

WOMEN OF THE REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS MOVEMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the countless people—organizers and activists, jurists and justices, doctors and clinic staff—whose work and leadership continues to secure access to abortion services across the country. For generations, women have been at the forefront of the fight to secure reproductive health services, and their bravery and vision continues to inspire our work today. In the face of the most serious effort to turn back the clock on abortion access in decades, their work is more important today than ever.

Around the country, medical providers and clinic staff show up to work every day to ensure that people have the care they need. They routinely provide care in the face of unrelenting threats, violence, and harassment by anti-abortion extremists, showing up each day to ensure that people in our communities have access to care. These providers and clinic staff have been innovating and adapting to meet an unending series of challenges and hurdles. Each day, abortion care providers are working toward a world in which every person can shape their own futures and families.

I want to share some of their names here today—just some of the many women whose work is critical to making abortion accessible.

Dr. Kathryn Fay, MD/MSCI, is on the faculty in the Division of Complex Family Planning at Brigham and Women's hospital, an instructor at Harvard Medical School, and is an NIH-funded researcher focusing on reproductive coercion. She continues to provide a full spectrum of care, including labor and delivery services, medication and procedural abortions, contraceptive counseling, and routine gynecologic care.

Dr. Halley Crissman is an OB/GYN in Southeast Michigan who provides gender-affirming care, abortion care, and comprehensive sexual and reproductive care. Dr. Crissman advocates tirelessly for her patients—for their access to safe, high quality medical care, and for their respect and bodily autonomy. She is the Director of Gender Affirming Care with Planned Parenthood of Michigan which is working to expand access to gender-affirming hormone care across the state of Michigan, while simultaneously working to protect and expand access to abortion care.

Dr. Katherine Farris has worked at Planned Parenthood South Atlantic for more than 13 years. She is a family physician who has provided abortion care throughout her career because she recognizes that without the ability to decide if or when to become a parent, no person has true freedom or autonomy to create the life they desire.

Dr. Rathika Nimalendran works as an abortion provider at a health clinic in North Carolina. In a profile for Physicians for Reproductive Health, she wrote "I have always been compelled to provide abortion care. I believe in a woman's right to choose what is best for her, and I provide abortions to help women who have made the choice to safely terminate a pregnancy."

Joan Whitaker retired as the director of health services at ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) in June 2020 after serving the Boston community for 33 years.

Dr. Adeola Oni-Orisan is a medical anthropologist and board-certified family physician specializing in reproductive healthcare. She provides abortion care in California and also travels to Georgia to provide abortions as interim-medical director of abortion services at Planned Parenthood Southeast. As a medical anthropologist, her work seeks to illuminate experiences of seeking and providing reproductive health care in Black birthwork communities in the bay area. She is also a leader in One Love Black Community, an organization which supports Black birthing people in San Francisco who are pregnant, postpartum, or postabortion.

Madam Speaker, abortion is essential, abortion providers are essential, and independent abortion clinics do essential work. Many also provide other life-saving services, including hormone therapy and gender-affirming care, prenatal and birthing care, STI and HIV testing and treatment, birth control and family planning, and sometimes even primary care. We celebrate each of these women today, together with doctors and nurses, clinic staff and administrators, across the country.

In addition to medical professionals and clinic staff, we also honor the women whose work as advocates, activists, and organizers is critical to ensuring that each person has access to the care they need. Women who have fought for the passage of laws that protect, rather than restrict, abortion access, have advocated for funding for reproductive health priorities; women who go into communities to coordinate and educate, and to connect people with the care and services they seek. Women who ensure we all know what our rights are, and who teach us to raise our voices to demand the protection of those rights.

I particularly want to pay tribute to the women who have been working on the ground in Texas, especially in the months since the enactment of S.B. 8. In the light of unprecedented restrictions and draconian new laws, organizers and activists in Texas have persisted, and their work is more critical now than ever.

I want to highlight one organizer today: Lucy Ceballos Felix. Lucy, originally from Matamoros, Tamaulipas; Mexico, is certified by the state of Texas as a Community Health Worker (CHW) and Community Health Worker Instructor (CHWI). Since 2012, Lucy has worked at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice as Associate Director of Field and Advocacy in Texas, meeting with groups of women and other from various cities in the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley, Corpus Christ, and Houston. Her work helps community groups learn how to discover and develop their leadership, mobilize their community, and take action on political issues that are harming their lives, families, and communities. In the light of recent Texas legislation, Lucy's work is needed now more than ever.

