

very rural district—he would just talk to people, strike up conversations. He would want to hear their stories and he would want to help people. He had a lot of opportunities to do that, Madam Speaker.

He started working for Congressman John Cooksey out of college at Louisiana Tech. He had already garnished a desire for public service.

After he worked for Congressman Cooksey, I met him in 2004, when he was working on the campaign of my predecessor, Bobby Jindal, who got elected to Congress. Luke served with him there. When Bobby got elected Governor, Luke went to serve with him in the State to make our State a better place.

And then when Ralph Abraham came to Congress, Luke spent the last 6 years working for Ralph as his chief of staff, going around the rural parts of that district in northeast Louisiana, just reaching out, finding out about people.

He was very much into genealogy. He wanted to know not just about people, but about their history, where they came from, what made people tick, and how he could keep making a difference.

Ultimately, when Ralph retired, Luke made that decision to run. And he didn't make that decision alone. His lovely wife, Julia, was all in. They were a family that was a partnership. They were a true love story of two people who cared deeply about each other and who cared deeply about their young children: young Jeremiah; and young Jacqueline, who we also grieve for.

It is heartbreaking when you think of the promise and what was lost, what we as colleagues lost. You hear members of his own freshman class who never got to serve with him—some have might not even met with him, just knew about him or heard about him—and miss him. That is the kind of person who Luke Letlow was.

I got to talk to Luke a lot in those last few days and in the last few weeks before he even got COVID. He was so excited to come up here and get sworn in as a Member of Congress and to start helping people in a different way.

He had already helped so many people working for others, but now was his chance to make his own mark. He was talking about what committees he wanted to be on. He wanted to serve on the Agriculture Committee. He wanted to serve on the Appropriations Committee. And he had big ideas, ideas that inspire other people to want to do better as well.

So, Madam Speaker, when we remember Luke Letlow, it is that big smile that Luke had. It is that servant's heart, the heart of a person who cares about other people and wanted to make a difference for all of the right reasons. Thank God we still have people like Luke Letlow who care enough to want to get into public service for the right reasons.

It is sad that we didn't get that opportunity to serve with him. I so

looked forward to serving with him as a colleague in the Louisiana delegation. He was only 5 days away from getting sworn in when we lost him.

So, Madam Speaker, as we remember the life of Luke Letlow, I know he is up in heaven looking down. He was a man of deep, deep faith, and that faith carried him and his family through those difficulties in the last few days when he was struggling and fighting for his life. I know that faith is what got him into heaven. He would probably be looking down and saying: Y'all shouldn't be making such a big fuss.

But you know what? He deserves this kind of tribute because this would have been a richer body if we had Luke Letlow.

We will all remember him and keep him in our thoughts and our prayers.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank the whip for those great remarks and his great leadership, and I know Luke appreciated that as well.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT).

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for yielding and for setting up this Special Order to honor Congressman-elect Luke Letlow.

Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Congressman-elect Luke Letlow, whose tireless work for his community, passion for public service, and love for his constituents will long be an inspiration to many Americans.

He spoke glowingly of the mighty Mississippi and his district's rich Louisiana soil, both of which flowed freely through his veins as he passionately advocated for the people who elected him to be their voice.

His life of service working for Governor Bobby Jindal, serving as chief of staff to Congressman Ralph Abraham, and then successfully running for Congress himself, exemplified his commitment to win the day.

Congressman-elect Letlow shared my great love for our Western States, and he was a fierce advocate for the issues facing everyday Americans. His calling to public service was only surpassed by his calling to be a loving husband, father, brother, and son. He cared deeply for his beloved wife, Julia; son, Jeremiah; and daughter, Jacqueline.

After he won his race, Congressman-elect Letlow's wife, Julia, spoke of God's sovereignty over the life of her husband, quoting the words from scripture: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart."

God set Luke apart with a calling, with an anointing, and that same calling and anointing is now in that Godly heritage that he has left behind. God's wraparound presence is surrounding the Letlow family.

God's plan for Luke's life was one of service, and his legacy will live on through his family. His wife, Julia, is a

woman of deep faith. A calling to public service is on her life. She was his rock for all of his years in public life. I am honored to call her my friend now.

