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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 12, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SUPPORTING THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. PRESSLEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, the great poet and pioneer of righteous rage, Audre Lorde, once said: "I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own."

The year is now 2020, and here we women are, still in so many ways not fully free, still shackled.

Today, I rise to affirm the humanity and the dignity of all women. I rise in strong, unapologetic, righteous support of H.J. Res. 79, which will strike the arbitrary deadline for ratification of the equal rights amendment, an amendment that should already be the law of the land.

Women are strong, hardworking, bright, and resilient. We are the backbones of our families, our communities, and our democracy. We do not live in checked boxes; we live in an intersectionality of lived experiences and identities. Our issues are everyone's issues, because our destinies are all tied.

Tomorrow's vote on H.J. Res. 79 is a vote for the preservation of our collective humanity.

Despite our commitment to hard work, both within our households and on the job, we are still paid less than our male counterparts. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, women are paid 83 cents for every dollar paid to a man; but nationally, women are paid only 80 cents for every dollar a man is paid.

Even worse, the modern-day wage gap disproportionately impacts women of color, with Black women earning 61 cents, Native women earning 58 cents, Latinx women earning only 53 cents, and AAPI women making as little as 50 cents per dollar paid to a White man.

In addition to pay discrimination, we face pregnancy discrimination, discrimination in the criminal legal system, sexual and domestic violence, and inadequate healthcare access.

But this isn't an accident. The American Constitution is sexist by its very design. This country's laws have historically treated us like second-class citizens, depriving us of the right to vote, to enter most jobs, and to own property.

While some of these injustices may cease to exist, we still face tremendous barriers to our full participation in so-

ciety. With tomorrow's vote, we have an opportunity to right this country's wrong and to take a stand in the name of equality.

I am honored to be serving and representing the Massachusetts Seventh Congressional District during these unprecedented times, where we have a record 127 women serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. These women are some of the fiercest table-shakers, justice-seekers, and truth-tellers that have ever served in this august body, and it is my privilege and joy to call them my sisters in service:

My sister in service Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, who has faithfully served the people of Washington, D.C., for 29 years and continues to lead in the fight for D.C. statehood;

My sister in service Congresswoman KATIE PORTER, who is fighting for economic justice for domestic violence survivors who are financially dependent on their partners;

My sister in service Congresswoman DEB HAALAND, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna Tribe, who continues to shine daylight on the silent crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women;

My sister in service Congresswoman RASHIDA TLAIB, whose unique experiences as a Palestinian American have given a voice to unheard Palestinians around the world fighting for their humanity;

My sister in service Congresswoman LAUREN UNDERWOOD, who remains clear-eyed in her fight for healthcare justice as both a nurse and someone living with a preexisting condition; and

My sister in service Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, for her leadership on this issue and for introducing this critical joint resolution.

Tomorrow's vote is a vote for equality. It is a vote for fairness. It is a vote to actualize the movements built on the backs of women.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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