I could speak for hours about the women who paved the legal path that is now under threat from the Supreme Court and the women who, as legislators at both the state and national level, have fought for passage of bills that expand abortion access and refused to accept policies that put it farther out of reach. I want to close by paying tribute to just one—Rep. Shirley Chisholm.

Rep. Chisholm was a trailblazer in so many ways, and not the least of these was her support for reproductive rights and abortion access. In 1969 she was named honorary president of NARAL, in 1970 she supported legalization of abortion in her home state of New York, and in 1970 described abortion as an issue of economic and racial justice. In 1989, she was one of 16 Black women who published the first collective statement calling for equal access to abortion. Rep. Chisholm emphasized what continues to be true today: that although abortion restrictions and bans hurt everyone, their impacts fall most heavily on women of color, low-income women, and others who already face barriers to accessing health care. Rep. Chisholm understood that reproductive justice is critical to economic and racial justice, and I am proud to continue her work as co-chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus.

Madam Speaker, every day across the United States and around the world, women are protecting, upholding, and expanding abortion access. Generations of women—lawyers, organizers, providers, activists, volunteers—are responsible the rights and freedoms we currently enjoy, and the Pro-Choice Caucus is committed to building upon their legacy. Even in the face of unprecedented threats, we will continue to fight for a future where everyone, no matter where they live or how much money they make, has the freedom to make decisions, for themselves, about their bodies, their lives, and their futures.

FREYA ARCHULETA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2022

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Freya Archuleta for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Freya Archuleta is a 9th grader at Adams City High School and received this award because their determination and hard work have allowed them to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Freya Archuleta is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Freya Archuleta for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt they will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of their future accomplishments.

WESTMINSTER RETIREMENT
COMMUNITY 55TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2022

Mr. McCAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the 55th anniversary of the opening of the Westminster Retirement Community in Austin, Texas. I wish to congratulate them for

the meaningful work they do for the senior community in Austin and commend them for their commitment to providing high-end, quality care to their residents.

Westminster will always hold a special place in my heart, as they cared for my mother in her final days. I want to thank the doctors, nurses, and all the staff for the love and care they provided her during her time with them.

Since 1967, Westminster has provided life care, residential services, and state-of-the-art healthcare to thousands of residents who have trusted and relied upon their facilities and staff. To reach this milestone, Westminster's staff has worked tirelessly to ensure that their residents receive the care they need while also providing a comforting place to live during retirement.

The high quality of care and standard of living for the residents of Westminster has garnered national attention and led to a recognition as a Top 25 "Best in Wellness" Senior Living Community in North America by the ICAA. This continued commitment to serving their residents in Austin illustrates the value that they serve in this community.

For 55 years, Westminster Retirement Community has diligently served the senior population in Austin to ensure that its residents live a long, healthy, and joyous life. Westminster has become the reliable institution that it is today due to its effort and acute attention to the care of its residents.

I want to recognize Westminster on their 55th anniversary and I commend them for the outstanding work they do for the retirement community in Austin.

TRIBUTE TO VOORHEES COLLEGE
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 125TH
ANNIVERSARY AND RENAMING

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2022

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a proud historically Black college, in South Carolina's 6th Congressional District, on the occasion on its 125th Founder's Day. Voorhees College has provided educational opportunities for young African Americans in South Carolina since 1897 and on April 7, 2022 will be renamed Voorhees University.

Voorhees is the first HBCU founded by an African-American woman, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, under the name Denmark Industrial School on April 14, 1897. When Ms. Wright founded the school, at the young age of 23, her vision was to provide a quality education to young men and women.

Ms. Wright's vision for the school grew, and in 1902, it became Voorhees Industrial School, after attracting the financial support of New Jersey philanthropist Ralph Voorhees. Mr. Voorhees and his wife donated money for the purchase of 280 acres of land in Denmark, South Carolina to expand the campus. More support came in 1924, when the school came under the auspices of the American Church Institutes for Negroes, which was part of the Episcopal Church.

