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CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY
MONTH

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include material on the subject of my Special Order in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, as a co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I am pleased to lead this Special Order in celebration of Women's History Month. Throughout March, we recognize the women leaders, trailblazers, and pioneers who come before us.

We have chartered a path forward that will lift up and empower young women and girls. The soul and moral compass of our Nation rests on the shoulders of women throughout this history.

I am proud to fight every day so that we can improve the quality of life for women and girls in Michigan and across this country.

As the co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus and the vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I have made it a mission to put women issues and Black women issues front and center in this Congress.

But before I go into the work that we have done and are doing in this Chamber, I want to recognize the inspirational women in my life who helped shape who I am.

First, I want to acknowledge my grandmother, who, without a high school education, taught me the value of education, taught me the value of being a woman, of being a wife, of being a mother. She is my rock and my foundation. She taught me that being a woman and being a Black woman in America "is to be fearless, Brenda," to never apologize, and be accountable for everything that I do, and that I work hard, get my education, and keep my faith in God. There was no door I could not walk through or no table that I did not deserve to sit at. She had strength and confidence in something I carry with me every single day.

Then there is my shero, Shirley Chisholm, who paved the way for Black women like me to be in Congress. She proved every day the power that women had to change their community. Shirley Chisholm always said: "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

And, my goodness, the majority of women who represent us here in Congress are carrying their own folding chair.

So we have our first woman, our first Black American, our first Asian-American Vice President, who has coined the phrase: "The first, but not the last."

We stand on the shoulders, all of us, of giants. We continue to build the foundation so that the next generation of girls and young women can stand on our shoulders. Look at this Congress. There are over 140 Democrat and Republican women in the House and the Senate, the most ever in the history of our country.

That translates to the work we are doing in this Chamber to better the lives of women and girls. If you look at today, we voted to pass the equal rights amendment resolution and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. These are the steps in the right direction. We have come a long way, baby, for full equality, but we still have work to do.

We, unfortunately, have a system in America that often suppress women and does not support women. But we know that, "A woman is like a tea bag," like Eleanor Roosevelt said, "you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water."

And I know for a fact that women have continued to stand up against every barrier. You point to this pandemic and you see how women, especially women of color, have borne the brunt of this health and economic crisis. But we keep moving and we will continue in this Congress to fight for the women in America.

This is our responsibility, and I am glad that we have women leaders across the Federal, State, and local governments that we have looked up to. Every woman in this Congress today recognizes that the next generation is looking at us and asking us to stand up.

Our Vice President of the United States, our Speaker of the House, and half of President Biden's Cabinet, and even on the other side of the aisle, the chair of the House Republican Party, all are women. We are making success, and I know that we can do so much more.

I continue to work, and I want to know that when women succeed, America succeeds, as our amazing Speaker of the House reminds us.

I am so glad to share this hour with some of our amazing women leaders who will continue to tell us, while we have a month dedicated to women's history, we make history every single day.

I would like to ask for my first speaker to come to the podium.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, my friend, my colleague, my co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus.

I rise tonight in honor of Women's History Month and the heroic, trailblazing women of our military, who have risked their lives for our country

in the advancement of women's equity and equality.

Women have been on the front lines fighting for America's values and freedom since the founding of our Nation. Our foremothers blazed a trail for women like Loretta Walsh, who, in 1917, as America teetered on the brink of entering World War I, heard and answered the call to serve. Loretta became the first woman to enlist in the U.S. military in a position other than nursing and was our first female chief petty officer.

I also want to recognize Captain Kristen Griest and Lieutenant Shaye Haver, the first women to graduate from the Army Ranger School; Marcella Hayes, America's first Black female fighter pilot; and Mary Edward Walker, the first female U.S. Army surgeon who served in the Civil War and the only woman to receive the Presidential Medal of Honor.

The strength and courage of these women and so many more like them reinforces what we already know: There is nothing women cannot do.

When women are in positions of leadership, our country is in better hands. I believe that this is especially true in our military.

I honor General Ann E. Dunwoody, our Nation's first female four-star general; Admiral Michelle Howard, the Navy's first female four-star admiral and first African American to command a U.S. naval ship; and Air Force General Laura Richardson, the first female commander of a combatant command.

