

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO THE SASSOON FAMILY OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, FOR THEIR UNSPEAKABLE LOSS

(Ms. CLARKE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a very heavy heart. This weekend, my district experienced an unspeakable loss. One of our families in the Midwood section of Brooklyn lost seven of its children to a horrific fire. I wanted to come to the floor to just extend our condolences to the Sassoon family, where mother and daughter are currently hospitalized. We are wishing them a speedy and healthy recovery.

To the extended community, we all mourn the loss of these children, and we will do everything we can going forward to impress upon the community, those with large families, the importance of fire safety, and that we make sure that we keep our loved ones safe by having fire detectors on every floor of our homes and fire extinguishers where possible.

□ 1915

DO NOT BAN MOM'S BROWNIES FROM SCHOOL

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my mother makes wonderful double-chocolate brownies. As a kid, I would take them to school, and the PTA would sell them in the school bake sale to raise money for projects like uniforms for the school band and cheerleaders.

When our four kids were in school, they would take brownies for school bake sales as well. And now my grandkids can still use their great-grandmother's brownie recipe for school bake sales.

But warning, Mr. Speaker: the Federal school food police are regulating school bake sales. You see, now the government wants to control and, in some cases, prohibit school bake sales in the name of making kids healthier. No more homemade cupcakes, brownies, or baked goods unless they meet government calorie, sugar, and fat standards. Not healthy, sayeth the bake sale police.

The Federal Government is becoming the parent of American kids. What is next? Are they going to tell schoolkids what they can wear?

Parents and schools should decide whether to have bake sales or not. Uncle Sam doesn't know better. Parents know better.

Let Mom's homemade brownies back in the schools.

And that's just the way it is.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). The Chair will remind all

persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

EMPOWERING PATIENTS WITH FSAs AND HSAs

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, today is the fifth anniversary of the President's new health care law, and it is apparent that the law has made it much more difficult for hardworking Americans to have flexibility with their own health care choices.

For instance, health care savings accounts and flexible savings accounts put power in the hands of patients by letting them make their own decisions when it comes to their own care.

But the new health care law actually prohibits someone from using their own money in their own health care savings account or flexible spending account to purchase simple over-the-counter medications like Advil or Claritin unless they first get a doctor's prescription. This makes absolutely no sense.

Today, I am introducing the Family Health Care Flexibility Act that will restore the ability of parents to take control of their own decisions when it comes to the care of their children in purchasing over-the-counter medications without a doctor's prescription.

Mr. Speaker, instead of a top-down, one-size-fits-all centralized health care system, we need solutions that provide patients with greater value, more choices, and lower costs.

JOINT REAPPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, their joint reappointment, pursuant to section 301 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381), as amended by Public Law 114-6, of the following individuals on March 23, 2015, each to a 2-year term on the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance:

Mr. Alan V. Friedman, Los Angeles, California

Ms. Susan S. Robfogel, Rochester, New York

Ms. Barbara Childs Wallace, Ridgeland, Mississippi

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Illi-

nois (Ms. KELLY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, first, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington, Congresswoman DELBENE.

REMEMBERING THE HIGHWAY 530 MUDSLIDE

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise today to honor, recognize, and remember the events from 1 year ago when lives in my district changed in a matter of seconds. Part of a mountain-side slid into the Steelhead Haven neighborhood, claiming 43 lives, numerous homes, and damaging public infrastructure.

The people of Oso, Darrington, Arlington, the Stillagamish Tribe, and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe will never be the same, but I have great faith in these communities.

The Highway 530 mudslide was a heartbreaking disaster. It caused unbelievable devastation and tragic loss of life. But even through such a painful tragedy, it has been inspiring to see how the community has come together, people doing everything they can to help each other. Their response in the face of calamity has been incredible.

I joined these communities yesterday to honor the memories of those we lost and recognize everyone's efforts, including the first responders who selflessly risked their lives to save others.

Recovery continues to be a slow, difficult process, but I am confident that through our work together we will continue to get through these difficult times stronger and closer than ever.