In 1928, the name was changed to Voorhees Normal and Industrial School, reflecting its addition of a junior college. In 1946, the

junior college became the first Black college in South Carolina accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In December 1962, the institution became known as Voorhees College. The high school was closed, and, in 1967, Voorhees began granting 4-year degrees.

The students on Voorhees College's campus, like many other historically Black institutions, became engaged in the 1960's civil rights activities. In 1969, students occupied the Wilkinson Hall offices of the mostly white administration to protest their failure to hire additional Black faculty and provide more scholarships to low-income students from the Denmark community.

The difference between this and other college protests was that, having seen the shooting of student protestors on the nearby South Carolina State College campus the previous year, the students armed themselves. Their actions drew national media attention. After two days, the South Carolina National Guard forced the students to end their protest. Many were arrested and suspended. Some received jail sentences of 18 months to two years. All of them went on to complete their degrees.

Despite the tumultuous times, Voorhees College has always followed Elizabeth Evelyn Wright's vision for the school, "to try to help my fellow man to help themselves, and if a way was not open for them, I must open it myself." It was in that spirit in December 2021, that the Southern Association of College and School Commission on Colleges approved Voorhees Master's degree program, setting in motion today's historic renaming to Voorhees University.

Voorhees College, under the leadership of Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, the tenth President, continues to offer its students a quality, comprehensive, general education, coupled with professional education, in a value-centered liberal arts tradition. Its mission is, "to produce highly qualified graduates who coalesce intellect and faith in pursuit of life-long learning, healthy living, the betterment of society, and an abiding faith in God." This mission is deeply imbedded in the hearts and minds of faculty, staff and students allowing students to combine intellect and faith as they broaden their minds and prepare for their futures.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in celebrating the 125th anniversary of Voorhees College and its new status as Voorhees University. May it continue to build upon the vision of its founder and serve as an exemplary example of higher education.

AWNEE MONTANO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2022

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Awnee Montano for receiving the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award.

Awnee Montano is a 12th grader at Northglenn High School and received this award because their determination and hard work have allowed them to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Awnee Montano is exemplary of the type of achieve-

ment that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Awnee Montano for winning the Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award. I have no doubt they will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of their future accomplishments.

HONORING THE BIRTHDAY OF
MRS. IRENE BURRUS

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2022

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor Mrs. Irene Burrus on the joyous and momentous occasion of her 99th birthday on March 31, 2022.

Irene has been a supporter, trusted advisor and personal friend of mine since I was a mere kid. I thank God for her and her incredible love, passion, and sincere care for our community at large.

Mrs. Irene Burrus has been a tireless volunteer in the New Orleans community for more than 50 years. She is a leader and possesses the skills to involve her friends and neighbors in the causes and organizations she believes in. Her kindness and empathy for others makes her a respected member of her community and has inspired many to follow in her service to others.

Irene was married to the deceased John Burrus, who served our country and was awarded the Navy Cross by President Harry S. Truman. She became involved in many causes for our military and veterans throughout the State of Louisiana.

Irene worked at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center for over thirty years. She has shared an unwavering love and dedication for the city of New Orleans with everyone she encountered. In 2013, at the age of 89, she volunteered three days of her time to welcoming people from over the world to the activities surrounding Super Bowl XLVII. She is well-known to serve breakfast to law enforcement every Mardi Gras.

A stalwart figure in Louisiana's volunteer circles, Irene was awarded the Heroism of the Year award by the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations and was one of the first five inductees into the Algiers Wall of Fame for her community service to Algiers and New Orleans.

Irene's service to causes and organizations is unmatched. She is a member of the Algiers Police Advisory Group, the Welcome Neighbors Organization, the Morning Kiwanis Club, the Algiers Economic Development Foundation, the Tall Timbers Garden Club, the Algiers Development District, the Algiers Charter School Association for Fundraising, the Military Wives Organization, the Old Aurora Neighborhood Association, the Historic French Quarter Easter Parade, the Algiers Republican Women, the Louisiana Republican Women, and the Algiers Courthouse Board of Directors.

Throughout her life, Irene has been "Shero" to the countless families she has helped along