These women have served our Nation honorably. They now must open new doors for a generation of women to fulfill their dreams to serve our country under safe conditions, free from sexual assault and harassment.

All of these women warriors volunteered for duty and risked their lives while fighting rampant misogyny, including attacks from talking heads on national TV—who have never served our country—and racism for the women of color. Their unflinching courage has paved the way for thousands of women serving in our Armed Forces today. Our military is stronger and this country is safer because women serve.

We honor these military women's achievements today on the House floor. May we never forget their sacrifice, duty, and dedication. May they elevate a new generation of women in the military, free from bias, racial discrimination, and sexual assault.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my amazing co-chair for everything she does.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise today to honor our foremothers who first demanded equity in and outside the home, along with the sheroes

of today who still battle for it amidst this deadly pandemic both on and behind its front lines.

The onset of COVID-19 pushed so many brave women into the deadly viral fires. It also foisted upon too many of them an inordinate share of unpaid caretaker and teacher roles once they were safe at home.

Throughout all of history, it is women, especially those of color, who bear the harshest health and economic burdens and fallout from such national crises.

The data is clear: Only a full recovery that prioritizes women can reverse this “she-cession” we are in.

That is why I proudly supported the American Rescue Plan, which provides much-needed help to women across this country. This relief package includes historic expansion of the child tax credit to help lift children and families out of poverty, and provides paid-leave tax credits to help more women stay in the workforce.

It also makes the investments needed to safely reopen schools and keep the childcare industry afloat so women and families can pay for care and get back to work.

And with the inclusion of \$1,400 stimulus checks per family member and extended unemployment assistance, women can finally regain their footing as equal partners and breadwinners.

Yet, even among these many challenges women have faced over this last year, we cannot overlook that, for the first time in history, we have sworn in a Madam Vice President. The historic inauguration of Vice President Harris will inspire countless girls to higher ambitions, and it marks a milestone for all women of color whose work, leadership, and vision went unrecognized for far too long.

In the Jewish faith, one of our most important tenets is the concept of *l’dor v’dor*—from generation to generation. It is our responsibility to lift up the women of tomorrow and ensure that the world provides every opportunity for them to succeed.

This Women’s History Month, while we honor and remember the women who have carried us through this and other past national calamities, we also celebrate that the shoulders we now stand on provide an even clearer vision of the equity and fairness for which we all strive.

Women are the changemakers, the visionaries, and the leaders of the future. Today, we celebrate a world in which my two daughters and all young girls everywhere have bold, limitless visions and dreams that are now truly possible.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL), my co-chair.

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, my sister in good trouble.

This is Women’s History Month, a time to reflect the gains women have

made; the struggles we continue to face; and the strong, fearless, and selfless women who have and continue to pave the way.

I have often lamented, as have many of my colleagues here, that for women to reach their full potential, we must be in charge of our own reproductive destiny. No one should have to call their Governor or Member of Congress for permission to access contraception or abortion. And even after the landmark decision *Roe v. Wade*, it is a constant battle to protect a hard-fought right to legal abortion.

We have seen Republican administrations and Republican States legislatures create obstacle after obstacle to prevent women from achieving reproductive freedom, blocking access to legal abortion and even contraception.

We have seen private citizens, under the guise of protecting lives, threaten abortion providers, including assassinating physicians that provide abortions.

And then there are the angels on the ground who, day in and day out, protect our precious right to reproductive freedom.

With this background, I want to highlight a courageous woman in my hometown of West Palm Beach, Florida, who has made and continues to make history as a great champion of women’s reproductive rights. She is one of the bravest people I know, someone I am proud to call a friend. Her name is Mona Reis.

Mona’s mission began early on in life, as a teenager. Six years before *Roe v. Wade*, she participated in a Florida’s Girls State program that gives teen girls an opportunity to run the Florida State Legislature, and she actually introduced a bill to legalize abortion in the State. Of course, it didn’t pass.

But this was just the beginning of a lifelong career and a commitment to protecting a woman’s right to choose, from working at the first outpatient abortion clinic established in Florida in the 1970s to, now, building her own outpatient clinic, the Presidential Women’s Center, 41 years ago.

She has been fighting to make sure that all women, no matter their age, race, or economic status, are able to access full reproductive care, including abortion.

