

Each one of these efforts seeks to put an end to the discrimination and to the violence against individuals as a result of their sexual orientation or their gender identity, and I believe each one of them is so strong and deserves to continue to be an American value because discrimination of any kind runs counter to who we are as Americans.

As a refugee from the brutal communist, the dictatorship in Cuba, I have always viewed my adopted homeland, the United States, as a symbol of freedom, of equality, of opportunity; and these are fundamental values that must be applied to everyone in our country, regardless of who they are or whom they love.

The United States has a unique and important role in the world. Many people look to us for leadership. They aspire to be like us. They emulate our values. So, as a country, we have the opportunity and the awesome responsibility to promote the best of our American values.

One way to do this is to take a stand against the violence, against the harassment, against the discrimination that LGBT community members face around the world. Mr. Speaker, I will give some examples.

Our American values dictate that we should respect and embolden individual freedoms for all. That is our guiding principle. But in 70 countries throughout the world, being gay or transgender is cause enough to be locked away, imprisoned. In seven of these countries, the penalty is death.

Our State Department Human Rights Report, a report that Congress has requested or mandated be filled out every year, is reported to us. It is filled with examples of abuses, of discrimination, of violence carried out against LGBT individuals everywhere.

In Russia, basic political freedoms of speech, of assembly, and of expression are denied to those who are LGBT. In the Russian republic of Chechnya, Chechen government officials are directly responsible for rounding up and executing LGBT individuals. We in Congress condemn these actions by Chechen authorities through a resolution that I authored and we passed.

In Egypt, LGBT individuals have been subjected to forced exams in order to prove if someone is gay, whatever that means; and, later, they are incarcerated.

In Indonesia and Nigeria, gay men have been stoned.

In Jamaica, lesbians have been subjected to rape, purportedly to correct their sexual orientation.

In Brazil and in many Central American countries, transgender individuals have been subjected to abuse and murder.

This is unimaginable in our country, but those are but a few examples of the range of injustices and disrespect that LGBT individuals face around the world.

Those who remain in their countries face these humiliations. They are even

denied employment, employment that they need in order to feed their families. And those who seek to flee their countries to escape a fate that you and I cannot even imagine are often denied the expedited refugee protection that they need.

So, Mr. Speaker, as my time serving in this body comes to a close, my fight for what is right will not end. I say to my colleagues: We may be from different parties, we may have different points of view and different philosophies, and we might serve on different committees, but I ask us all to commit, beginning today, to working across the aisle with a view to becoming more consistent, more fair, more respectful, and more principled on this issue. We as a country need to take action to set the right example.

There are many issues upon which we as a body may never agree, but LGBT equality should not be one of them.

#### 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 59 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Pastor William Hild, Jr., FirstSarasota, the Downtown Baptist Church, Sarasota, Florida, offered the following prayer:

Our Father and our God, we beseech You this morning to grant unto this House abundant wisdom, such as we read of in the epistle of James, a wisdom that "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity." May such wisdom be the foundation upon which debate and decision is made.

We pray for the health, wholeness, and peace to be upon each and every esteemed Member, their spouses, their families, and the dedicated staffs who undergird them. May the great challenges that confront our land, debated in this Chamber, become opportunities for even greater blessing as, together, we seek Your will for this, our beloved Nation.

May we be reminded today that Your Word teaches us: "Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord." We thank You for Your incredible goodness, remembering all Your many blessings, both individually and as a Nation.

We earnestly pray for a deeper desire to make You the foundation and center of our life as we offer this humble pray-

er in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. LAWRENCE 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.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, November 28, 2018.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the Certificate of Election received from the Honorable Ruth Johnson, the Michigan Secretary of State, indicating that, at the Special Election held on November 6, 2018, the Honorable Brenda Jones was duly elected Representative in Congress for the 13th Congressional District, State of Michigan.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,  
Clerk.

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I, Ruth Johnson, Secretary of State and Custodian of the Great Seal of the State of Michigan, certify that the following persons were duly elected in Michigan at the November 6, 2018 General Election to the Office of U.S. Representative in Congress for a term commencing immediately and ending on January 3, 2019, as shown by the official returns certified for the election and placed on file in this office.