May his family find comfort in the words of the scripture: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted. . . ." and in knowing that Congressman-elect Letlow fought the good fight, finished his race, and kept the faith.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for her words. That was very appropriate. I was going to cite the same scripture.

I will just say this as we close tonight: The night we got word of Luke's passing was December 29, and that word, the phone call we got shook my whole family, as it did everybody in the State.

As we were putting our children to bed at night, I reminded my youngest son, my 10-year-old son, that while grieving is part of our human experience, the Lord mourns with us. We know that from Isaiah 53:4. And as Lauren just said, He always remains close to the brokenhearted. Psalm 34.

So many are mourning this loss and so many remain brokenhearted. But I will close with these words from the Apostle Paul, as he wrote to the church in Rome, Romans 8:38-39: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Luke believed that and he lived it, and he would want us to remember it, too.

Madam Speaker, this concludes our Special Order tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

DANGER OF GENDER IDENTITY POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Louisiana, for that very heartfelt time recognizing Mr. Letlow and his family. Our hearts are with them.

I now move on to another topic that is also very, very important to all of us and to America, and it deals with a bill that will be on the floor this week.

It is shamefully called the Equality Act, but it shreds the principles of protecting our children. In fact, under this

bill, children, beginning with the womb, will be targeted and victimized.

Under this bill, children in the classroom will be bombarded with unscientific, confusing materials questioning the reality of their biological sex.

Under this bill, children struggling with gender dysphoria will be pushed toward medical treatments and even surgical procedures, which will disrupt their natural development and may leave them sterile and physically altered for life.

Under this bill, children's privacy will be violated when locker rooms, restrooms, and homeless shelters will no longer be single sex.

Under this bill, parents may face custody battles for making healthy, wholesome choices for their children's health.

This scenario was not hypothetical for the Ohio couple who lost custody of their daughter for not affirming hormonal treatments.

Under this bill, foster care and adoption agencies will be forced to shutter. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The so-called Equality Act jeopardizes the well-being of our children. It jeopardizes the role of parents, the privacy and safety of vulnerable women, the competitive edge of female athletes, the livelihood of charities and businesses, and the integrity of our healthcare system.

We demand better for our children and their futures, and we will not be silent. We are here tonight to expose the Equality Act for what it is, a far-reaching policy that will upend all aspects of life, and turn basic decency and common sense into discrimination.

I appreciate my colleagues who have joined me tonight to let America know why this bill must be defeated.

Madam Speaker, first, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS), my friend and colleague who is a practicing anesthesiologist.

Mr. HARRIS. Madam Speaker, this bill, the Equality Act, is nothing more than an identity politic sellout, a thinly veiled attempt to attack and coerce individuals who hold serious and legitimate concerns or objections to things like parental rights to make healthcare decisions for their children; the ability of women to compete on an equal athletic playing field; and even medical procedures like sterilization and abortion.

I am a physician and I have been practicing medicine for over 35 years. This bill, if enacted, would mandate that healthcare practitioners and even facilities like Catholic hospitals would be forced to provide and participate in procedures like abortion, which ends a human life.

We should all be able to agree that a Catholic hospital should never be compelled by the government to offer procedures like abortion that they morally object to in the strongest possible terms.

Furthermore, if society continues to support politically correct gender iden-

tity politics, the science is becoming clearer that gender dysphoria, especially in children, is a psychiatric condition that in most cases will resolve itself with time.

Instead, however, this bill would require parents to allow irreversible medical interventions for their children, children who may even be prepubescent, resulting in sterilization, and oftentimes later regret.

□ 2015

Scientific data confirms that many who undergo gender transition continue to deal with serious depression, even after full transition. And the poorly named "Equality Act" would mandate that medical professionals accept and support the desire of their patients to undergo these invasive procedures, even if they have professional or conscience objections.

