

beaten with the United States flag and symbols of Nazism. You could see their valiant efforts, the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police with our own Capitol Police. They stood their ground, being beat continuously by insurrectionists and, of course, domestic terrorists.

Madam Speaker, I offer today my deepest appreciation for them and sympathy for their brothers who were lost in the fight to preserve democracy. Yes, it was a fight because it was an attack on the United States Capitol. We owe them a great deal of gratitude and, as well, admiration.

Madam Speaker, I intend to introduce a resolution that will honor all those who stood their ground and protected this place, Members of Congress, and others, and were in the midst of a battle where so many were hurt. I express my sympathy and concern for those still hospitalized.

And I do say that it is important for us to say the simple words thank you. Thank you to the men and women of the United States Capitol Police, the Metropolitan Police Department, and, of course, our National Guard, and others.

□ 1900

IN HONOR OF USCP BRIAN D. SICKNICK

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, this week, we had a hero lie in honor in the dome of the United States Capitol.

United States Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick gave his life to protect the U.S. Capitol, one of our greatest symbols of democracy. I had the opportunity to pay my respects to Officer Sicknick in the Capitol rotunda, which is safe and secure because of his sacrifice and also the bravery of his fellow Capitol Police officers and other law enforcement.

I am devastated by the loss of Officer Sicknick, and I want to provide my deepest condolences to Officer Sicknick's family and fellow officers.

I want each and every Capitol Police officer to know that I am grateful and appreciative of their work here that they do each and every day to protect democracy and all who work here, and they protect all of our constituents who visit.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

(Mrs. LEE of Nevada asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Nevada's Third District.

The pandemic has ravaged our economy, especially in Nevada, where the travel and tourism industry is the bedrock of our economy.

Nevada is one of the hardest-hit States by this pandemic. Currently, we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country at 9.2 percent, but we have an opportunity to put this pandemic behind us and to begin to rebuild our economy. That answer lies in vaccine distribution. We are doing everything we can to get vaccines to those who are eligible, but with limited resources, we are not able to get them out quickly enough.

This week, we were able to work with Clark County Commissioner Michael Naft to establish a temporary vaccine site for the residents of Laughlin, a rural community on the border of Arizona, California, and Nevada. Before this site was established, these Nevadans had no vaccination options within an hour's drive of their community.

This pandemic needs to be treated like the crisis it is. We need to act swiftly and get States more funding for distribution. I am urging my colleagues: we must act quickly. We cannot let partisan games get in the way.

RECOGNIZING LAKELAND FIRE CHIEF DOUG RILEY

(Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lakeland Fire Chief Doug Riley for being named the 2020 Florida Fire Chief of the Year by the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association.

Riley was appointed as fire chief in December 2017. He has served more than 30 years with the Lakeland Fire Department, holding just about every position there during his tenure.

I was privileged to serve alongside Chief Riley as a Lakeland city commissioner and as a fellow rotarian. I have seen firsthand his effort to build better relationships with employees, staff, and the community. Doug Riley continues to go above and beyond to strengthen the fire department and its employees.

On behalf of the 15th District of Florida, congratulations to Chief Doug Riley for earning this distinguished honor. The Lakeland community thanks the chief for his efforts to protect and serve us every day.

Well done, Chief.

COVID-19 RELIEF

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the bipartisan Restoring Communities Left Behind Act.

This legislation establishes a \$5 billion neighborhood infrastructure stimulus program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help communities face down the dire COVID-19 economic crisis.

I am grateful for the cooperation and leadership of Michigan Congresswoman

RASHIDA TLAIB for leading this bill with me, and also for Chairwoman MAXINE WATERS for encouraging our efforts.

In addition to COVID-19, Americans in rural and urban areas are still suffering from the effects of the 2008 Great Recession, decades of job washout, and redlining. Wall Street's malfeasance resulted in African Americans alone losing nearly half of their accumulated wealth since the founding of the Republic.

Nothing is more important for wealth creation than owning a home. This bill will provide a lifeline for families to restore financial security through homeownership.

The bill is a critical job-creation program. By investing in neighborhood infrastructure, we are investing in skills training and creating good paying jobs.

Congress must act now to provide stimulus for neighborhoods to recover so they emerge more resilient. I look forward to working to include this bill in a larger COVID relief and recovery package. I urge my colleagues to support this important housing recovery legislation.

HONORING TOMMY LEE EXLEY, SR.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor the life of Tommy Lee Exley, Sr., who passed away on January 16.

Tommy was a man of integrity who dedicated his life to serving others. In addition to serving his country in the National Guard, he was very active in community service. Tommy served on the Effingham Industrial Development Board and the Effingham Hospital Board for a number of years.

He was also an active member of the Lions Club, The American Legion, Sunrise Rotary Club. He was even president of the Springfield Jaycees, which is an organization that identifies community needs and provides solutions by planning and facilitating service projects and funding.

Tommy graduated from the University of Georgia and was an avid Georgia Bulldogs fan.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful family, including the love of his life, Bebe, as well as his friends, during this most difficult time.

INSURRECTION IN THE CAPITOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, 29 days ago, on January 6, 2021, insurrectionists attacked our Capitol seeking to overturn the results of our Nation's election.

Twenty-nine days ago, the glass in and around this very Chamber was shattered by gunshots, clubs, and by individuals seeking to restrain and murder Members of Congress duly elected to carry out the duties of their office.

Twenty-nine days ago, Officer Sicknick, who just laid in honor yesterday in our Nation's Capitol, was murdered on the steps just outside this hallowed floor. Two Capitol Police officers have lost their lives since, in addition to the four other people who died during the events of January 6.