Federal, State, and local agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and the State Department of Transportation responded to calls for aid when our communities needed roads rebuilt, an extension for filing taxes, help to get kids to school, or to find new housing.

I will continue to push for resources until these communities are fully restored. But instead of simply sending aid after a disaster, lawmakers need to do more to ensure that we fund programs and research efforts to prevent future natural disasters from becoming national tragedies.

One thing that struck me most while spending time in these communities and with local emergency command centers was the spirit, courage, and cooperation of everyone who pitched in to help.

FEMA officials even commented that this was the first time they allowed locals to be so heavily involved in rescue efforts. They did so because the people of these communities brought unique skills, experience, and determination. For example, loggers understood how to use heavy machinery in a challenging environment with 40 feet of mud, rocks, and trees. It was the first natural disaster where everyone—Federal and local—worked together so well.

Lawmakers in our Nation's Capital could learn a lot from the people of

Oso, Darrington, and Arlington. We too need to work together to ensure our communities are better prepared for natural disasters and landslides, in particular.

During this session of Congress, I plan to introduce legislation that would standardize and share research and mapping methods across the country while increasing funding for research and hazard assessments in high-risk areas. In addition, a primary goal of my bill will be to determine a national strategy to increase public awareness of the risks associated with landslides and identify slide-prone areas. We must also create education programs and increase rapid response efforts because, as we all know too well, disasters strike with little warning.

We will never forget those who were lost in the slide and the incredible community that continues to be "Oso strong."

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we enter the final week of Women's History Month, the Congressional Black Caucus would like to use tonight's Special Order hour to examine the unique challenges that women face in America today. Many of these experiences are shared across the socioeconomic spectrum, and some are more specific to African American women.

The late poet and author Maya Angelou once said:

Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.

There is much truth to these words, and our Nation has been strengthened by women who have taken stands for their rights. But tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus also stands up for millions of women across America.

Tonight, we will examine gender pay gaps, workforce treatment, family issues, health disparities, and a host of other concerns women face in America.

Each Women's History Month we recognize those pioneers who broke glass ceilings and paved the way for women's rights and equality: Abigail Adams; Phillis Wheatley; Lucretia Mott; Sojourner Truth; Harriet Tubman; Ella Baker; Rosa Parks; the Honorable Shirley Chisholm; Coretta Scott King; Ruth Bader Ginsberg; and the Honorable Loretta Lynch.

Still, we can't lose sight of the challenges that remain for women. We must all continue the work needed to eliminate gender inequalities once and for all.

Fifty years after President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law, women continue to earn less than men. Women make only 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, amounting to a yearly gap of \$11,000 between full-time men and women. That \$11,000 lost could purchase 89 more weeks of food, or more than 3,000 additional gallons of gas, or more than 1 year of rent for a woman's family.

For African American women and Latinas, the pay gap is even larger. Af-

rican American women on average earn only 64 cents and Latinas on average earn only 55 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men.

Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Yet, the minimum wage has not kept up with inflation over the last 45 years. With the minimum wage now, using inflation-adjusted terms, minimum wage women are earning more than 30 percent lower than they were in 1968.

These economic disparities are just a few of the issues facing women that we will address tonight. I want to thank the chairman of the CBC, the Honorable G.K. BUTTERFIELD, for allowing us to address this important topic tonight.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois, for leading us in tonight's Special Order to address the unique challenges black women face.

It is certainly fitting, Mr. Speaker, that we are discussing the contributions of women in our society during March as we celebrate Women's History Month.

Let us acknowledge those who have sacrificed and led the charge in women's rights, voting rights, civil rights, and rights in this Chamber.

Black women have consistently played a critical role in our Nation's history. In Congress, women like Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first African American female to serve in Congress and to run for President of these United States. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, first black woman in Congress from the deep South.

When I think of Shirley Chisholm, I remember the words that we still hear and say so often when we talk about women: unbought and unbossed.

Women like Carol Moseley Braun, who became the first African American female woman elected to the United States Senate.

