

school without fear of being gunned down in their classrooms. We've seen this kind of violence on a college campus in Blacksburg, at a high school in Columbine, and now at an elementary school in Newtown.

Since 1982 there have been more than 60 mass murders carried out with firearms across this country. In the last 5 years alone we have had 19 mass shootings. That's a rate of more than one every 4 months. These are alarming numbers, and we as a Nation must be willing to do something about it.

There have been calls by some for meaningful action, but I implore my colleagues that what we really need is immediate action. The issue of eradicating gun violence is ripe, and we must act now.

The first thing we must do is ban assault weapons of all types. Their only purpose is to kill the largest amount of people in the shortest amount of time. Tragically, the Newtown shooter used a military-style weapon to perform his evil deeds.

□ 1040

Weapons with the ability to carry out such deadly force do not belong on our streets. I challenge anyone to justify the use of these weapons anywhere but on the battlefield for which they were designed.

Proponents of gun rights say that there is an absolute right to bear arms. I disagree. All rights are subject to reasonable restrictions. But what is absolute is that I have a right to leave my home without being shot. People have the right to worship their God without being massacred. The children of Sandy Hook Elementary had an absolute right to go to school without being gunned down. No one sends their child to school expecting that they won't come home.

I understand there are many factors that contribute to these unforgivable acts of violence, but we must start somewhere. It is time for us to have a serious and deliberate conversation about a comprehensive national gun policy that eliminates loopholes in the laws and requires uniform background checks. Enforcing current laws is not getting the job done. We must do more to ensure that our citizens feel safe and secure in their homes, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and neighborhoods. We cannot wait for another Tucson, Aurora, Oak Creek, or Newtown massacre. We must take action now.

I ask my colleagues, where do you stand? Whose side are you on? I'm on the side of every man, woman, and child killed in senseless violence. Who in this House can be against common-sense gun safety regulations? Anyone who is is on the wrong side.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. INOUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HIRONO. I stand here today to give tribute to my friend, Hawaii's senior Senator—our country's senior Senator—DANIEL K. INOUE. With your passing, my friend, I want to tell you that no one can fill your shoes.

In Hawaii, we jokingly say that there are three economic drivers in our State: tourism, defense, and Senator INOUE. And it's true. His work and his unselfishness in serving his State and country are unparalleled.

He served our country during war at a time when people who looked like him were not considered American citizens. He did it and served our country honorably and with respect and with incredible strength and character. He did it because he believed in what our country should and could be. Our country—great; our country—about service; our country—about our children and our future; our country—honorable. His personal legacy in my home State of Hawaii could and will never be matched. Never.

Hawaii, we will never be able to thank Senator INOUE for his service and what he has done for us. It is too great to put into words, and it cannot be done in a 5-minute tribute.

But what I want to give my aloha and thanks to Senator INOUE for, is bigger than all of us: for his commitment to serve and protect our brave men and women who fight for our country, for his dedication and willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion, for standing up for the ideals of freedom and justice that our country is founded upon, for always standing up for our proud heritage in Hawaii.

Senator INOUE was, as so many have recognized, a genuine patriot, a uniquely proud American, and a man and a leader always true to his word. But Senator INOUE was also an architect and a builder. Half a century ago, he had an architect's vision of the Hawaii we inherit from him today. Over his many decades of service, he displayed a builder's skill—pouring the foundation of the modern and vibrant Hawaii that we inherit from him today. That is his legacy.

So the greatest tribute we can pay Senator INOUE is to acquire his vision, to apply his skills and build on the remarkable foundation he laid for us.

I know this is the tribute that I will pay to my friend. I know this is the tribute that the people of Hawaii will pay to Senator INOUE. Hawaii drew incredible strength from the life and service of DAN INOUE, and it is that very strength—strength of purpose and strength of character—that will keep Hawaii and our country strong for years to come.

The Senator INOUE I knew and loved, and that we all loved and respected, would expect this of Hawaii and us, and we will not let him down.

THE SHOOTING TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Now it's Newtown, 20 innocents and their six teachers. More tears, more burials, but will we heed its meaning? Will we break the gun lobby spell that has held us in thrall to a psychosis that has left us numb and paralyzed with each passing tragedy? I think so.

First step in any recovery program: admit the problem. We have too many weapons with too much ammunition that is unregulated, unchecked, and unjustified. We need to restore rigorous background checks to keep dangerous weapons away from criminals and the mentally ill. We need to close the gun show loophole. We need to facilitate database sharing among law enforcement agencies—Federal, State, and local.

Next step: limit access to weapons of mass killing. No hunter needs an Uzi; no citizen needs an assault-style weapon for self-defense. No other civilized society has allowed the argument that any restriction of any kind is a direct assault on our personal liberty, except us.

Next: require registration and stiff penalties for failure to secure dangerous weapons in the home or workplace while banning their presence in a select number of public places such as churches, police stations, mental health facilities, recreation and youth centers, government buildings, and—oh, yes—schools.

The gun lobby has bullied and intimidated us for too long. Reasonable gun control measures like those just listed provide for public safety; they don't threaten it. The lobby loves to fall back on trite mantras that unfortunately have proved all too effective in silencing any meaningful public debate heretofore: "Guns don't kill; people do." "Any restriction real or imagined contravenes my Second Amendment rights to bear arms."

Oh, really?

Even Justice Scalia, in writing his unprecedented and deeply flawed Heller opinion, acknowledged that it did not preclude reasonable gun control measures. Even Scalia has had to admit in his originalist interpretation of the Second Amendment he cannot answer whether the Constitution envisioned a universal right to possess rocket launchers, RPGs, stinger missiles, or military assault weapons in our homes. That is the logical fallacy and folly of the argument of unrestricted rights to bear arms without limit. Its proponents allow for no check on this right in the Constitution. Even the First Amendment has limitations. So does this one.

