy and optimism when my home city of Houston hosts the Ruby Anniversary celebration of Pride Week later this month, June 14–24, 2018.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the 16th largest LGBTQ community in the nation is located in the Houston metropolitan area, which I am privileged to represent.

The Houston LGBTQ community is culturally diverse, economically dynamic, and artistically vibrant.

Houston Pride Week has been an annual event for the last 39 years, since 1979, and promotes the individuality of Houston's ever-growing LGBTQ community.

The Pride Festival and Parade are at the center of a celebration annually attended by more than 700,000 people from Houston and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

All Americans should be deeply concerned over the increase in violence and acts of hate perpetrated against members of the LGBTQ community we have witnessed in recent months.

Especially troubling is the rise in bigotry and violent crimes against transgender people, particularly transgender women of color.

According to statistics compiled by the Human Rights Campaign, at least 22 trans

gender people in the United States lost their lives due to fatal violence, the most ever recorded.

Sadly, we are on pace to break this record in 2017, as 11 transgender persons have been killed in the first five months.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all Americans to visit Houston during Houston Pride Week to observe how we live out our conviction that "Love Will Conquer Hate."

Progress is made through the efforts of courageous men and women who actively engage their communities and face adversity to ensure that the rights of all are clearly recognized and protected.

People like the legendary Bayard Rustin, who organized the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation which inspired the Freedom Rides of the 1960s and helped Dr. King organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and who was the driving force behind the historic 1963 March on Washington.

Texas natives such as Sheryl Swoopes, a 3-time WNBA Most Valuable Player and champion for the Houston Comets, and former Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

These leaders have set an example of what can happen when we lift the limits of inequality and support our fellow Americans in their pursuits of their inalienable rights.

Other members of the LGBTQ community whose contributions have enriched American culture and made our country better include the great poet Langston Hughes; Mandy Carter, 2008 national co-chair of Obama Pride and lifelong activist; Billy Strayhorn the musician and gifted composer whose 30-year collaboration with Duke Ellington gave the world some of the greatest jazz music ever; Tom Waddell, army medical doctor and Olympic athlete; and James Baldwin, one of the towering figures in the history of American literature.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to acknowledge the achievements of just a few of the countless number of Americans who overcame prejudice and discrimination to make America a more welcoming place for succeeding generations of LGBTQ community members.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING PAYU-TA, INC. ON THEIR 10TH ANNIVERSARY SERVING THE GUAM COMMUNITY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Payu-ta, Inc. as they celebrate their 10th anniversary as a nonprofit organization serving the people of Guam. Payu-ta is Guam's umbrella association of non-governmental organizations. It was established in 2008 to address the need to enhance the services and effectiveness of non-governmental agencies on Guam. The mission of Payu-ta, Inc. is to support system that promotes and strengthens member organizations' capacity and advocates for a progressive and sustainable Guam community. The organization seeks to create collaborative partnerships that maximize resources and responds efficiently and effectively for positive community impact.

For the last 10 years, Payu-ta, Inc. has demonstrated that all those in our community are called to work together for the betterment of the island of Guam. The work of Payu-ta, Inc. has been a true investment in our community on Guam. The organization has recognized that non-profit organizations are a vital part of our society that contribute to the improved quality of life for all those in the community. Payu-ta, Inc. is made up of 27 member organization who provide a range of services to supplement the needs of the people of Guam. The members of Payu-ta, Inc. continue to deliver and enhance services to strengthen the island community. I am proud of the good work Payu-ta, Inc. has done over the last 10 years. I join the people of Guam in recognizing and commending Payu-ta, Inc. on its 10th anniversary as a nonprofit organization serving our island and people. I look forward to their continued success and contributions to our community.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT AND BLACK EUROPEANS

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a resolution that I have introduced with my good friends, Congressman GREGORY MEES of New York and Congresswoman GWEN MOORE of Wisconsin. Our resolution recognizes the history and current situation of People of African Descent living in Europe and Black Europeans, and encourages the Secretary of State to take a number of steps to ensure their situation is improved following recommendations from the People of African Descent Week (PADWEEK) held by our colleagues in the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium from May 13–17, 2018.

As European Parliamentarian Cecile Kyenge has noted, "The People of African Descent Week reaffirms European values by developing strategic and coherent responses to make our society more inclusive in the face of rising racial prejudice and violence across Europe." Recommendations from the week included a European Black History Month and Remembrance Day for Victims of Colonialism and Enslavement, a fund for Black European led initiatives to address continuing disparities and discrimination and support empowerment initiatives, European-wide strategies for the inclusion of People of African Descent, and support for transatlantic exchanges on common issues of racial prejudice and discrimination.

The need for recognition of Black populations in Europe became clear ten years ago when I chaired a U.S. Helsinki Commission hearing entitled, "The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics," where we learned that the situation in Europe is very similar to the one in the United States. While the presence of Blacks in Europe can be traced to enslavement, colonization, military deployments, voluntary or forced migration, the movement of refugees and asylum seekers, or educational and other professional exchanges, the story of Europeans of African Descent and Black Europeans still remains