Madam Speaker, in response, I will be reintroducing the Conscience Protection Act this week. My bill will protect healthcare providers from being required to perform abortions or sterilizations and allow them to continue practicing medicine without duress or coercion from their employer or perhaps even their patients.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor my bill, and I oppose the so-called Equality Act on the floor this week.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I thank Dr. HARRIS, and I appreciate his firsthand experience and thoughts on this very, very, serious matter.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), cochair of the Values Action Team.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for her courage and backbone in supporting these vital social issues.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the dangers of H.R. 5, the so-called Equality Act. This bill would have disastrous effects on our culture. H.R. 5 will not only turn the Civil Rights Act on its head, it would harass individuals and entities who are merely seeking to exercise their sincerely held religious beliefs.

Under the current text, countless faith-based businesses and nonprofits across the country would simply cease to exist. I am not convinced that my colleagues across the aisle understand the far-reaching consequences of the so-called Equality Act. The reality is that churches could be forced to violate their beliefs simply to stay open if it were enforced as written.

This awful legislation also creates fundamental inequalities for many Americans. Parents sending their kids to public schools would live in fear that their young daughter would have to use the same locker room or restroom as a man because the Equality Act would open the door to biological males self-identifying as females.

I have introduced an amendment to the Equality Act protecting accommodations choosing to designate pri-

vate, single-sex spaces, such as restrooms or locker rooms. I hope the Democrat majority allows a vote on this commonsense amendment that tens of millions of American parents want.

In addition, the so-called Equality Act would significantly disadvantage women participating in sex-specific sports leagues. That is why I have also introduced an amendment, originally filed as a bill last Congress by Democratic Representative TULSI GABBARD, protecting equal opportunities for women and girls in high school and college sports. This amendment of mine seeks to protect women and girls simply wanting to compete against other biological women and girls on a level playing field.

Women and children suffer when Democrat policies are enacted. Women's sports, and the girls and young women who just simply want to compete with other females on an equal basis, will be the victims of Democrat policies.

Madam Speaker, I adamantly oppose the radical Equality Act, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will take a stand and oppose it as well.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. LAMBORN, such great remarks, so much common sense there.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN), my friend, and an emergency room physician.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Missouri for her leadership on this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, as a physician, I know firsthand that this bill, H.R. 5, will force medical providers to surrender sound medical judgment and their sincerely held convictions to politically fashionable dogmas.

According to the radical activists who seek to enshrine gender identity in the Federal civil rights law, the only appropriate treatment for a child struggling from gender dysphoria is gender reassignment. That is it. Such procedures often lead to irreversible damage, especially in adolescents. But under the Equality Act, medical providers who object to performing these procedures will face crushing legal liability if they refuse to comply. Every medical facility receiving any Federal money will be given an ultimatum: Comply or shut down.

Madam Speaker, if H.R. 5 becomes law, a doctor who refuses to perform a mastectomy or a hysterectomy on an otherwise healthy teenage girl seeking gender reassignment surgery, will be held liable for violating the Federal law.

H.R. 5 even goes so far as to exempt itself from longstanding, bipartisan Federal religious liberty protections—protections both Congress and the Supreme Court have consistently upheld. A Catholic hospital, following the commands of Scripture to serve the frail and the poor will be forced to violate

their very faith to comply and perform abortions or face financial ruin.

Madam Speaker, as a physician, I took a sacred oath to do no harm and to preserve the health of those in my care. If this bill becomes law, many doctors will be forced to go against both their conscience and their medical judgment.

Make no mistake, this is a death sentence for medicine and for the sacred rights of conscience. Biology is not bigotry, and medicine is not discrimination.

All Americans who do not wish to see medicine sacrificed to the politically correct orthodoxy should stand up and oppose this bill.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Dr. Green. That is excellent. "Biology is not bigotry." It seems like common sense, but we are not talking about common sense with the Equality Act. And that is why we are here tonight, to let the American people know about the ramifications, the very serious, permanent ramifications of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN), another doctor, who I am proud to be joined by, who is a dentist from Texas.

Please share your thoughts about this bill and what it is going to mean to Americans.

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Missouri for this opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in objection to the so-called Equality Act. Once again, under the guise of equality, the left is prioritizing its radical agenda over religious freedom, the well-being of children, and the safety of women and girls.