Patricia Roberts Harris, the first black woman to serve in a Presidential Cabinet and the first woman to hold two Cabinet positions—the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and, later, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

And then from my great State of Ohio, the seventh-largest State in this Nation, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, only to be followed by two women, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE and myself, representing the Third Congressional District.

Even in the face of grave opposition and unequal treatment throughout our Nation's history, black women have continued to stand strong and contribute to the well-being of their families and our country as a whole, women like the women who serve in the Congressional Black Caucus, women like the women who serve in this Chamber, women like the only female to serve as Speaker of this House, NANCY PELOSI.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, here we are in 2015, and a black female leader is waiting to lead the critically important office of the United States Attorney General. No one can say she is unqualified, no one can say she is inexperienced, no one can say she hasn't or didn't perform well, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple weeks ago, 8 hours of testimony, more than 900 questions answered, and yet, she is left waiting, waiting longer than the previous combined times of the seven previous Attorney Generals. For 132 days, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lynch has been waiting for a vote. Mr. Speaker, that is three seasons.

□ 1930

In the fall, the Senate failed to take up the nomination. In the winter, the Senate dithered on her nomination. Here we are, now in the spring, and we are waiting.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Senate waiting for? Our Nation needs an Attorney General, and holding this nomination hostage is senseless and reckless.

I strongly urge the Senate Republican leadership to stop playing politics with law enforcement and national security and to vote on the confirmation of Loretta Lynch to serve as our next Attorney General.

Ms. Lynch is eminently qualified and is a proven leader with an exemplary record at the Department of Justice. She is a brilliant, well-educated, and experienced lawyer twice before confirmed. It is well past time for the United States Senate to move forward with the nomination of Loretta Lynch, a black woman and nominee for United States Attorney General and, possibly, another first in our history.

As I always like to say, Mr. Speaker, firsts are never good unless there can be a second and a third and a fourth. If we make this first happen, as we have done in the past, then there can be other women standing here and sitting where you are sitting.

I honor Ms. Lynch and all of the strong black women who have paved the way for each successive generation, for my granddaughter so that she can know that there are women who can stand up in this Chamber and speak on this floor.

That is what the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order, in part, is about because, every day, black women hold their families together as primary caregivers; they support their children and continue to preserve and persevere when our society fails to deliver on equal rights.

Equal rights in pay equity, health care, and education are priorities for me in this Congress and for millions of women across this Nation. The pay gap is startling, but it is real because we know, when women succeed, America succeeds. In Ohio and across the Nation, women make 77 cents to every \$1 a white man makes, and for African American women, it is 66 cents for every \$1 that they make.

Five years ago today, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. Our Nation took a giant step forward—a giant leap—in saving lives and making health care a right for all, not just for the privileged few. The Affordable Care Act has important implications for black women as they face longstanding and persistent disparities in health care and in health in general.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank my colleague, the Congresswoman from Illinois, for bringing forth this topic. I would also like to thank all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus for hosting this Special Order hour.

There are countless black women whose names may not appear prominently in our history books, who may not ever appear on this floor or be recognized in this Congress or in this country, women like my 91-year-old mother in Dayton, Ohio, who reared four daughters and told us and taught us about the value of standing up for what you believe in.

They are women who won't appear in our history books but whose sweat and blood and strength are woven into our national identity. I honor all of these women. They continue to inform me and inform my sense of pride and dignity as an American.

I am going to end with the same quote that my friend and colleague started with, a quote by the late Maya Angelou, "Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it"—Mr. Speaker, as I stand today—"she stands up for all women."

Thank you.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, my friend from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY. Your points about Loretta Lynch are so pertinent. Despite the gains we have made, we still have a long way to go.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is now my great privilege to yield to my friend from the great State of New Jersey, Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I want to thank the gentlewoman, my colleague from Illinois, for providing this opportunity for me to share with you this evening.

I am also honored to join my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues on the floor as we celebrate Women's History Month, and I am particularly grateful to our chairman, Chairman Butterfield.

This year's commemoration of the women who have shaped this Nation is

especially important here in this body because, for the first time, more than 100 women hold seats, speaking on behalf of Americans from Alaska to Florida.