Twenty-nine days ago, food service workers, staffers, and children ran or hid for their lives from violence deliberately incited by the former President of the United States.

Sadly, less than 29 days later, with little to no accountability for the bloodshed and trauma of the 6th, some are already demanding that we move on, or, worse, are attempting to minimize, discredit or belittle the accounts of survivors. In doing so, they not only further harm those who were there that day and provide cover for those responsible, but they also send a tremendously damaging message to survivors of trauma all across this country that the way to deal with trauma, violence, and targeting is to paper it over, minimize it, and move on.

Sadly, this is all too often what we hear from survivors of trauma as the reason why they don't get care; that what they experienced wasn't bad enough or too bad to talk about; or that they are afraid of being invalidated, accused of exaggeration or making a mountain out of a mole hill. As a result, thousands, if not millions, deny themselves the care that they need and deserve to live better lives.

Twenty-nine days ago, our Nation's Capitol was attacked. That is the big story, and in that big story resides thousands of individual accounts just as valid and important as the other.

Tonight, for this Special Order, we will begin to hear and commit to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD just some of those many stories. I thank my colleagues who have bravely come forward today to share their accounts.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, it was an extraordinary day that started out quite beautiful for me. I live across the street, right next to the Supreme Court; and every day, almost without fail, there are demonstrators out on

the Supreme Court who are peaceful. Some of them I agree with and some of them I disagree with, but it is a beautiful sight to see people exercising their First Amendment right.

That was a beautiful day, January 6, and I had time. We weren't scheduled to be here in the House until about 1 p.m. So I did something that is a privilege and just a joy for those of us who serve here in the Capitol. I took a walk from the Supreme Court to the Capitol, down to the Washington Monument, to the Lincoln Memorial, and back.

Of course, the Trump protesters at that point were there, as it was their right to be. But on the way back, I became somewhat alarmed because when I got to the White House, it was really much more like a mob with many folks with bullhorns talking about hanging Mike Pence and using horrible epithets I can't mention here directed towards NANCY PELOSI.

As they came back toward 4th Street, I came in sight of—and was standing by—two groups of people who were about 70 strong and were practicing marching in military formation, and as they marched, they were chanting, again, a word I can't use here. For those people, talking about the people in this building.

As Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ said, people in this building were workers. They were Capitol Police who were in this building because they had to do an hour-and-a-half commute to do this job to protect this building that belongs to the people of this country so they could then pay the bills for their family and make that hour-and-a-half commute back. It was the cafeteria workers. It was everyday, hardworking, wonderful Americans.

Now, at that point I still didn't think anything about it because it never occurred to me, with all the anger and hostility I saw with those groups of people who were marching in a formation, that when I was later sitting up in that gallery with many of my colleagues as the proceedings were taking place, that this building would be invaded. I took it for granted that that just couldn't happen.

Of course, it did. The first sign we had of something amiss is when we saw the security people for our leadership—the Speaker, the minority leader, and our majority leader—rush them off the floor. We on the floor and in the gallery still had no idea what was going on.

Now, in retrospect, we find out the west side of the building was being breached, and one of the police officers said it was like a castle storming.

Mr. MCGOVERN took the chair and began to continue the process of certification of the election until one of the Capitol Police officers told us that teargas had been fired, that people had breached the building, get out the gas mask, and lie on the floor.

Then I saw Capitol Police officers with guns from their holsters. I looked at these men and women and I tried at

that moment to imagine what was it like for them that they actually had to have a weapon out. They had families, they had responsibility, and whatever fear they may have felt, their duty was to protect us, and they were going to do it no matter what.

How small I felt at that moment that because of someone who was doing their duty to protect me—I am no more worthy than any other person who works in this building—but that is their job. They were threatened.

Then, of course, we heard the shot when the mob was getting in to the door of the Speaker's Lobby. Then to get us out, they had to bring us all the way across this Chamber to the far door. We got stopped right over here where these two doors were being breached, and we heard the sound and saw the poles that were being pushed through.

You know the rest. We are going to hear more stories.

But I want to say that, in listening to my colleagues and experiencing it myself, where I had some fear, but then we were okay, there are two things that just stay with me. The first thing is that the tradition we have had in this country that is so commonplace, we do it every 4 years, the peaceful transfer of power, and how extraordinary it is that we do that every 4 years, was shattered. The second thing is that we saw something that allowed Jim Crow to thrive for over 100 years after the Civil War, and that was the use of violence as a political tactic.

□ 1915

We now have a Capitol ringed by these 7-foot fences with concertina wire. So the trauma that we are feeling, working in the sense of isolation, is the trauma to our democracy. Our goal, our responsibility is to restore that and not be defeated.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT).

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Congresswoman ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, for organizing this Special Order Hour this evening.

The events of January 6 are still burning in the memories of all of us, as well as millions and millions of Americans across the Nation; although some people would like to deny that it never happened, or sweep it under the rug, it continues to burn in everybody. The images are so aggressive that they still burn in the memories of millions upon millions of Americans.

I started that day as I start every day. I came to my office at 8:30 in the morning. I couldn't get through Independence Avenue because it was shut down, so I came through the back of my office building, and I noticed that I was walking on the sidewalk with some of the protesters, unimpeded. I felt as though security was very lax. No one stopped them. They were walking right next to me. They were around here as early as 8:30 in the morning.

I went to my office, and as I proceeded at one point to leave my office to come down to the floor, I was informed that the Capitol had been breached. So we stayed in our office.