As the father of three daughters and the grandfather of nine granddaughters, I am outraged at the assault that this bill launches on women in sports. And furthermore, as a healthcare practitioner, I am infuriated at its blatant attack on the conscience rights and religious freedoms of those in the healthcare industry.

This bill is not about preventing discrimination in medical treatment, it is about forcing medical professionals to abandon their conscience rights and medical judgment to comply with the left's extreme views on gender.

The Equality Act would prohibit physicians from counseling children with gender dysphoria. Instead, they would be required to administer dangerous medical treatments, including puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries.

This mandate contradicts science. Increasingly, we are finding that these treatments compound these children's confusion rather than solving it. The catastrophic effects leave children physically and psychologically scarred and often render them sterile. It is nothing short of child abuse.

The left will not tolerate disagreement with its view on gender. They provide no conscience protections and explicitly state that the Religious

Freedom Restoration Act does not apply to this new definition of sex. Physicians refusing to perform these harmful treatments would be punished, even if they object because of religious or moral convictions.

The Equality Act is another attempt by the left to promote its radical agenda and suppress everyone else who disagrees. We must fight for the conscience rights and religious freedoms of our medical professionals, and we must stop our children from being used as pawns in the game of political correctness.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Well said, and I thank the gentleman so much.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. FISCHBACH), the first female president of the Minnesota Senate. She is a mother of two and grandmother of five.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HARTZLER for putting this together. I appreciate the opportunity in making sure the people in the country understand what is in this bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5, the so-called Equality Act. The reality of this bill is anything but equal. It is nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to force unreasonable mandates on our institutions and restrict the liberties of the American people.

If this becomes law, Americans can expect government-imposed limits on the free exercise of religious liberty, businesses forced to cover the costs of abortions, and medical providers required to perform abortions, even if it conflicts with their deeply held beliefs.

Unfortunately, this is just the tip of the iceberg. So today, I rise to speak on behalf of pro-life Americans in my district and across the country who fear this legislation will be manipulated by the radical left to impose its will and create a right to abortion right up to the moment of birth.

Madam Speaker, a majority of Americans support at least some restrictions on abortion, including making sure taxpayer funds are not used to fund abortions. Instead of respecting the rights of all Americans, this bill will impose a top-down abortion mandate that interferes with the State and Federal laws that protect the right to life and will force doctors, nurses, and other medical providers to participate in abortion procedures, even if it goes against their own sincerely held beliefs.

The previous administration made great strides in protecting religious freedom and the liberties of all Americans. Unfortunately, the new administration does not seem to value those cherished beliefs.

This bill will relegate the pro-life view to discrimination, redefine gender, and require faith-based employers to pay for abortion in their insurance offerings.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this legislation on behalf of the unborn who do

not have a voice. I oppose this legislation on behalf of my constituents, many of whom hold beliefs that are in conflict with this bill's radical ideology. And I oppose this bill on behalf of the millions of Americans who know that life is a God-given gift worth fighting for.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this bill and ask Members to do the same.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Representative FISCHBACH. Life is precious, and it is jeopardized under this very poor bill, and so thank you for raising those points.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT), a volunteer counselor to incarcerated women.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time.

The Equality Act.

Madam Speaker, equality for who?

Where is the equality in this legislation for the young girls across America who have to look behind their backs as they change in their school locker rooms just to make sure there isn't a confused man trying to catch a peek?

Where is the equality for women who have been sexually assaulted?

Under this legislation, their crisis counselor may be "Alexis" who was actually born "Alex." And they will have to talk to him about their assault.

Where is the equality for parents who want and deserve the right to raise their children, free from government overreach?

Under this proposal, Congress seeks to replace mom and dad with bureaucrats. This isn't hyperbole. In Ohio, a mom and dad had their child removed from their custody because they didn't allow their daughter to undergo gender transition. Removed from their custody.

And so here we are. The left will lay down the rights and security of millions of Americans, particularly young women, at the altar of gender ideology.

Following the lead of liberal indoctrination camps, also called colleges and universities, my colleagues on the left are committed to advancing this radical ideology, the rights and sovereignty of individual States be darned. So much for Federalism.