Her clinic has treated more than half a million women for things like prenatal care, HTDs, family planning, and pregnancy termination.

This has been a fulfilling but sometimes dangerous mission. Every week for 40 years, the clinic is surrounded by protesters who taunt patients as they enter for care.

In 2005, her clinic was burned to the ground in an arson attack, but she has continued to provide high-quality and compassionate care despite the fact that she has had to endure so much.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to talk today.

It is an honor to recognize Mona Reis, an unsung heroine who continues

to make our communities a safer and a healthier place for women and girls. It is an honor to know her, to thank her, to celebrate her as we recognize Women’s History Month.

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Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is also significant to note that the majority of the diversity in Congress is represented by the women Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), a fighter for the ERA.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. LAWRENCE for her extraordinary leadership.

In 1921, exactly 100 years ago, just after ratifying the 19th Amendment, the suffragists set their sights on another constitutional change. The vote was not enough for them. They knew we needed to put gender equality into our Constitution.

So, these women, among them my relative Alice Paul, wrote the equal rights amendment. It was first introduced in Congress in 1923 in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women’s rights convention in our country. It was introduced in the House by Representative Daniel Anthony, nephew of the great suffragist leader, Susan B. Anthony, to honor her work, as well as the work of many others, like the great suffrage leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also of New York.

Today, during Women’s History Month, we honor these women as constitution-makers. But verbal praise alone is not enough. We must also carry out their wishes. Because now, a full 100 years later, the equal rights amendment is still not part of the U.S. Constitution.

I thank JACKIE SPEIER and all the women and like-minded men in this Congress that voted to move the equal rights amendment forward.

Eighty-five percent of U.N. member states have constitutions that explicitly guarantee equality for women and girls. These constitutional guarantees have enabled national legal reforms that eliminated discriminatory laws and helped usher in new laws protecting girls and women. Where once the U.S. was a leader on gender equality, when it comes to our Constitution, we are now far, far behind.

Today, we must fulfill the hope of our suffragist foremothers and make equality a reality in our Nation’s most fundamental document.

I must say, throughout this struggle I have always said: Where are the women? When I walk around the Mall, they have museums for everything, but not women. It is hard to empower women if we don’t even recognize them. So this Women’s Caucus put in a bill to create a national women’s museum on the mall. I thought this would be easy. It took us two decades to finally pass it last year, but it is now going to be built. It was a priority of this caucus, and we made it happen.

I just want to close by saying that our Smithsonian Women's History Museum will inspire visitors of all ages and all genders for generations to come.

I am so glad to join my colleagues for tonight's Special Order to celebrate the historical achievements of women and to look forward to creating a more equal future for all and preserving this history and the contributions of women in the new Smithsonian women's museum, which is now going to be built on the mall due to this Congress and this Women's Caucus.

I thank all of my colleagues that helped this happen and helped the passage of the ERA today.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I can't wait for that museum.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), another leader and fighter for women's rights.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Democratic Women's Caucus, Congresswomen Frankel, Speier, and Lawrence, for hosting this Special Order on Women's History Month.

I want to thank Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE for insisting that Black women and women of color be seen in this body.

Last year, we celebrated the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave some women the right to vote. We know that women of color were not able to vote until decades later, and Black women fought until they got suffrage in 1965.

I am proud that this January, my bill, with the support of both Republicans and Democrats here in this body and in the Senate, passed. It is called the Women's History and Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act, and it was signed into law. This measure will ensure that prominent women from American history can be honored on our circulating quarter dollar coins.

The currency we use is one of the most important shared ways that we have in memorializing what is important to us as Americans. Making sure that prominent American women are featured on our coins is an important step in recognizing the contributions women have made in furthering civil rights and making our country a more equitable place.

As the mint solicits public input for these coins, it is my hope that diverse American women will be chosen and depicted, celebrating our Nation's leaders, thinkers, and innovators.

Last election also brought a record number of women in Congress, and there are, I believe, 120 women now in the House. I know my mentor, the first African-American woman elected to Congress, Congresswoman Shirley Chisolm, would be so proud. Yes, we brought our folding chairs, but I have to just tell you, we are here to stay.

I salute my late mother, Mildred Parish Massey tonight, who blazed so

many trails. She instilled in her three girls that women are equal to men, from day one.