This year, the Congressional Black Caucus includes 20 women who are fighting for working families, for better wages, for more funding for better education, and for the many other policies that will make our Nation stronger and our families healthier.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be the very first African American woman to represent the State of New Jersey in Congress and to be the only woman currently serving in this delegation. These are outstanding firsts, and I am thrilled to be one of them, but this is 2015, Mr. Speaker, and we shouldn't still be speaking about "firsts" and "onllys" when it comes to women. There may be 104 of us, but women still make up only 20 percent of Congress while we make up more than half of the population.

Women across this country still earn just 78 cents for every \$1 that is earned by men, and we have heard that women of color, particularly African American women, earn even less than this.

Women still face a culture that questions our ability to excel in science and tech-focused fields, a culture that rushes to blame victims of sexual assault instead of protecting them, a culture that doubts that women are capable of making choices about their own health without the interference from lawmakers, who in the majority are men.

Women's History Month is about celebrating trailblazers, but it is also about honoring the strength of all women and recognizing that we are just as capable as men and are just as ready to bring something to the table.

We just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the marches from Selma to Montgomery, and in the process, we paid tribute to many of the leaders who risked their lives on the Edmund Pettus Bridge that day.

Most people connect these events with Dr. Martin Luther King or our esteemed colleague Congressman JOHN LEWIS, but Amelia Boynton Robinson was among the first to bring the organizers to Selma. Even fewer know Viola Liuzzo, who paid the ultimate price for joining the march as she saw men and women brutalized on that bridge purely because of the color of their skin.

I mention those names, Mr. Speaker, because, when it comes down to it, women have been leading for generations, even if it has been behind the scenes and without recognition.

I join my colleagues in paying homage to a long history of amazing women; but I also ask every Member of this body: What are we doing to make history? What are we doing to build an economy in which women are equals and a society in which women are respected? What are we doing to make the phrase the "first woman of history" an unnecessary question?

When we look at the opportunities before us, we know, Mr. Speaker, it is now that we have the opportunity to make history—right now. We have the opportunity to make history with the first woman, an African American, as the U.S. Attorney General of this great country, and we have an opportunity in the near future to say that there has been a woman elected President of the United States.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you to the great gentlewoman of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, it is during Women's History Month when we recognize the contributions and achievements of women throughout the course of history. Many of these women have had distinguished public service careers, from President Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor—Frances Perkins—to the first female Cabinet Secretary, to current Secretaries Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Sally Jewell, and Penny Pritzker, and National Security Adviser Susan Rice.

Women like them have a proud and established record of providing wise and honest counsel and of leading our government through important and transformational times.

Right now, the Obama administration is awaiting Senate confirmation for a woman who is eminently qualified for the position of U.S. Attorney General, our Nation's chief law enforcement officer. The first woman to hold this position was Janet Reno under President Bill Clinton.

Attorney General Reno strongly defended the Constitution, promoted civil liberties, and captured and convicted domestic and foreign criminals. The second woman—but not the last woman—to hold the position of Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, will be Loretta Lynch.

Once confirmed by the United States Senate, Ms. Lynch will make history by being the first African American woman to serve as Attorney General. She will join the proud ranks of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, former Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, and Patricia Roberts, who was the first female African American Cabinet Secretary who served as both Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and as the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Loretta Lynch, as you have heard over and over and as we know, is eminently qualified to be Attorney General, Mr. Speaker. A graduate of Harvard University and of Harvard Law School, Ms. Lynch has had a distinguished legal career. She is universally recognized for her keen analytical skills and her passion for the law.

Ms. Lynch is also uniquely fit to serve the role for our Nation at this critical point in our national discourse. As U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ms. Lynch currently serves as the chief Federal prosecutor for Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Long Island.

At this time, I yield to my distinguished colleague from New York, HAKEEM JEFFRIES.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend and colleague, Representative KELLY from the great State of Illinois, for, once again, presiding over this CBC Special Order, this opportunity for members of the Congressional Black Caucus to speak directly to the American people for 60 minutes on matters of great importance.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, members of the Congressional Black Caucus recognize the strength, the vitality, the intelligence, and the importance of African American women to the African American experience in this great country—in fact, to the American experience.