The power-hungry left will not slow down until every school, every church, every workplace, every State, and every community adheres to the left's definition of gender.

You disagree?

They will find you. They will imprison you. Or as we have seen, they will even take your children. And let's make sure the American people know this is only the beginning.

The Equality Act requires doctors to perform abortions, and they are going to use your tax dollars to pay for them.

Once the left codifies their ideology, they will come for your speech. It is already happening in Canada, where you can be fined and imprisoned for misgendering someone.

□ 2030

Madam Speaker, they won't stop there. Nothing will ever satisfy the left until there is complete and total compliance.

Madam Speaker, Scripture says, when speaking of those who have turned their back on God, who have traded the truth for a lie: Professing to be wise, they became fools.

I can think of no better description of the so-called Equality Act, or inequality act, than this. The utter foolishness is astounding. Up is down. Wrong is right. Left is right. Boys are girls and vice versa.

Madam Speaker, for the sake of our sons and daughters, for the sake of parental rights, privacy, decency, and so much more, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this horrendous legislation.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, so well said. Up is down, and right is wrong.

Our last speaker is the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), a doctor of education.

I want to thank the other colleagues who are here. We are running out of time, but I want to thank Representative RICK ALLEN, who objects to this bill, for being here as well.

Dr. Foxx, will you share, in closing, why we should oppose this bill this week? I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, our First Amendment is a powerful instrument that has protected our most sacred freedoms for hundreds of years. Few other countries provide the same protections and freedoms that our First Amendment guarantees. Yet, today, these essential rights are under attack.

H.R. 5 is the latest example of Democrats' misleading and partisan manner of legislating. As a former educator and the Republican leader of the Education and Labor Committee, I can tell you the bill may have "equality" in the title, but it certainly does not serve all Americans.

The Equality Act would empower the government to interfere in how regular Americans think, speak, and act. Specifically, it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to make sexual orientation and gender identity protected classes.

According to the National Review, this extreme legislation redefines sex to include gender identity, undermines religious freedom, gives males who identify as females the right to women's spaces, and sets a dangerous political precedent for the medicalization of gender-confused youth.

Under H.R. 5, our Nation's K-12 schools would be forced to treat gender as being fluid, subjective, and not tied to biological reality.

Government intervention often causes more harm than good. I've spent my time in Congress working to protect individual freedoms from unnecessary bureaucratic burdens. I recognize that a strong family is vital to our na-

tion's progress and prosperity, which is why I've worked to advance legislation that allows families to flourish and protects life at all stages. It is unconscionable that in America, where we fight for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we tolerate this systematic extermination of an entire generation. The right to life demands that we protect our Nation's most vulnerable, including the unborn.

Our First Amendment is a powerful instrument that has protected our most sacred freedoms for hundreds of years. Few other countries provide the same protections and freedoms that our First Amendment guarantees. We are the 'land of the free' because of it. Our individual liberties are the envy of people around the world and they are the cornerstone of the world's oldest democracy.

Yet today, these essential rights are under attack.

H.R. 5 is the latest example of Democrats' misleading and partisan manner of legislating.

As a former educator and the Republican Leader of the Education and Labor Committee, I can tell you that the bill may have "equality" in the title, but it certainly does not serve ALL Americans.

This legislation has a clever name and an allegedly noble purpose, but it is a vehicle for serious, harmful consequences.

The Equality Act would empower the government to interfere in how regular Americans think, speak, and act. Specifically, it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to make sexual orientation and gender identity protected classes. According to the National Review, this extreme legislation "redefines sex to include gender identity, undermines religious freedom, gives males who identify as females the right to women's spaces, and sets a dangerous political precedent for the medicalization of gender-confused youth."

Under H.R. 5, our nation's K-12 schools would be forced to treat gender as being fluid, subjective, and not tied to biological reality.

The bill would undermine Title IX protections for girls by outlawing sex-based athletic competitions.

Even more troubling is the bill's meticulous and intentional destruction of religious freedom protections.