She was one of the first 12 Black students to integrate the University of Texas at El Paso. She was the first Black female civilian at Fort Bliss, Texas, to work there for years, and she was the first in so many segregated places.

But you know what? She told my sisters and me that "can't" is not in the dictionary and that we can fulfill our dreams. But in doing that, we have to break these barriers so that others can enter, and she insisted that we open the doors for other women and girls.

It is so important that we celebrate Women's History Month and honor the women trailblazers who came before us. Not only should we celebrate women, but we should also ensure that they are protected and granted equality. I can't think of a better way to honor Women's History Month than for this body to pass bills to guarantee and enshrine women's equality. It is a shame we have to do that.

One important action we can take to do that is to remove barriers to ratifying the equal rights amendment. I have to thank my good friend, Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, for her leadership on these efforts. It is way past time we do that.

For 244 years, women have not been able to claim the full protections and opportunities afforded by the Constitution. Women and girls face a devastating wage gap, gender-based violence, inadequate access to healthcare, pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, the list goes on. Yet, our Constitution does not explicitly protect them, and women of color have had to fight twice as hard.

I thank Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE for leading the Special Order tonight. It is an important moment for women in this country.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman LEE for being a voice for women year after year after year.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), who has been one of our fighters from the beginning.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my remarks about Women's History Month with a little quiz. Who was the first woman of color to serve in this body, in the United States House of Representatives?

I think I hear somebody saying maybe it was Shirley Chisolm. Shirley Chisolm certainly was a groundbreaking leader, but she was not the first woman of color. It was a woman named Patsy Mink.

Patsy Takemoto Mink was born in the territory of Hawaii in 1927. She became a lawyer at the University of Chicago. That is my hometown. Not frequent for women to do that. In fact, she couldn't get a job, so she set up her own practice.

But she got really interested in politics, and she served in the territorial

House and Senate. And guess what? She was the first woman ever to be in that body. She was a groundbreaker.

In 1964, 5 years after Hawaii became a State, Patsy ran for the United States Congress, the first woman of color and the first Asian American and the first woman to represent Hawaii.

She championed early childhood education, introduced the first childcare bill in Congress, and she was a groundbreaker by introducing title IX. This was legislation that itself was groundbreaking. An amendment to the Higher Education Act, title IX, ensured that women could not be excluded from participating in school activities or participating in collegiate athletics. Believe me, this was not an easy bill to pass.

That same year, she actually did run for President. That was about 2 years before Shirley Chisolm did. A very short race. She was an anti-Vietnam war candidate. Then she dropped out to run for Senate and lost that race.

But she came back to the United States Congress to serve once again. I have to tell you that I had the pleasure—when I came here in 1999, Patsy Mink was here, a fierce and tiny woman whom you could not resist.

I want to say today that we need to lift the name of Patsy Mink higher. People don't know who she is or who she was or what she accomplished for women. I am determined that we will do something in this House of Representatives to acknowledge and honor the great work of Patsy Mink.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS), who has been a trailblazer in her own right.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Michigan and all of the chairs and the co-chairs of this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the women of the United States House of Representatives for Women's History Month. This Women's History Month marks the 101st year of women's suffrage in the United States.

Despite the fact that women have had the right to vote for 101 years, we still don't have equal justice under the law. That is why earlier today, we passed a resolution to remove the arbitrary deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment, because there is no expiration date on equality.

Yet, to this day, women are still paid less for our work, face workplace harassment, and are discriminated against, simply because of who we are.

Women who work full-time, year-round, still make 82 cents on the dollar for men's earnings. Fighting against these disparities and ensuring our Federal Government and policies are reflective of the whole country is why having women at every level of government is so important, in our House, State houses, and, yes, even in the White House.

So this month, in particular, we draw strength and inspiration from those

who came before us and those remarkable women working among us today, from Shirley Chisolm, the first Black woman to serve in Congress; to NANCY PELOSI, the first and only woman Speaker of the House; to KAMALA HARRIS, the first female, first African American, and first South Asian American Vice President in United States history. She was sworn in by the first Latina Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor.

A hundred years ago, only one woman, Alice Mary Robertson, was elected to serve in Congress. Currently, a record 144 women were elected to this Congress, with 120 women in the House of Representatives alone.