Two police officers came to the office trying to escort us out and trying to take me to a site, a room in another office building where other Members were, to protect us. I decided to stay in my office with my team, and we locked ourselves in there.

I could see from my window some of the protesters. You see, this assault against the Capitol was not just concentrated on the Capitol steps. It was everywhere, really.

And of course, at about 8:00 at night, a little bit before that, I came here to conclude the proceedings. I felt it was very important that we completed our work for the night and not be intimidated by that mob. Democracy could never be intimidated.

And so I came here very early. I walked around as agents went around the Capitol and this floor securing evidence. And the scene was pretty horrifying; furniture stuck up against the walls and bloodstains right outside, where someone was shot, was being mopped.

So this is a traumatic experience for all of us on both sides of the aisle and for our Nation. It cannot be swept under the rug. We must get to the bottom of this. We must find out if there were Members of this body who aided and abetted that angry mob, who instructed them of the whereabouts of Speaker PELOSI.

You see, that mob came here saying they wanted to assassinate her and they wanted to hang the Vice President. So if anybody in this body assisted someone that clearly had an intent to attempt to murder someone, they are an accessory to that crime, and we must look at that evidence.

Ultimately, we need to have the truth; and if we want unity in this body, we need the truth. If we want unity in America, we need the truth. That is what will unite us. We must have a deep dive, a deep investigation into what occurred.

Did any of our colleagues text, email, or tweet the whereabouts of Speaker PELOSI? Did anybody tweet or share information about the labyrinth of tunnels and hallways in this Capitol building? They seemed to know their way around.

So the truth is important for the unity of our Nation. This is a beautiful building and a temple of democracy, but Congress is not this building. It is each and every one of us and, by extension, the people that we represent. So an attack against us was an attack against our constituents. We are their voices here, and we must take a good look at what occurred.

We must not sweep this under the rug. We must continue to ascertain and get all the facts and evidence to determine who played a pivotal role in perpetrating that crime. Only then will we

have unity. Only then, through truth, will we have peace.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from New York, first of all, for her courage and for convening us together. And I might say to the gentlewoman that we are not doing this for ourselves. We have taken an oath of office.

I have said this many times today as we debated a question of the status of a Member. We took an oath to defend this Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. And we realize that that oath is really above our own personal safety; that if we were called upon by this Nation to defend her, to defend our constituents, I would venture to say that most Members would stand by their constituents and this Nation.

This should not be taken as Members fleeing out of fear. But it should be taken as an explanation and an expose' of what happened in this place; how it was desecrated, undermined, diminished; how the American people watched this precious place.

For those of us who have been here, I fled this place on 9/11. We were in a meeting, and all you could hear is a lot of noise. Members continuing to meet, not wanting to be disturbed, did not move until an officer or screaming came, and we heard the noise saying, we don't know what's going on, but get out.

In that instant, we fled, and all we could hear was, run as fast as you can and hit the ground way on the other side near First Street and the Supreme Court. I could see the billowing smoke and the plane that had hit the Pentagon. And so, that fleeing, of course, was because we were told to do so.

But Members began to look for their staff and wanted to know what they could do. It was different from having a pandemic. It was different from the setting here, except for the fact that Members cared about what was going on with their constituency and their staff.

Here, we were in the same way. Members were protecting their staff in their offices. So I want this not to be about us, but the story needs to be told.

As you have already heard, there were those of us participating in this debate, some on the floor, some in the gallery.

And I will tell you that the first thing I saw, Madam Speaker, because we did not know of the huge crowds down near the White House. We didn't know that there were people dancing to music inside the White House, watching activities of attack here. But we did know about the major speech that was provoking a crowd of insurrectionists that had planned to come here and kill people.

But the first thing I saw was good friends here rising up out of seats and moving out quickly. And only after they began to move did we hear the

words, Hurry up. Get out. Flee. Not necessarily flee, but the first words I heard was our good leadership calling for the doors to be closed. Thank them for that, our Sergeant at Arms, who are here in this place.

As we fled, we could hear the attack coming from the Senate side, and then we could hear the shooting that occurred right outside in the cloakroom area. And we crouched there, and some of my good colleagues and I began to pray.

I started out by saying this is not about us, but it is about truth. And as I mourned and honored Officer Sicknick, as he was honored by being in a state of honor in this House, I was reminded of the many officers, Capitol Hill and Metro Police, that are in hospitals; that are still hurting; and that are still suffering. And I said earlier this evening that I offered to them my deepest concern and sympathy and respect, and I will be introducing a resolution to honor them.

But I think the importance of this re-living what we went through is, as I have heard from my colleagues, we must get to the bottom of this. We cannot let white supremacy, which is now the number one terrorist activity or terrorist group in America, more so than foreign terrorists, dominate the goodness of what this democracy and this Constitution stands for.

We can't let the idea of free speech be the source of the fueling of hatred and anger that turns to violence. We can't let individuals storm this building and call for the killing of the Vice President, or the killing of the Speaker of the House, or the putting on of plastic cuffs on Members of Congress.

We can't frighten Members of Congress in their offices. We cannot allow this kind of attack on voices like the gentlewoman from New York who simply wants to tell truth. She has freedom.

So I am here on the floor to say that we shall not be denied. We are never going to give up our love for democracy nor its vitality; nor are we going to let this country be dominated by the insurrectionists who came to this place to do nothing but act in a bloodthirsty manner. We are not afraid of you.

And yes, on behalf of all of those officers that the video showed us that were beaten by American flags, beaten with signs of Nazism, we are going to get to the bottom of this for you. We are going to find out what happened.