We've been lulled into a passivity and fatalism with the logical fallacies and sometimes thuggish tactics of the gun lobby and its extreme right-wing allies at a terrible cost. Each year, guns kill

almost 10 times the number of Americans lost on that tragic day in 9/11; and each year, we face another massacre: Aurora, Tucson, Virginia Tech, and now Newtown.

Time for our outrage to return us to action and reshape this gun culture. It is in our hands.

SIMPLE RESPECT FOR OUR VETERANS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE U.S. TERRITORIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, as we end the 112th Congress, we are faced with two crises: the fiscal cliff crisis; and now a gun crisis and a mental health crisis, that comes to us from Newtown, Connecticut. When you consider that this is a Congress which has not been able to handle even minor issues, much less crises, one begins to wonder whether we will live up to what is required of any person who is a Member of the United States Congress.

□ 1050

This morning, I come for something less than a crisis for the country, something far easier to solve. I am calling on the Defense Authorization Conference Committee to solve a simple noncrisis problem, a problem, though, that casts shame on our treatment of our active-duty military, our veterans, and their families.

Thanks to Chairman BUCK McKEON and Ranking Member ADAM SMITH, the House passed Defense Authorization bill contains a simple provision. That provision says that when you raise the flags of the 50 States at military ceremonies, if you're raising or displaying the flags of the 50 States, you must also display the flags of the District of Columbia and the five territories.

The territories and the District have always served disproportionately in war, but what we are asking for today and what the House bill provides is the simple respect that anyone who wears the uniform and any family member of that active military person or veteran is entitled to.

I thank the House for recognizing that in some matters all of us are certainly equal. We are all equal in according respect for members of our military. I've spoken with Senator LEVIN, the chair of the Defense Authorization Committee, and am convinced that he is for this provision. I have spoken to the White House at the highest levels, and I have asked all concerned to simply recede to the House provision.

For reasons that escape us all, the Senate removed this provision when the House, last year, put it in the Defense Authorization bill. It would be impossible to remove this provision if the Members of the Senate, who are responsible for doing so, could have heard

from our veterans who went to speak to the staff of Senator McCain and Senator LEVIN and told of their own experience. There was the colonel who said that when he was welcomed home from the Gulf War, the flag of every State was raised, but not the flag of the District of Columbia. There was the mother who wrote me, Tomi Rucker, to say that she and the father went to the graduation of her son from Navy boot camp Great Lakes Naval Station full of pride, and as each graduate's name was called, the home state flag was raised, but no flag for Jonathan Rucker of the District of Columbia when his name was called. The colonel's son, who came back three times from war, a combat veteran in Iraq, and each and every time the flag of the District of Columbia was not raised as the flags of others were.

And my colleagues from the territories have come forward with equally heartbreaking stories. This, my colleagues of the House of Representatives, you can solve, you can solve this very day, and my colleagues in the other body need only follow your lead.

The Defense Department some months ago issued a memorandum that said that raising the flags should be done at the discretion of the commander. Well, it wasn't at the commander's discretion that our young men and women volunteered to risk their lives for their country. And would such a memorandum have been put forward to say that the commander could decide whether to honor the flag of Virginia or Maryland, to take my closest neighbors, when their veterans came home? What is the difference between their veterans who have gone to war and the veterans of the District of Columbia?

There are very few ways to honor our veterans. We honor foreign dignitaries by raising their flag. The least we can do is to honor our own military, our veterans and their families, by raising the flags of their home district or territory.

IN RECOGNITION OF MS. CAROLYN COLEMAN'S 45 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WORKING FAMILIES AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CURSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURSON of Michigan. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Ms. Carolyn Coleman, executive secretary to the secretary treasurer of the International Union, UAW, on her retirement.

As a Member of Congress, it is both my privilege and honor to recognize Ms. Coleman for her many years of service and her contributions which have enriched and strengthened our communities. Ms. Coleman brings a lifetime of experience to her current position with the United Auto Workers, a career which began in July of

1967 in the UAW's women's department. Carolyn's skill and knowledge led her to be selected to premiere assignments. She directly assisted many great union leaders in their important work, including UAW Vice Presidents Dick Shoemaker and Cal Rapson, as well as UAW President Owen Bieber, and UAW Secretary Treasurer Dennis Williams, her current supervisor.

Her work is impeccable, her advice valued, and her friendship treasured. Carolyn is one of the many unsung heroes of the labor movement. She was never the one who gained headlines for making fiery speeches that inspired the masses or received credit for labor agreements that have lifted so many working families into the prosperous middle class. But behind the scenes, she contributed to both. For 45 years, Carolyn Coleman reported to work for the United Auto Workers with one simple goal in mind: to do her very best work so that working people will have a better life.

Ms. Coleman believes in her community and has shown a commitment which has exceeded the years of her tenure with the UAW. A longtime member of Hartford Memorial, she has long been actively volunteering in numerous ministries of her church. As well as being a member of the Red Hat Club, she has volunteered her time in a broad array of capacities and community activities.

In addition to her service to the community, Ms. Coleman is the proud mother of two daughters and a son: Lisa, Tonya, and Jimmie. She is also a proud grandmother to six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

I ask that my colleagues join me today to honor Ms. Carolyn Coleman for her dedicated service to working men and women. I join with many others who have been blessed to have worked beside her and have benefited from her labors to wish her many more years of health, happiness, and productive service to our community.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Lord of the ages, ever faithful to Your promises, be with Your people now and forever.