□ 2015

I am proud to say that when I was elected and sworn in in 2013, I became the 100th woman. However, there is still a lot of work to be done; 144 out of 535 Members is just 25 percent. That is just not what our country looks like. Women make up over 50 percent of this Nation.

Women's History Month is a reminder of the importance and the urgency of that work and the need for us to continue breaking those glass ceilings.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I thank the gentlewoman and thank her for being the 100th woman to enter into Congress.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ).

Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 31 minutes remaining.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. I thank Mrs. LAWRENCE so much for gathering us all here tonight in celebration, because celebration is what we must do. We must celebrate not just Women's History Month, but everything we did today. We must celebrate that we passed the extension of the ERA, that we passed the Violence Against Women Act, that we passed the American Rescue Plan with all of those wonderful provisions that will lift women and children out of poverty.

I come from a place where for many years they didn't give us the vote, they didn't give us statehood, and there was much discrimination. But it was also a place where women and women of color have a long and proud history of transformative leadership, and I honor a few of them today.

One hundred years ago the suffragist Adelina Otero-Warren helped lead the charge to ratify the 19th amendment in New Mexico. After her success, she became the first Latina to ever run for Congress. Unfortunately, she wasn't successful, but 100 years later I am the first Latina to represent my district.

In my family, my grandmother, Isabel Lopez Leger helped to integrate the segregated city of Las Vegas, New Mexico, refusing to move when the neighbors realized she was a small, Brown, Spanish-speaking Hispana.

My big grandma, as we called her Ganga, Abelina Romero Lucero, under-

stood how central the vote was to achieving equity and representation for our communities, making calls to mobilize voters from her hospice bed. She was a Democrat until she died.

My mother, Manuelita de Atocha Lucero Leger, was punished for speaking Spanish in the schoolyard. She took this bigotry and turned it into advocacy, and she and my father helped pass the 1973 New Mexico Bilingual Multicultural Education Act because she knew that language was so essential to "our culture and heritage," "nuestra cultura y herencia," and identity.

New Mexico also claims Dolores Huerta, who proudly taught us that, "yes, it can," "si, se puede."

I close with New Mexico's beloved daughter, Secretary Deb Haaland of the Pueblo of Laguna. New Mexico has shed tears of joy over her confirmation. She takes to the Department of the Interior a fierce voice borne of resilience and the love of community and our Earth which she inherited from the 34 generations of New Mexican women before her.

Women's history is still unfolding, for we have hard work ahead of us, don't we? Women of color, especially, are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, health disparities, and economic hardship. So I am so thankful to be here with my "sisters," "hermanas" to celebrate our history and to recommit ourselves to the hard work we have ahead of us.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I thank the gentlewoman so much. We are standing on the shoulders of Deb Haaland and my amazing mentor and friend, MARCIA FUDGE, who have left the Halls of Congress to go to the White House to lead the administrative staff.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH), a community organizer who put her boots on and walked the streets, and made change, and then blessed us by coming to Congress to continue the fight.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I want to first and foremost give a great sense of thanks and debt of gratitude to my colleague, BRENDA LAWRENCE, for bringing this Special Order hour today, as we are really celebrating womanhood. That is truly what we are doing tonight.

Mr. Speaker, this month we celebrate the amazing and just absolutely inspirational women that are all around us. As it has been said over and over again, you know, so many amazing women reside right here in this body, and I have to personally say, I have never met in my lifetime a greater number of courageous and intelligent and just amazing women that are so committed to democracy and protecting their constituents and their communities, and I feel very humbled and honored to actually get to serve with each and every one of them.

Whether it be a mother or a scientist, a Congresswoman or the Vice President of the United States, we are eternally

thankful for the work that women do to help us thrive here at home and across the globe.

This week I had the opportunity to speak with four amazing women who are fighting for change in my community in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District.

Cobb County Chairwoman Lisa Cupid has become the first African American and first woman to serve in her position on the Board of Commissioners.

Aixa Pascual has dedicated her career to engage and advocate for Georgia's Latino population.

And after 15 years of teaching, Charisse Davis joined the Cobb County School Board to implement ideas that she learned from her experience as an educator.