We are going to find out why the information came from the FBI to the City of Washington, D.C., and their police, and it was evident that it was given to the brass here, but that there was no response in terms of the kind of equipment or the numbers of officers that were there, or why wasn't permission given to the mayor of the City of Washington to call up the National Guard.

□ 1930

Why did this President deny access to the National Guard to protect, not us, but this place of democracy?

I am grateful for this opportunity. We have work to do. But I think the greatest statement that we can make tonight, that we are in the light of day on this floor, as I said before, not for us, but to be able to stand in the shoes of all those heroes who fought in different ways, whether it was in the peace movement, whether it was in the civil rights movement, Black power movement, whether it was Cesar Chavez fighting for farmworkers—people who fought to make a difference for goodness.

For all of those patriots, all of those fallen leaders, some assassinated like Dr. Martin Luther King, we cannot stand and allow the voices of those who provided horror to this place to suggest to the world that they have overcome us.

I close by simply saying to the world that we had a day, January 6, an attack on this place, insurrectionists and domestic terrorists penetrated the United States Capitol, but they never penetrated the strength of the Constitution and our values and our commitment to protect democracy, but also to give respect and comfort to those who lost their lives on that day or thereafter, in terms of our law enforcement officers, and sadness for those unfortunately who lost their life by being misguided, but also to be able to say that this is a place that we will hold sacred.

We will be victorious. White supremacy, insurrectionists, and also domestic terrorism will not prevail over us. We will win, and we will win for the many Americans who believe in the goodness of this country.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, and I thank her so very much for her courage.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PHILLIPS).

Mr. PHILLIPS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentlewoman from New York, for organizing tonight and for inspiring rising generations of Americans, including my own daughters, to dream bigger and to do better.

I want to start my remarks by addressing those who have belittled, dismissed, minimized, or criticized anyone who has experienced trauma of any type, at any time, in any form. To you, I say I take pity on you, and I say shame on you.

I was in this very room on January 6 when the insurrection began. I was 1 of 20 colleagues up in the gallery, just over my shoulder, who had to take cover behind our seats, on the floor, and struggle to activate our gas masks, the whizzing sounds, the collective whizzing sounds in this room, which none of us will ever forget.

We know the sound of the breaking glass, of the screams, and of the furniture being moved in front of the doors. We know the feeling of being trapped in this room and believing that being taken hostage may be the best-case scenario.

We know what it feels like, searching for something, anything, with which to defend ourselves, and realizing a pencil is about all we had. We know what it feels like thinking that it is a real possibility that we would not see our families and loved ones again.

We won't forget. We won't forget.

But I am not here this evening to seek sympathy or just to tell my story—rather, to make a public apology.

Recognizing that we were sitting ducks in this room, as the Chamber was about to be breached, I screamed to my colleagues to follow me across the aisle to the Republican side of the Chamber so that we could blend in—so that we could blend in—for I felt that the insurrectionists who were trying to break down the doors right here would spare us if they simply mistook us for Republicans. But within moments, I recognized that blending in was not an option available to my colleagues of color.

So, I am here tonight to say to my brothers and sisters in Congress, and all around our country: I am sorry. I am sorry, for I had never understood, really understood, what privilege really means.

It took a violent mob of insurrectionists and a lightning bolt moment in this very room, but now I know. Believe me, I really know.

I want to close with an invitation, a hopeful invitation at that, to everybody watching or listening. Whether you experienced January 6 right here in this room; whether you were barricaded in an office across the street; or whether, like most Americans, you experienced it through a television screen, please do not allow that day to change you for the worse. Rather, please find something in it to improve yourself, to improve our country, and to improve our world.

I surely did, and I hope you will join me.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON).

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York for arranging this really important Special Order hour.

Every day, we are so grateful for the hard work and support of our congressional staff. Many of them are young enough to be my children, but they serve Congress and our country with brilliance and honor every single day.

This evening, I want to read a letter signed by nearly 400 congressional staffers to their Senators because they don't often have a voice on this floor, but their words are so raw and so heart-wrenching.

Here is their letter, titled "An Open Letter to Members of the U.S. Senate."

"We are staff who work for Members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, where it is our honor and privilege to serve our country and our fellow Americans. We write this letter to share our own views and

experiences, not the views of our employers. But on January 6, 2021, our workplace was attacked by a violent mob trying to stop the electoral college vote count. That mob was incited by former President Donald J. Trump and his political allies, some of whom we pass every day in the hallways at work.

"Many of us attended school in the post-Columbine era and were trained to respond to active shooter situations in our classrooms. As the mob smashed through Capitol Police barricades, broke doors and windows, and charged into the Capitol with body armor and weapons, many of us hid behind chairs and under desks or barricaded ourselves in offices. Others watched on TV and frantically tried to reach our bosses and colleagues as they fled for their lives.

"On January 6, the former President broke America's 230-year legacy of the peaceful transition of power when he incited a mob to disrupt the counting of electoral college votes. Six people died. A Capitol Police officer—one of our coworkers who guards and greets us every day—was beaten to death. The attack on our workplace was inspired by lies told by the former President and others about the results of the election in a baseless, monthslong effort to reject votes lawfully cast by the American people.

"Our Constitution only works when we believe in it and defend it. It is a shared commitment to equal justice, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of our differences. Any person who doesn't share these beliefs has no place representing the American people, now or in the future. The use of violence and lies to overturn an election is not worthy of debate. Either you stand with the Republic or against it.

"As congressional employees, we don't have a vote on whether to convict Donald J. Trump for his role in inciting the violent attack at the Capitol, but our Senators do. And for our sake, and the sake of the country, we ask that they vote to convict the former President and bar him from ever holding office again."