Consistently, it has been black women who have fought hard to bring American democracy to life, to continue the march to perfect a more perfect Union.

I think often of the role that Harriet Tubman played—a bold, fearless woman who managed to free herself from the horrific bondage of slavery in the South and make it to the North but who then decided, at great sacrifice to her own potential well-being, to go back down South an additional 19 times, freeing more than 200 black slaves.

I also find it fascinating that, when Harriet Tubman once was asked about her heroics—who spent many of her final years in New York—was dismissive. She said: “I could have freed more if they only knew that they were slaves.”

I think Harriet Tubman gave us some words of wisdom that can serve many communities all across the country today that are still struggling to deal with social and economic injustice. She said: “I could have freed more if they only knew that they were slaves.” Sometimes, we have folks who remain trapped in their own circumstances because they have a mindset issue. Harriet Tubman helped to perfect our democracy.

Mentioned earlier by some of my distinguished colleagues were some of the other contributions that were made during the civil rights struggle, and there were many African American women who haven't always gotten the credit for playing a leading role in the civil rights movement—designed, again, to help perfect American democracy—dealing with Jim Crow and racial segregation in the South and in many parts of this country.

I think it was Fannie Lou Hamer who famously said, “I am sick and tired of being sick and tired,” when asked why she stepped forward at great sacrifice to herself. I think there are still a lot of Americans in many parts of this country, when it comes to the prison industrial complex, when it comes to the problem of the police's use of excessive force, and when it comes to the issue of income inequality, who still draw inspiration from Fannie Lou

Hamer's words of being sick and tired of being sick and tired.

□ 1945

Now, I also stand here today as someone who proudly represents the Eighth Congressional District in New York, a district that in part was once represented by the Honorable Shirley Chisholm. Of course, great women in the Congress today like JOYCE BEATTY and ROBIN KELLY and MARCIA FUDGE and others stand on Shirley Chisholm's shoulders. She was the first African American woman ever elected to the House of Representatives in 1968. I am proud to represent part of the district that she once served. She was one of Brooklyn's gifts to this country and, in fact, to the world.

I am struggling today because, here again, Brooklyn is once again prepared to share some of our tremendous human capital and wealth with this great country in the form of Loretta Lynch, by way of North Carolina. For the life of me, I haven't been able to figure out what the holdup is, why it is so difficult for Senate Republicans and for the majority simply to hold a vote so we can confirm Loretta Lynch as the Nation's chief law enforcement executive.

We have heard every excuse in the book as to why Loretta Lynch is twisting in the wind, and none of them are legitimate. I don't want Loretta Lynch to be confirmed because she would be the first African American woman to serve as our Nation's Attorney General leading the Department of Justice; I want her confirmed because she is the best qualified person for the job. Don't trust me, HAKEEM JEFFRIES from Brooklyn. Rudolph Giuliani, of all people, the great law and order mayor of New York City, former Federal prosecutor, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and many, many others—Democrats, Republicans, people from the North, the South, the East, and the West—have all said Loretta Lynch is a talented law enforcement professional and the right person for the job at this particular point in time.

What in the world is the holdup? I can't figure it out. Is it a problem with her personal background? Let's see. She is the daughter of a school librarian and a Baptist preacher. That can't be the issue.

What is the holdup? Is there a problem with her legal education? I don't think so. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School.

What is the problem? Does she not have enough law enforcement experience? She is practically a career Federal prosecutor, who clearly has the ability to allow the law and the facts dictate her decisionmaking process.

Is there an issue that she hasn't been adequately vetted? Well, she has actually been unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, not once but twice, to be the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. I think she has been vetted.

Well, is it that the Senate doesn't have the ability to walk and chew gum at the same time, as MITCH MCCONNELL indicated? We have got to deal with other matters. Other matters? I don't get it. She has been waiting longer than the five previous Attorney General nominees, combined, since being voted out of the Committee on the Judiciary.