Dr. Colleen Kelley, a physician at Emory University School of Medicine, has worked on the Moderna vaccine trial at Grady Hospital.

I truly want to thank these incredible women for all of the amazing work that they have done in our community, because it not only serves my community, my district, Georgia, but also the rest of the Nation.

I wish everyone a truly happy, happy Women's History Month. But I have to honestly say, as I am sitting here today listening to all of my colleagues talk about the amazing women that we know and amazing women who have done so much work throughout the course of history, I would be remiss if I did not mention my own mother, Wilma Cecelia Holman. I owe her such a great debt of gratitude because she was one of the very first women, Black women in Illinois to receive a master's in nursing and to actually teach nursing. So I know that everything that I am, all of my courage, my strength, my imagination, my creativity, my drive, and my willingness to put my boots on and get down in the dirt, in the trenches for the people that I love and care for in my community comes from her.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I thank the gentlewoman from Georgia.

I know there is a tradition that says, as long as you say the names of your forefathers, they will never leave you. So I just want to introduce into the RECORD Etta Cranford, who was my grandmother. At the age of 55, she inherited a 3-year-old and 5-year-old when my mother died, and she gave everything she had until her death to ensure that I would be a strong Black woman in America.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON).

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LAWRENCE for bringing us together for this Special Order hour.

In honor of Women's History Month, I rise to celebrate the League of Women Voters nonpartisan work to encourage active and informed participation in our democracy since 1920. Founded shortly before the ratification of the 19th amendment, the League has always believed in women's power to help create a more perfect democracy.

In recent years, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania has worked to combat 21st century voter suppression tactics, including strict voter ID laws and extreme gerrymandering.

In 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a decision in the League of Women Voters v. Pennsylvania that declared our congressional districts had been so extremely gerrymandered that they violated our State constitution. In doing so, that decision created districts, including mine, that are more compact, contiguous, and constitutional. The League of Women Voters' decision paved the way for the election of four women, myself included, to serve in our State's congressional delegation at a time when there were none.

From the first suffragists through the present day, I want to applaud the League of Women Voters for its ongoing work to empower voters and defend our democracy.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I now yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING), a woman who has made a difference. I am looking forward to the brilliance of her future.

Ms. MANNING. I would like to thank my colleague from my hometown for holding this Special Order and for all she has done on behalf of women.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate Women's History Month by highlighting the multiple and irreplaceable roles that women play in our communities.

Generations of women have worked to balance jobs with raising children and caring for aging loved ones. This isn't new. Women have always disproportionately shouldered the burden of caring for family. But for the first time, this pandemic has highlighted the toll these various roles take on women, as so many have been forced to leave the workforce to care for others.

Over the last year, 2.3 million women have left the workforce, a nearly 3 percent drop in female participation in the labor force. Several factors have contributed to this drop, but none more than the closing of childcare facilities and schools.

The American Rescue Plan is helping women recover from this pandemic and return to work by bolstering the childcare sector, increasing the child tax credit, expanding paid leave, and safely reopening schools.

We must treat women with dignity and respect and put into place systems that allow women to care for their families and excel at work. I proudly voted to support the American Rescue Plan because it is an important step in the right direction.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS).

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LAWRENCE for her leadership and for organizing this Special Order hour on this incredible night in this incredible month of Women's History Month.

I also want to point out that all three women from the North Carolina delegation participated, and that is true sisterhood.

I rise today to highlight an extraordinary North Carolinian in honor of Women's History Month, Reverend Nancy Petty.

Nancy is a trailblazer in the community. As a member of the LGBTQ community and the faith community, she has championed marriage equality and brought these welcoming ideas to her own church, Raleigh's historic and progressive Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. I worshipped virtually with Pullen just last Sunday.

A kind and compassionate person, Nancy often preaches inclusivity and understanding. She has focused on facilitating interfaith dialogue with Raleigh's Muslim community and has partnered with the Jewish community on social justice advocacy.

She truly represents the best of our community, and I am honored to call her a friend and a neighbor. She has inspired a generation by her example to treat others the way you would want to be treated.

I am so pleased to recognize Reverend Petty for this Women's History Month and the example she sets for us all.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD), our final speaker tonight, who came to Congress with a mission. She has made her voice heard, and she has made such a difference. We welcome her as not only a woman Member of Congress but as an amazing Representative.