It is signed by nearly 400 congressional staff.

Madam Speaker, I include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD their letter and their signatures.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE: We are staff who work for members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, where it is our honor and privilege to serve our country and our fellow Americans. We write this letter to share our own views and experiences, not the views of our employers. But on January 6, 2021, our workplace was attacked by a violent mob trying to stop the electoral college vote count. That mob was incited by former president Donald J. Trump and his political allies, some of whom we pass every day in the hallways at work.

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charged into the Capitol with body armor and weapons, many of us hid behind chairs and under desks or barricaded ourselves in offices. Others watched on TV and frantically tried to reach bosses and colleagues as they fled for their lives.

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Signed,

Aaron Fritschner, Abigail Hewins, Adam Comis, Adam Veale, Alex Guajardo, Alex Karabatsos, Alex Marston, Alex Molina, Alexa Marquez, Alexa Sledge, Alexander Gristina, Alexandra Schnelle, Alexandra Yiannoutsos, Alexis C. MacDonald, Alisa La, Allan Rodriguez, Allison Blankenship, Allison Lukas, Aly DeWills-Marciano, Alyssa Mendez.

Amanda J. Quesada, Amand Yanchury, Amy Fischer, Amy Kuhn, Amy Soenksen, Andi McIver, Andre Earls, Andrea N. Goldstein, Andrew Goddeeris, Andrew Myslik, Andrew Noh, Aneeb Sheikh, Angele Russell, Angelica Duque, Angie Wells, Anissa Z. Caldwell, Anne Feldman, Anne Wick, Annetta Joyce, Annmarie Goyzueta.

Anthony Barnes, Anthony Lemma, Anuj Gupta, Aria Kovalovich, Artin Haghsheenas, Asha Samuel, Ashlee Wilkins, Avery Bonifati, Barbara Hamlett, Beatrix M. Dalton, Ben Kamens, Ben Rutan, Ben Turner, Benito Torres Jr., Benjamin Bernier, Brad Kortan, Brandon Garay, Brandon Mendoza, Brendan Greenlee, Bridget Hogan.

Brigid Campbell, Brittan Robinson, Bryce Causey, Caleigh Lynch, Carianne Lee, Carlos Muriello Villasenor, Carmen Palumbo, Caroline Ramos, Carolyn Olortegui, Cassie Winters, Caty Payette, Cesar Solis, Chandler Mason, Chelsea Alatraste Martinez, Chelsea Rivas, Chloe Kessock, Chris Gibson, Chris McCarthy, Christian Seasholtz, Christopher Nguyen.

Cindy M. Buhl, Cindy Matos Beltre, Clarissa Rojas, Cole A. Baker, Colin Pio, Collin Davenport, Connor McNutt, Connor Vargo, Cori Duggins, Corinne Paul, Courtney Callejas, Courtney Hruska, Courtney Rogers, Cyré Velez, Dan Riffle, Dana Hanson, Daniel Gleick, Daniel Holt, Daniel Maher, Daniela Contreras.

Daniela Valles, Danielle Fulfs, David Lucas, David Sanchez, David Todisco, Dayanara Ramirez, Denzel McCampbell, Dr. Heather O'Beirne Kelly, Drew Hammill, Eddie Meyer, Eduardo N. Lerma, Jr., Edwin Sevilla, Eleanor Trenary, Elena Radding, Elizabeth Austin-Mackenzie, Elizabeth Kulig, Eloise Melcher, Elyse Schupak, Emily Amador, Emily Lande-Rose.

Emily Loya, Emily Morrison, Emma Norman, Emma Zafraan, Erin Melody, Eva Naomi Gutierrez, Evan Brooks, Evan P. Dale, Fabiola Pagán Meléndez, Fabiola Rodriguez-Ciampol, Frederick Castro, Gabby Richards, Gail Chaney Kalinich, George "Stephen" Williams, Jr., George Flynn, Grace Rubinger, Greg Claus, Griffin M. Anderson, Hannah Ceja.

Hannah Melissa Borja, Hannah Weinerman, Harsh Deshmukh, Heather Boyd, Hector Colón, Helen Beaudreau, Humberto Ramos, Hussain Altamimi, Jack Gebbia, Jack Stelzner, Jacqueline A. Sanchez, Jae Von McClain, Jaime Cobham, Jaime Gilmartin, Jamari Torrence, James E. McFeely, Jamie Smith, Jason Nerad, Jason Tufele Carl Johnson, Jed Ober.

Jen Fox, Jenna Jaffe, Jennifer Chandler, Jeren Totten, Jermaine Simmons, Jesse Malowitz, Jessica Andino, Jessica Hernandez, Jessica Mulligan, Jessica Pedroza, Jessica Valdez, Jessie Durrett, Jill Hirsch, Johana Mata, John Chapa Gorczynski, John Swords, Johnathan Garza, Joicelyne Jackson, Jona Koka, Jonathan Nwaru.

Jordan Dashow, Joseph Valente, Joy A. Hamer, Juan Romero-Casillas, Julia Kravitz, Julian Gerson, Julie Jochem, Justin McCartney, K'Yetta McKinney, Kaozouapa E. Lee, Kat Cosgrove, Kate Brescia, Kate Stotesbery, Katharine Nasielski, Katie Worley, Katrina Martell, Kelli Scott, Kelsey Smith, Kendra Wood, Kenneth Russell DeGraff.