Religiously affiliated colleges and universities that maintain student codes of conduct, hiring practices, or housing rules reflecting sincerely held beliefs about marriage and sexuality risk losing federal funding under the Equality Act, as such policies would be deemed discriminatory.

Beloved secular private colleges that maintain single sex admissions policies, like Smith College and Morehouse College, could be forced to change their policies or forego federal funding.

In Virginia, we've already seen the displeasure amongst parents regarding such policy implementation. In an opinion piece published by the Washington Post in 2019, a former middle and high school teacher whose children attend Arlington Public Schools said, "It would erode parents' rights over their children's education, corrode Title IX protections for girls and risk convincing healthy, normally developing boys and girls that their bodies are wrong and must be altered with hormones and be vandalized by surgical instruments."

The bill also lacks any pro-life protections, which is why I am submitting my amendment that will protect religiously affiliated groups and

individuals from participating in or funding abortions.

This bill is a brazen attempt to replace longstanding constitutional rights with the identity politics of the moment.

We've entered treacherous waters by considering legislation that stifles proven, bipartisan solutions and, more seriously, our Bill of Rights. It's outrageous that Democrats would advertise these proposals as guaranteeing fundamental civil and legal rights.

Madam Speaker, as elected Representatives, we all strive for equality before the law, but H.R. 5 is another classic example of Democrats passing a bill now and figuring out what it means later.

This is no way to legislate.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, the Equality Act's supporters claim it will protect students from discrimination, but in reality it makes schools more dangerous and unfair for everyone.

By expanding the definition of "sex" to include self-declared gender identity, it requires schools to allow biological males into girls' restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sport events usually reserved for women.

And by incorporating sexual orientation and gender identity into Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, which appropriately mandates the desegregation of public education, this bill could order the incorporation of radical gender ideology in sex education or other aspects of curriculum, far outside the original law's scope. Activists are already pushing graphic, age-inappropriate content on these topics on students in places like Arlington, Virginia.

This bill puts teachers and administrators at risk too. Those who "misgender" a student or fail to use the individual's preferred pronouns could be accused of harassment and subject to discipline or even lose their jobs.

Girls would also face unfair competition in sports. The Equality Act would force schools to allow biological males to compete on female-only teams.

We have already seen consequences of this. One transgender MMA fighter has broken the skulls of two female opponents (and counting), and transgender runners and basketball players are dominating female competitors, leaving many females' long ambioned goals of trophies and scholarships dashed.

For years, supporters of Title IX have fought to encourage and empower girls through athletic competition. Democrats would like to erase those gains, shattering countless girls' dreams and dignity, to appease the woke mob.

Americans of faith would suffer too. Religiously affiliated colleges and universities that maintain student codes of conduct, hiring practices, or housing rules reflecting their faith's sincerely held beliefs about marriage and sexuality would lose federal funding under the Equality Act, as such policies would be deemed discriminatory and open them to countless lawsuits to threaten their very existence.

All-female universities, whether religious or secular, would be required to accept male students identifying as female students, and male students identifying as males, since this bill provides no exemptions for female-only institutions. Is that a policy Americans want?

The misnamed Equality Act erases opportunities for girls and women and harms all students and teachers. It must be opposed.

OUR POWER, OUR MESSAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to open our first Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour of this year, during Black History Month, utilizing to the fullest extent possible: Our Power, Our Message.

I would like to thank the Congressional Black Caucus members for having the confidence to elect me to be chairwoman during the 117th Congress. I stand on the shoulders of greatness as I acknowledge the past members and chairs for their tremendous leadership.

For the next 60 minutes, we have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about the issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus and the millions of constituents we represent.

Tonight's Special Order hour topic will serve as part of a rollout of our policy agenda and celebrate our 50th anniversary in the context of the many critical issues facing the Black community.

The Congressional Black Caucus kicked off Black History Month, Madam Speaker, with the powerful Travon Free film "Two Distant Strangers," a moving story about a young Black man caught in a George Floyd type of nightmare with his local police department.

During tomorrow's CBC meeting to be held at 12 p.m., the "Living Black History" vignette, featuring all 58 members of the CBC, will be unveiled to the public via Facebook, TheGrio, and my YouTube page.