□ 2030

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, so many of the leaders we hear about are public figures, elected officials, people with loud voices in the community, but there are so many other kinds of leaders. In particular, in connection with this month's Women's History Month, I rise to pay tribute to some who are not often noticed, the extraordinary women who have battled the COVID pandemic on its front lines in my community and across our Nation.

This historic crisis has devastated my community and communities in every corner of our country. More than 530,000 of our fellow Americans have died. Millions have lost their jobs. Unprecedented numbers of children and families have faced hunger.

Women have experienced a disproportionate share of these converging crises. As a larger share of frontline workers, they have risen to the occasion, putting the health and safety of their neighbors ahead of their own.

One woman in my community, the Greater Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, has done everything she can to make sure these heroes and our most vulnerable neighbors are not forgotten. Dr. Rajika Reed has served the people of our community for more than 20

years as a counselor, children's therapist, teacher, public health researcher, and epidemiologist. Most recently, Dr. Reed has served in one of the hospital systems in my community, St. Luke's University Health Network, first as senior director of epidemiology and strategy and now as vice president of community health.

Dr. Reed has been instrumental in keeping our community informed throughout the pandemic. Dr. Reed has been particularly incisive when speaking about the disproportionate impact of COVID on various communities throughout the Seventh District, helping all of us recognize and understand how rapidly and drastically the stakes can change depending on a person's life circumstances.

By grounding every conversation in easy-to-understand data, Dr. Reed has made sure that officials at all levels have a shared understanding of constituents' lived reality and the challenges they face, particularly the stark racial and economic disparities that have only grown during the pandemic.

Still, throughout it all, Dr. Reed's warm and calm delivery has helped soften the blow of what was at times devastating news. Her work has helped mobilize my entire community around the shared mission of taking care of our own and putting the most vulnerable among us first.

To Dr. Reed and women frontline workers in every corner of my community, including many low-wage workers who still don't have the support or pay they need, I stand with you. All of us stand with you today and every day.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Michigan has 14 minutes remaining.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this moment to thank everyone who spoke tonight.

I want everyone to know that women are making so many strides. We are currently on target to send women to the Moon. We are on target to make sure that women continue to be leaders in education and healthcare. I am proud to say that not only do we have a woman as our Vice President, but we also have a woman as our amazing Speaker of the House. We have six chairs of our congressional committees headed by women. We also have over, as I said, 194 women in Congress currently.

With Women's History Month, sometimes the men will roll their eyes in the back of their head and say: Women, why do you need a month? Because, so often, the strides and hard work that it took for us to accomplish what was given to privileged men are often overlooked.

I am proud to stand here today to lead this Special Order hour to honor the women, as Congresswoman WILD said, the ones who often don't get a platform, don't get a mic, and they just do the work every day.

Women are the predominant group of educators. If you are educated in America, you were probably touched by a woman. Those who are in hospitals and went through COVID and all the suffering, the caregivers and nurses are predominantly women.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the mother who gave birth to us. We are often in the kitchens and other places that women are such strong leaders, but now we have women in the CSuites. We have women manufacturing and designing. We have women in every area of America working.

The only thing that any woman wants is the opportunity to have a seat at the table to be able to show her brilliance. As my grandmother told me, never apologize for your hard work, your brilliance, or your skills and talents that you have been blessed with. You use them, and you do a good thing with them.

And as John Lewis said, get in good trouble. The suffragists taught us that the good trouble they went through gave us the right to vote in America.

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

MANAGING THE CRISIS ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I stand here on behalf of the freedom-loving members of the Republican Study Committee, the conservative conscience of the GOP Conference, and the largest caucus with over 150 members and our friend and fearless leader JIM BANKS from the Hoosier State.

Mr. Speaker, we come to this Chamber with grave concerns, with profound grief over what is happening to this great Nation at the southern border, along the border of States like my home State of Texas. My citizens are on the front lines, and the citizens of the Lone Star State and border States are at ground zero of this self-inflicted crisis.

Just because the President won't acknowledge that there is a crisis doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. Mr. Speaker, it is raging out of control. It is an unmitigated disaster, and as I said, it is self-inflicted.