Kevin Figueroa, Kevin O'Neil, Kevin Vargas, Kiara Tringali, Kichelle Webster, Kimberly Stanton, Kimiko Hirota, Kira Floersheim, Koray Rosati, Kory Haywood, Kristi Black, Kristin Kopshever, Kristina Broadie Jeter, Kurtis Miller, Kyle McKenney, Lana Abbasi, Lana Westfall Marro, Lanette Garcia, Larissa Richardson, Laura Brantley.

Laura Ellen Schock, Laura Forero, Lauren Pauley, Lauren Covington, Lauren Geiser, Lauren Linsmayer, Lauren Meininger, LaVontae Brooks, Leslie Merrill, Leslie Zwicker, Liam McCaffery, Libby Wiet, Lillian Adelstein, Lily Fitzpatrick, Lisa Pahel, Lisa Tencer, Lucia Rodriguez, Luis Zegarra, Maggie Harden, Malcolm Yates.

Mara Kelly, Maria Camila Gomez Osorio, Maria Di Leone, Maria Martirosyan, Maria Robayo, Mariam Jalloul, Marilyn Dillihay, Mark A. Hinson, Marlon Dubuisson, Maru Vazquez, Matt Corridoni, Matt DeFreitas, Matt Jansen, Matt Sonneborn, Matthew A. Ceja, Matthew Bonaccorsi, Matthew E. Fried, Matthew Holcombe.

Matthew Morgan, Matthew Steil, Maureen Acero, Max Frankel, Maytham Alshadood, Meaghan Johnson, Melanee Farrah, Mia Robertson, Michael Harris, Michael Lawson, Michele Lockman, Michelle Sánchez, Mike Lucier, Mike Shanahan, Moh Sharma, Molly Cole, Mustafa Alemi, Natalie C. Adams, Nawaid Ladak, Nick Burroughs.

Nicolás Ballón, Noah Simon, Numa St. Louis, Olga Avant-Mier, Oliver Edelson, Olivia Byrd, Pam Trinward, Patrick Carroll, Patrick Koetzle, Paula McKinney-Rainey, Philip Bennett, Pierre Whatley, Pilar Lugo, Priyanka Hooghan, Quinton Johnson, Rachel Dembo, Rachel Montoya, Raman Khanna, Randy Love, Rebecca Eichmann.

Rebecca R. Kelly, Rebekah Eskandani, Reecha Patel, Remington F. Belford, Rex Dyer, Ricardo Martinez, Rita L. Waters, Robert M. Gottheim, Robert Montgomery, Rona Sayed, Rosario Duran, Ryan A. Washington, Ryan Early, Ryan Morgan, Rylee Stirn, Saira Bhatti, Sammi Goldsmith, Samuel R. Spencer IV, Sara Barber.

Sara Guerrero, Sara Palasitis, Sarah Dean, Sarah Mulero, Scott Balough, Scott Heppard, Scott R. Nelson, Ph.D., Serena Li, Shadawn Reddick-Smith, Shalini Gagliardi,

Sharon Eliza Nichols, Shawn M. Meredith, Sonia C. Norton, Sool Abdrahaman, Stephany Ospino, Stuart Styron, Sullivan Gassmann, T. Scott Harris, Talia Marcus, Tamara P. Zapata.

Tara Jordan, Tara Rountree, Tendrina Alexandre, Thelma Teresa Carrera, Theodore Steinberg, Thomas J. Story, Todd Stein, Tommy Brown, Toni Dunbar, Udit Thakur, Victoria Bonney, Victoria Graham, Victoria Oms, Wendy Ginsberg, Whitley O'Neal, Will Barrett, William (Billy) Hennessy, Xiao Shan Susan Liu, Yael Velvel, Yazmin Mehdi, Yonathan Teclu, Zac Mitchiner, Zach Cafritz, Zach Fisch, Zoe Bluffstone.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman OCASIO-CORTEZ for leading this Special Order hour, and I thank her for the bravery she exhibited by sharing her story.

January 6 was unlike any other day I lived through during my time in Congress. I awoke with Georgia on my mind, with hope in my heart, after the runoff victories delivered us a Senate Democratic majority. That morning, it felt like we were turning the page on a dark chapter and entering a chapter of reckoning, progress, and, ultimately, unity.

To fully turn that page, Congress needed to count the electoral college votes and certify the historic election of President Biden and Vice President Harris. That was supposed to be a perfunctory, procedural action. But it became, instead, the target of an angry mob incited by the President, who encouraged that very mob to interfere and stop the counting of the ballots.

Too many Republican colleagues empowered the lies that Trump told instead of standing up for the truth and for our democracy.

Earlier that day, I had followed press reports about a rally being organized by Trump supporters in Washington, and my staff warned me to be careful as I carried out business in and around the Capitol. I got to the Capitol early because I did not want to run into too many crowds, but I never imagined what was coming after Trump encouraged his supporters at a rally to storm the Capitol and disrupt the electoral college count.

About midday, shortly before 1 o'clock, I was returning back to my Cannon House Office Building when the Capitol Police told me: Sir, we are closing down Cannon. We are evacuating Cannon. You need to go to either the Longworth House Office Building or Rayburn and take cover.

So, I followed the instructions. I made my way back to Longworth, where I took refuge in a colleague's office. Eventually, I made it to a secure location in the Veterans' Affairs Committee offices in the Longworth basement.

It was there my phone started to blow up with anxious constituents who asked me if I was okay, and they made me aware of what was going on outside. I turned on the television, and I could not believe what I was seeing.

What I saw were Capitol Police being overwhelmed and the violent mob of Trump supporters breaking into the Capitol and bringing the electoral college vote count to a halt.