We need all hands on deck. There are terrorists all across the world who want to strike the United States of America, and we are holding up the chief law enforcement officer of this country? Then we hear the excuse: Well, we don't like her position on the President's executive action on immigration. You don't like her position? She is the President's nominee. What position do you expect her to have?

That is not even a legitimate argument because you had no problem confirming Ash Carter to be the Secretary of the Department of Defense, and my good friends on the other side of the aisle on the other side of the Capitol are obsessing about two things: the President's executive action on immigration as well as the President's negotiations with Iran along with, or as part of, the P5+1. Ash Carter presumably supports those negotiations. You can't stand them so much so that you even wrote to the Iranian mullahs. I mean, that should shock the conscience of the American people. You can't stand the Iranian negotiations, but you didn't hold up Ash Carter's nomination.

So for the life of me, I am trying to go through a process of elimination to figure out what is the reason that you have held up Loretta Lynch's nomination. What is the reason? Why are we waiting so long? You have got to come up with a good answer to the fact that she is being treated like a second-class citizen.

Unfortunately, as we go down the checklist of excuses that you have provided, not a single one of them hold up. So I am just hopeful over the next couple of days, as we bring Women's History Month to a close, that you will have the decency to do what is right for the American people and allow Loretta Lynch to have an up-or-down vote so we can finally allow democracy to flourish in what allegedly is supposed to be the world's greatest deliberative body. Allow democracy to flourish; give Loretta Lynch a vote so we can get back to doing the real business of the American people.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Representative JEFFRIES, thank you for continuing to lift the nomination of Loretta Lynch, and also thank you for highlighting Harriet Tubman, a fine example of someone who helped improve the quality of life for her fellow brothers and sisters.

“I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Many women can say that in regard to the pay gap, unemployment, and still trying to break the glass ceiling. In the past year, we have seen the

greatest economic growth in decades. More and more women have been able to reenter the workforce, reducing the unemployment rate among women to a 6-year low.

Unfortunately, black women have yet to reap the benefits of the economic rebound. In fact, while the overall unemployment rate for women declined, the black female unemployment rate has increased over the past 2 months. According to a recent analysis by the National Women's Law Center, the black women's unemployment rate is more than twice the unemployment rate of white women. In February, the black women's unemployment rate was 8.9 percent, up from 8.7 percent in January and 8.2 percent in December.

By comparison, the unemployment rate for adult white women was 4.2 percent in February, down from 4.4 percent in January. Despite having comparable levels of education, black women have the highest unemployment rate of any other group. A possible factor in the stubborn unemployment rate for black women is that we are disproportionately employed in the public sector, which is experiencing a much slower recovery than the private sector.

The National Women's Law Center said the stagnant job situation for black women is a red flag in the employment landscape and urged lawmakers to act to promote a stronger, more widely shared recovery. I couldn't agree more. We need to invest more in job training and retraining programs that help black women adapt to the changing workforce and prepare for the careers of tomorrow. We must work to promote diversity in hiring and encourage employees to model their work forces on the communities in which they operate. As we look for ways to help women succeed, we must be mindful of the unique challenges black women face and develop targeted policies that help level the playing field for all women.

In closing, we have heard from many of my colleagues gathered here tonight, and they have mentioned, as we recognize Women's History Month, we are reminded that we are constantly in the midst of new history being made.

Tonight I had the privilege of being joined by my CBC colleagues. One, a member of the freshman class and another person who wasn't here tonight, she is the 100th woman ever elected to Congress, Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS of North Carolina. Jeannette Rankin of Montana was the first woman to serve in this esteemed body, and many more will join the ranks of women in Congress, women like the Honorable Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, the Honorable MARCIA L. FUDGE, our last Congressional Black Caucus chair and the future of the CBC; women like JOYCE BEATTY, Representative BRENDA LAWRENCE from Michigan, ALMA ADAMS from North Carolina, STACEY PLASKETT of the Virgin Islands, and BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN from New Jersey.

