

And though a diagnosis is no longer the sealing of an immediate fate, it is the beginning of an indefinite battle for life, adequate health care, and for social belonging.

With an estimated 38.6 million people worldwide living with HIV at the end of 2005, and more than 25 million people having died of AIDS since 1981, December 1st is a date which serves to remind everyone that action makes a difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Let there be no mistake, we are here to acknowledge that AIDS is a deadly enemy against which we must join all our forces to fight and eliminate.

Americans should be reminded that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate.

With an estimated 1,039,000 to 1,185,000 HIV-positive individuals living in the U.S., and approximately 56,000 new infections occurring every year, the U.S., like other nations around the world is deeply affected by HIV/AIDS.

The detrimental effects of HIV/AIDS have also hit home. More than 65,000 people in Texas are living with HIV.

Thirty-six percent more Texans are living with HIV today than just seven years ago. In 2010, studies showed that 1 in every 3 diagnosed persons in Texas were not getting proper medical treatment.

We must make certain that every affected individual receives efficient medical treatment that will afford them long life.

Not only is the state of Texas suffering from HIV and AIDS, but my district, the 18th Congressional District of Texas, has seen an increasing number of people living with the disease.

In 2010, there were over 22,000 reported persons living with HIV (non-AIDS) in the greater Houston area, and more than 9,000 reported persons living with AIDS.

This problem continues to escalate as there have been 1,700 new infections each year among individuals in Harris County, particularly among racial and ethnic minorities.

We must continue to fight a tough fight to reverse all of these costly and tragic trends.

I will continue to sponsor and co-sponsor legislation that addresses the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The fight is not over.

We must continue to stand strong in our struggle to conquer some old and new challenges that we as Americans and members of the global community encounter.

Today, Friday, December 1st is World AIDS Day.

And, we will focus on HIV/AIDS, prevention and awareness, and continue to fight for life.

Together, we will help all of our friends, relatives, and children live healthy and full lives.

HONORING BISHOP S.F. MAKALANI-MAHEE (1972–2017)

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 1, 2017

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, today it is my privilege to honor the life of Bishop S.F. Makalani-MaHee, a minister and transgender activist from Oakland Park, Florida, who was the youngest pastor ever commissioned by the Unity Fellowship Church.

S.F. was born on July 5, 1972 to Barbara MaHee and the late Adisa Makalani. The family's Sundays were spent in church, where S.F. enjoyed serenading the congregation with gospel renditions of "Jesus Can Work It Out."

S.F. found his love of Broadway at the Julia Richman High School in New York, where producer Cheryl Weisenfeld cast him in a production of Grease.

After moving to Atlanta with family, S.F. began teaching theater courses, as well as lecturing for Georgia State University, Soapstone Center for the Performing Arts, and Spelman and Morehouse Colleges. He also founded the Heart Theater, a youth theater troupe, where he wrote and directed Journeys, an educational play focused on HIV/AIDS.

Bishop S.F. Makalani-MaHee came to South Florida in 1997 where he found his community, his congregation and his purpose. S.F. began working at the PRIDE Center in Wilton Manors, as well as many other non-profits. He founded Black Gay Pride South Florida and co-founded BLACKOUT, South Florida's first African-American LGBTQ Film Festival. S.F. was the first transgender person to be appointed to the Broward County Human Rights Board. He was also an active member of the Dolphin Democrats, the longest continually-operating LGBTQ advocacy group in the South.

Bishop S.F. Makalani-MaHee spent his life loving others unconditionally. Before his untimely passing, S.F. served as the Coordinator of the Transgender Program at the Broward County Department of Health, where he advocated for fellow members of South Florida's transgender community. S.F. passed away on November 20, 2017, this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance. He is survived by his mother Barbara; his siblings Darcy, Jeffrey, Justin, and Marsha; and several nephews. He is also survived by a community of friends across South Florida, Atlanta, and New York who he considered his family.