As the violence unfolded, I have to say I was in a secure location, as safe as I could be for that moment. I was fine but shaken, concerned about what this meant for our democracy.

I worried about the safety of my colleagues. I worried about the safety of the staff. I wondered when the National Guard would arrive, when reinforcements would arrive, because it was extraordinarily distressing to see our Capitol Police so greatly outnumbered by the crowd.

I was safe. I turned out to be fine. I still am fine. But that is not the case for everyone. Unlike my colleagues and me who are here, most of the people who lived through the horrors of that day can't share their experiences on the floor of the House today.

I am here to give voice to and acknowledge the experience of hundreds of congressional staffers, Capitol support staff, maintenance workers, and Capitol Police officers who also lived through that deadly insurrection. They experienced and lived the trauma, and it is just as valid and real as the stories that are being shared here today.

□ 1945

Staff barricaded themselves in offices. They heard banging on the doors from insurrectionists who could harm them. Staff also evacuated the House Chamber in gas masks. They were alone, gathering any items they could use as weapons in case the insurrectionists broke into the very room they were sheltering in. They were in danger as well. This is their workplace, hundreds of people who answer the phones and keep our buildings running and keep us safe every day.

When you run for office, you are confronted with the reality that you may be putting yourself in harm's way. Staff didn't ask for this, they didn't sign up for this, to be put in harm's way. They shouldn't have had to have dealt with an attack like this. They were just doing their jobs.

Those who lived through that dangerous day or watched as the Capitol was attacked from home are also experiencing pain and trauma. To them, I say: What you are feeling is valid, and we are here to support you, and don't let anybody gaslight or diminish or belittle what happened on January 6th. It was a serious event.

Over the past few weeks, I learned that following the insurrection, the Office of Employee Assistance has been overwhelmed with requests for counseling and support from our staff. After my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and I were made aware of this overwhelming of requests at the Office of Employee Assistance, we worked with the VA to bring Mobile Vet Centers to the Capitol complex to provide mental health services and re-

sources to Capitol Police, the National Guard deployed at the Capitol, congressional staff, journalists, and anyone who needs it.

I visited one of the vet centers this morning, and they told me, vaguely, "Congressman, the numbers are there. The numbers, out of confidentiality, we won't tell you how many, but people are using these centers, and they are asking for help."

The Mobile Vet Centers can accept walk-in appointments every day, including weekends, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. If someone would like to schedule a next-day appointment, they may call the Washington, D.C. Vet Center at 202-726-5212.

I just want to emphasize, if you work at the Capitol, as part of the Capitol workforce, whether you work as a maintenance worker, whether you work as a staffer, this is available to you.

I thank my colleagues and the staff who keep our democracy running. The only way to make this right and to help heal our Nation is for the Senate to do the right thing and hold Donald Trump accountable for the insurrection he incited.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB).

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her incredible courage. I asked her to go last because this is so personal. This is so hard because, as many of my colleagues and my closest colleagues know, on my very first day of orientation, I got my first death threat.

It was a serious one. They took me aside. The FBI had to go to the gentleman's home. I didn't even get sworn in yet and someone wanted me dead for just existing.

More came later; uglier, more violent. One celebrating in writing the New Zealand massacre and hoping that more would come. Another mentioned my dear son, Adam, mentioning him by name. Each one paralyzed me each time.

So what happened on January 6, all I can do is thank Allah that I wasn't here. I felt overwhelming relief. I feel bad for ALEXANDRIA and so many of my colleagues who were here; but as I saw it, I thought to myself, Thank God I am not there. I saw the images that they didn't get to see until later.

My team and I decided at that point we would keep the death threats away. We tried to report them, document them, to keep them away from me because it just paralyzed me. All I wanted to do was come here and serve the people who raised me; the people who told my mother, who only had an 8th grade education, that she deserves human dignity; people who believed in me.

So it is hard. It is hard when my seven brothers and six sisters beg me to get protection, many urging me to get a gun for the first time. And I have to tell you, the trauma from just being

here, existing as a Muslim woman is so hard. But imagine my team, which I love and just adore. They are diverse. I have LGBTQ staff. I have a beautiful Muslim who wears her hijab proudly in the halls. I have Black women who are so proud to be here, to serve their country. I worry every day for their lives because of this rhetoric. I never thought that they would feel unsafe here.

So I ask my colleagues to please try not to dehumanize what is happening. This is real. And you know many of our residents, from the shootings in Charlottesville to the massacre at the synagogue, all of it—all of it is led by hate rhetoric like this. So I urge my colleagues to please, please take what happened on January 6 seriously. It will lead to more deaths. We can do better. We must do better.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I think that what Representative TLAIB speaks to is so powerful and so important because when we attack not just Members of Congress and focus on them because of their gender, their faith, their race, their creed, we make everyone on this complex feel unsafe and feel less than safe. Our seats do not belong to us. They belong to the people of the United States. We, as Members who come in and leave this Chamber, are not permanent fixtures. There are so many others in this country who see themselves in the 435 Members of this body. And to see individual Members targeted, demeaned, singled out by virtue of how they were born is to single out and demean so many people in this country who see themselves on this floor.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. BUSH), a powerful woman and leader that so many in our country see themselves in.

Ms. BUSH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York for being such a leader at this time.

Madam Speaker, St. Louis and I rise to reflect on how our office experienced the white supremacist attack on our Nation's Capitol on January 6.

Everybody's experiences are different, and everybody's experiences must be validated. Everybody's experiences.

I remember sitting up in the gallery listening to floor speeches, knowing that there was supposed to be a protest happening outside, seeing people outside and thinking that this was just part of the day. Until something happened, and I just felt the need to stand up and walk out.