Reinstating catch and release while we are recovering from a pandemic? Are you kidding me? We have put mandates and restrictions on the American people who have sacrificed by staying at home. Some have lost their jobs. They don't know how they are going to make ends meet for their family.

Everybody stepped up, Mr. Speaker. They did what they were told to do in some cases, but they all acted responsibly for the sake of our country and their fellow man and the country that they love. And now, we are just letting

people cross our border illegally, violate our sovereignty, break our laws, and then just be released into the interior of our country with no testing and no screening.

In Texas, Mr. Speaker, we are coming back. We have folks back to work. Kids are in school. My kids are in school. We feel normal again, and we are blessed to be in a State that puts a premium on individual liberty and personal responsibility. We have worked hard to get to where we are now.

We didn't like everything that was done to us by our government. We didn't like all the protocols and mandates, but we did the best job we could for the sake of our fellow Americans. Now, we have the potential for a flare-up in the pandemic because our hospitals are going to be overwhelmed again.

Our schools are already overwhelmed as they try to do right by their students, let them come into the classroom, have that support structure, knowing that to close your doors on these kids is to close a bright future for them. It is to lock them out of their greatest potential and to give them grief and all kinds of heartache and mental health concerns.

We have our police, who have been disparaged with cries to defund the police. They would be dismantled if the bill that passed the House supported by the Democrats ever became law and ripped away the tools that they have to not only keep our community safe but to protect them in the process. We have stripped them—or would if the bill passed—of their legal liability protections. All the while, we are putting more pressure on our local law enforcement to do the job that the Federal Government under this Commander in Chief has failed to do.

The Commander in Chief is supposed to provide for the common defense. He is supposed to be the exemplar for rule of law. He is the chief enforcer of the law. What kind of example is our President setting to just throw caution to the wind and let folks come into this country who are not our citizens, prioritizing them over the safety and health of our citizens?

I got to hear some of my colleagues express concerns over women's rights and protecting women from abuse. We all support that, and our hearts go out to any victims of abuse in this country or any country. But meanwhile, because of the policies that have been passed by this President, reinstating catch and release, empowering sanctuary cities, repealing the stay in Mexico policies, halting funding for the border wall, all of these things have sent a message that we are open for illegal business.

If you ask the cartels, business has never been better. We are lining their pockets while they exploit vulnerable people who are hopeless. They are being exploited.

Mr. Speaker, one out of every three women are sexually assaulted on their

trek to this country. That statistic is from Doctors Without Borders. Children are used as a passport, trafficked by these cartels. We have empowered these cartels. This is a disaster on so many levels, and I am glad my colleagues are here to express these same sentiments in their own words.

Mr. Speaker, I will end with this. It is clear there is a cause and effect here. It is clear that policies have consequences. They incite behavior, and the behavior is causing chaos at the border.

I believe this President is obsessed. This is just a fundamental question, why our President would allow this to happen. I believe he is obsessed with undoing anything that has the name "President Trump" on it, regardless of its merits. I believe he is equally obsessed with placating the left and their radical agenda. I have come to that conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to speak to this. We are going to tell the truth. We are going to lay out the facts. We are going to call on our President to do the right thing and prioritize the American people and their safety and security.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOOD).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague and fellow Member from Texas for yielding.

Our country's future will forever be changed based on how we manage or refuse to manage Biden's border crisis. And, yes, it is a crisis.

Steady merit-based legal immigration is stabilizing. It provides a talented pool of workers, effectively permits patriotic assimilation, and enriches our culture. We can debate how best to achieve those objectives and what immigration levels or numbers are in the best interests of our Nation and our citizens, but what is not open for honest debate, or at least debate that honestly places the interests, safety, and security of American citizens first, is the need to secure our border and eliminate illegal immigration.

President Biden's open border policies threaten our security, overtax our resources, jeopardize public health, and turn every town into a border community.

As others have said, without a border, we don't have a country; we have a landmass, one that is currently under invasion. That is an invasion that is with complicit approval from the President's policies and the support of the Democratic Party, and this is especially egregious and inexcusable.

□ 2045

The fact is that, in the 56 days since President Biden was sworn in on January 20, illegal immigration has surged and our southern border has been overrun.

We are not stopping illegal immigrants based on their inability to provide for themselves and not be a burden on our economy, our social services,