Despite our gains, though, there are only two black women who serve in statewide offices across the United States: Kamala Harris and Denise Nappier. There are veterans who have come to serve this Congress, like my good friends TULSI GABBARD of Hawaii and TAMMY DUCKWORTH from my home State of Illinois. Many diverse districts across this country are well served by the women they elect to Congress.

When women succeed, America truly does succeed. This is why we must continue to fight for equal pay for equal work. This week, paycheck fairness legislation will be introduced. I urge folks across the country to call their Representative to cosponsor this important legislation.

We must also fight for affordable child care and other economic policies that support working women, allowing us to continue shattering the glass ceiling and reach the greatest heights of all sectors of society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this wonderful hour of debate. I thank all of my colleagues for caring enough to get involved and participate.

I yield back the balance of my time. Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus, to commemorate Women's History Month, and address some of the unique challenges black women face. This is an issue of great personal significance to me and many of my CBC colleagues.

It is hard to accept that in 2015, women still earn significantly less than men in the work place. The wage gap for black women is even greater. Black women earn sixty-four cents on the dollar compared to men, while white women earn seventy-seven cents on the dollar. These numbers are disheartening for all women, but illustrate the even greater challenge that black women face in the fight for equal pay. Moving forward, the discussion on equal pay in the workplace must move beyond talking points. We must act swiftly to decrease wage inequality. We must also ensure that the obstacles black women in the workplace are included in the national discourse.

While the phrase "women's issues" has become popular in academia and the media, it usually does not include many of the unique issues affecting black women. As poet and black feminist, Audre Lord, once said, "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single issue lives." Black women have never had the luxury of just being women; for black women, there is an intersection where race and gender meet, making our struggle so much more unique. Black women face a separate set of problems further alienating us from our male counterparts. We must consistently battle with the fact that we are black in a society that does not value black life, and women in a society that does not value the female contribution to society.

Though a lot of progress has been made for women in the workplace, we still face so many obstacles as we work to permanently establish ourselves as professionally equal to men. In an effort to change these human injustices, we must increase the discussion on these issues. The end goal is to ensure that all women earn

equal pay, regardless of race. Progress toward this goal is our responsibility and we must work tirelessly in achieving it.

THIS IS BUDGET WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I sure do appreciate that, and I appreciate you being down here with us. I enjoy this time of the evening. It is a little quieter on Capitol Hill. Folks are coming and going, but I always learn something that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. For all the differences that we have here, when you talk to each other 15, 20 seconds at a time, those differences get accented. When you listen to one another for an hour at a time, it is easier to find those strains that bind us together. I hope that I am able to touch on some of those topics tonight myself, Mr. Speaker.

I have got the House budget on my mind. It is budget week. I don't know if everybody else is as excited about it as I am. This is budget week in Washington, D.C.

I just finished a hearing in the Committee on Rules, and we had folks come up and testify about all of their different budget ideas. What it means for it to be budget week is that we just voted in the Committee on Rules to make every single budget that any Member of this body, whether they be the most liberal Democrat, the most conservative Republican, or anywhere in between, north, south, east, and west, youngest to oldest, any Member of this body that has an idea about how to grapple with the budgetary challenges that face this Nation, Mr. Speaker, their idea is going to get a vote on the floor of the House this week—this week.

Now, it is heavy duty writing a budget, Mr. Speaker. I serve on the House Committee on the Budget. One of the reasons it is so hard, and you can't see it, Mr. Speaker, but I have here a pie chart of the spending in the United States of America. Now, you and I go through bill after bill, day after day, month after month of talking about appropriations bills. But as you know, Mr. Speaker, appropriations bills, they just deal with what I have shown here in the blue areas, the kind of non-defense discretionary spending and defense spending.

Candidly, that is what everybody thinks of as being the budget. They think of transportation, roads, bridges; they think of the environment, parks; they think of the judiciary; they think of law enforcement; they think of all of these components of government. Well, the truth is, all of those things, Mr. Speaker, we have to jam into this little bitty piece of the pie, these two blue pieces of the pie, the things that Congress focuses on every year in the appropriations cycle.