We are also hosting a virtual film screening of director Lee Daniels' film, "The United State vs. Billie Holiday," tomorrow evening.

In that spirit, later this week, I will be introducing the Black History is American History Act to close out our Black History Month.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the CBC with the largest CBC group ever, 58 members who represent the diversity, hope, and promise of this great Nation. It has been stated before, and it certainly bears repeating, the CBC is commonly referred to as the conscience of the Congress and over the decades has forcefully advocated on policies that our Nation cares about, ranging from economic justice and rep-

arations, healthcare, voting rights, consumer protection, education, and fair policing to far beyond.

The killing of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd drew America closer to another watershed moment last year, amid a pandemic that has disrupted life as we knew it, triggering an intergenerational cross-class collective of people demanding change, which led to the passage of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, a bill that is the first-ever bold, comprehensive approach to hold police accountable, change the culture of law enforcement, empower our communities, and build trust between law enforcement and our communities by addressing systemic racism and biases to help save lives.

I also wear another hat, and that is as chairwoman of the Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the House Financial Services Committee. Though it may speak for itself, I appreciate that kind of transformative change which we seek in the spirit of policy, legislation, and regulation that will, hopefully, result in building a record that we can use as we promote diversity and inclusion in our democracy. As CBC founder member Bill Clay noted, we have no permanent friends or enemies, just permanent interests.

The CBC's priorities will allow us, in many instances, to work with the Biden administration to deliver relief to our constituents who have been so devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and to work on long-term plans for recovery. To that end, we are so pleased that we will announce our domestic policy team tomorrow, as we have met with Ambassador Susan Rice, who is head of the Biden domestic policy team.

It is so important that I end by saying the Congressional Black Caucus is committed to dramatically reversing these alarming trends by working with our community leaders, allies, and colleagues in Congress to pass critical legislation and by working with the Biden-Harris administration to encourage responsible executive branch policies and actions using Our Power, Our Message.

Now, I am honored to announce our CBC anchors for tonight: Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a scholar, a strategist, an orator, a woman who has sponsored legislation and helped craft much of the changes that we will be talking about through the 117th Congress; and I am equally as proud to say that the Special Order hour will be co-chaired by her coanchor, Congressman RITCHIE TORRES, a freshman, a member of the Financial Services Committee, a giant in public housing legislation. Tonight, you will hear from them.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OUR POWER, OUR MESSAGE
DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank our illustrious leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, whose visionary leadership is going to carry us into the 117th Congress.

Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY acts legislatively on her history. She is from Ohio, one of the major stops of the Underground Railroad. In fact, Cincinnati, Ohio, has one of the most monumental monuments, if you will, to that freedom train, that courage, of Harriet Tubman. I might say that our chairwoman's actions are in resemblance to Harriet Tubman. We are grateful for her vision.

We will tomorrow, at the Congressional Black Caucus, unveil the talent of tens upon tens of members of the Congressional Black Caucus and lay out our legacy. Our Power, Our Message. I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership.

It is as well my honor to be able to co-chair this with, if I might with a degree of familiarity, a brother from the Bronx. I am delighted that a working man's and woman's representative has come to be able to shine, a man who is a product of public housing, public schools, and public hospitals, and who had a dream of lifting up his community and building back a better Bronx.

I am delighted that at 25, against all odds, he became the youngest elected official in New York City and the first openly LGBTQ elected official from the Bronx. He doesn't know that his reputation preceded him as a dynamic gether-done person.

I will repeat his motto before I begin my remarks, and that is RITCHIE TORRES' remarks and life motto is as follows: "My motto is life is simple. If you do nothing, nothing will change."

Wow, what a piercing message for all of us, Republicans and Democrats, to do something good.

His motto is: "If you do nothing, nothing will change. We can build a better Bronx, and we will do it together."

I am delighted to coanchor with Mr. RITCHIE TORRES for the 117th Congress.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I am particularly delighted to begin my remarks, as I continue to weave in and out tonight, and then, with my remarks, will yield to Mr. TORRES as well.