I walked out and walked over to the steps, and I went down a flight. I went to the steps and I went to look to see what was happening outside. I saw the tip-top of flags, and then I saw more of the flags, and I could read words.

And then after I could read words, I could see people. Then I realized that people were approaching. So I hopped on the nearest elevator and left and made it back to my office safely.

When we came back into our office, we walked in, and we started to see on our televisions people breaching doors.

I remember thinking, Is this actually what is happening?

The more I watched, people were calling this a protest. Let me say this: That was not a protest. I have been to hundreds of protests in my life. I have co-organized, co-led, led and organized protests not only in Ferguson, Missouri, alongside the amazing Ferguson front line that most people don't even acknowledge—they don't even know their names. They don't even know who died. They don't even acknowledge the amazing people who put their lives and livelihoods on the line for our safety, believing that Black Lives Matter. Because they actually do. And we shouldn't have to say it. It should just be true. But it is not evident in our society when we have to continue to say, "My life matters."

And then they hit us with things like this. So I remember sitting in the office with my team and just thinking to myself, I feel like I am back. At this very minute, I feel like I am back. I feel like this was one of the days out there on the streets when the white supremacists would show up and start shooting at us. This is one of the days when the police would ambush us from behind, from behind trees and from behind buildings, and all of a sudden now we are on the ground being brutalized. It felt like one of those days.

And I just remember taking a second thinking, if they touch these doors, if they hit these doors the way they hit that door, if they hit these doors and come anywhere near my staff—and I am just going to be real honest about it—my thought process was, we banging to the end. I am not letting them take out my people, and you are not taking me out. We have come too far.

So, Madam Speaker, St. Louis and I rise with a message for our Republican colleagues. On January 6, I thought about January 3, and I thought about how we all raised our right hands up and took an oath, each and every one of us, on this very floor. We swore that we would support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Even though that Constitution wasn't written for people who look like me, even though that Constitution wasn't written by people who look like me, and even though that Constitution cemented an unjust nation for people like me, my team and I got to working. We unveiled legislation to investigate and expel those who were responsible for inciting this attack so that we could defend it because we have a duty to fight for a more perfect Union.

Because if you cannot stand up to white supremacy in this moment as Representatives, then why did you run for office in the first place?

No matter what district you represent, no matter where you live, no matter Democrat or Republican, you represent a district that is, on average,

about 700,000 people. Meaning, you have to represent those who love you, those who despise you, those who voted for you, those who swear they will never cast a vote for you, people who talk like you or people who don't look like you.

Building better communities, building better lives, building a better society is not a Democratic or Republican issue. We can't build a better society if Members are too scared to stand up and act to reject the white supremacist attack that happened right before our eyes.

How can we trust that you will address the suffering that white supremacy causes on a day-to-day basis in the shadows if you can't even address the white supremacy that happens right in front of you in your House?

Does your silence speak to your agreement, is the question.

In St. Louis, the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately hospitalizing and killing Black and Brown people. I have lived that. We have people dying from gun violence, a crisis that stems from decades of economic disinvestment and disruption from an overreliance on policing that this very Chamber has continually voted to endorse.

□ 2000

I have cried those tears. You don't know what that is like. So I ask you today, take a moment to think about what it is like to live what we live through. If you cannot do what is right in the face of a blatant, heinous, foul, white supremacist attack like the one we just saw, how will you do right by the Black and Brown people you represent who just want to know that our children will have safety, that our children will have life, and that they will have shelter, because you represent us, too.

So on January 3, we stood together to swear our oath of office to the Constitution. We swore to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic. Well, it was attacked by a domestic enemy called white supremacy and we must stand together now, today, to uphold that oath and hold every single person who helped incite it accountable.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative BUSH for her comments today and for how she carries herself in this Chamber every day, which is just a powerful demonstration of why so many people are inspired by her example.

Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York has 4½ minutes remaining.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, lastly, I would like to close, speaking to some of the individuals who have already been mentioned, and some of the folks who have already been mentioned in prior remarks: our staff, our Capitol Police, our House clerks, we thank you.

We know how many of you were put in the line of danger because of the job

that you have. We know and felt how many staffers were willing to put themselves on the line in order to protect the Members that they serve alongside, and that is a weight that no one should have to carry.

And so we say thank you to our House clerks. We say thank you to every single staff member of the United States Congress. We say thank you to our food service workers. We say thank you to our custodial workers, sweeping up the glass on the floor shattered by white supremacists, cleaning up after their mess.

There are not enough ways to say thank you. We say thank you to our Capitol Police who were willing to defend us. And, again, to our staffers we say thank you.

I would be remiss if I did not specifically thank my staffer right here to my left, Gerardo Bonilla Chavez, who was with me on the day of the attack, and who did everything he could to protect me.

I want his community to know that he is a hero. I want his parents and his family to know that he is a hero. Our staff already know that he is a hero, and I believe he is a hero, too.

And I know it is not just him. He will be the first one to say that. But to every one of our House clerks, we say thank you; to our Capitol Police we say thank you; to our food service workers, our custodial workers, every person here that was standing to fight for our democracy, we thank you.

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

BIDEN'S UNILATERAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS ARE HARMFUL

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, in the first days of his administration, President Biden has taken a record-breaking number of executive actions and he has signed more executive orders than any President in recent history.

I am very proud this evening to be joined by some of my colleagues from the Congressional Western Caucus. As a group, we represent constituents across the country who have been negatively impacted by these actions of President Biden.

On his very first day in office, the President signed an executive order to