difficult day. It caused me to see the importance of those many souls on March 7, 1965 who took the heroic step to walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

It was heroic because they were marching into danger unforeseen. The simple request was to allow people to vote, to be able to capture the essence of the Constitution; and in the Declaration of Independence we all are created equal. We had the good fortune this weekend, as I have done for the past 3 years, to join John Lewis, one of those along with Hosea Williams and Bernard Lafayette and many, many others on that fateful day, March 7, 1965 to begin that walk of no return.

We commemorated it, by our walk, and we walked tall. We saw media, we had throngs, and we were not beaten. Those 36 years ago, however, those individuals who were brave enough to do it, were putting their life on the line. They were beaten, beaten to unconsciousness. They were bloodied, but they were unbowed.

After what we have gone through in this last election year, this past weekend was even more riveting and more emotional. It showed me even more the sacrifice made for those of us who now stand here today.

The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD) returned home after being educated at Morehouse and finishing his law degree to serve his community. I pay tribute to him because he lived that life and fought that fight. We must never forget March 7, 1965.

We must never forget that bloody Sunday, we must never forget the courage of those who came back, Dr. Martin Luther King came back on, I believe, March 21, and we should commit ourselves, Republicans and Democrats alike, never to allow the fundamental right to vote to be diminished. That is why I propose a national holiday for all Americans to vote in Presidential years and the Secure Democracy Act that will establish the kind of systems that will allow all Americans to vote.

I believe this is extremely important as we acknowledge as well this month the celebration of women in America's history. So many women who shared their life with the civil rights movement, so many women who are our first teachers, so many women who braved obstacles to be able to serve their country in the United States military. Yet we still have many miles to travel.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of those who wish to vote, on behalf of women, and as I close, on behalf of our children, for I join my previous colleague, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) to say how many more times will we apologize to the parents of dead children.

We must in fact take the bravery of men and women who went forward in the civil rights movement and women who paved the way for those of us who stand here to pass real gun safety legislation, to hold adults accountable, to find ways to heal the broken hearts of children who find no other way to exhibit their anger than to take a 22 rifle and shoot 30 rounds of ammunition out of the 40 that the child secured.

When is this Congress going to be brave enough, similar to those men and women who took those steps across the Edmund Pettus Bridge some 36 years ago, willing to offer their lives so that America might be free and have the right to vote. When will we stand as Republicans and Democrats on behalf of our children to stop the bloodletting of children going to school and killing children because we have a love affair with arms. We know we can certainly protect the second amendment and protect our children as well.

LOWERING THE ELIGIBILITY AGE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill that lowers the minimum age for individuals without children to be eligible for the earned income tax credit.

In 1975, the earned income tax credit was established to provide aid to working parents with low incomes. In 1994, the credit was extended to include low-income workers with no children.

This credit provides struggling workers age 25 or over a financial boost by reducing their tax liability or providing an actual cash benefit.

But the earned income tax credit discriminates against younger workers. It is inherently unfair to deprive some the benefits of the tax credit simply because he or she is under the age of 25.

Congress justified the age requirement to prevent students, who are supported by their parents, from becoming eligible for the credit. Yet in our inner cities and rural areas many young men and women cannot afford to go to college. Upon high school graduation, they are thrust into the workforce. But many of the jobs available to them do not pay a living wage.

My bill helps these individuals by lowering the minimum age requirement of the earned income tax credit to 21 years of age.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation.

36–YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH ACROSS EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, on the 36th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, I stand to say thanks to the Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, the Republicans and Democrats, who came this past weekend to Alabama to participate in the reenactment of the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

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Mr. Speaker, this journey was begun some 36 years ago. The journey for freedom and for the right to vote is still going on. It will not stop until every facet of our lives are free from prejudice and discrimination. But in order for that to take place, Mr. Speaker, each one of us must rededicate our lives to the proposition that all men are created equal and that they have certain inalienable rights.

Mr. Speaker, we as Members of Congress must make sure that we join the common man not only in rededicating himself to the principles of democracy, but we must make sure that our laws are in accordance with our democratic principles.

Mr. Speaker, the reenactment of the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge is not just a celebration but it is a cause celebre. It is a time to remember and to reflect upon those persons who 36 years ago put their lives at the mercy of others who were opposed to them taking such action for the principle that everyone in our country should have the right to vote. It was an honor to participate in that reenactment with such greats as the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and Bernard Lafayette, and others who participated at that time.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have our Edmund Pettus bridges to cross. We still discriminate in this country against the disabled, against gays, against people who may not speak in our native tongue. We still have a long way to go in our society to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to vote and to make sure that every vote is counted.

So it is not just remembering what took place; but, Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about the inequities that still exist in our society. The reenactment keeps the public aware of the past atrocities in our history. It keeps them reflecting on the fact that we still must fight for those things that are dear to our democracy. We hope that the reenactment will cause all of us to learn from the past but also to cause us to be able to profit from the mistakes of the past, to correct those problems of the past, to correct the problems of the present so that the future will be safe and secure for all to enjoy.

REMEMBERING THE 1965 MARCH ACROSS THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I rise today to pay tribute to the brave and courageous men and women and a few young children that attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery 36 years ago today, March 7, 1965.

Just think, Mr. Speaker, 36 years ago, in many parts of the American South, 11 States of the Old Confederacy, from Virginia to Texas it was almost impossible for people of color to