

After months of paperwork, background checks and interviews, this family's dreams are now crushed, and there are dozens of cases out there just like the Pongitorys.'

It is truly disturbing that the Russian Government would punish parentless children in retaliation for an entirely unrelated American law. We all know that the wellbeing of children should not be used as a bargaining chip for diplomatic means. This week, I will be introducing a House resolution to right this wrong. Please join me in sending a clear message to the Russian Government.

H.R. 61: HOLDING BIG ABORTION BUSINESSES ACCOUNTABLE

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Big abortion businesses are getting rich, and they don't deserve or need our Federal tax dollars. That's why, on this first day of Congress, I introduced the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act. It's H.R. 61.

Planned Parenthood's 2011–2012 annual report showed they received a record \$542 million in taxpayer funding while simultaneously performing a record number of abortions—actually, one every 94 seconds. So, in 94 seconds, they perform that abortion, and they take in over \$1,600 in Federal taxpayer money. Their funding has increased by 11 percent in the last 2 years even though former employees of Planned Parenthood say the organization promotes sex-selection abortions, facilitates human trafficking, engages in coercive behavior, and fails to maintain financial records in accordance with the law.

I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 61 so we can get ahold of these big abortion businesses, hold them accountable, clean up the title X grant program and end taxpayer funding of abortion.

□ 1930

RIGHT OF GUN OWNERSHIP

(Mr. COLLINS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my grave concern over recent media reports that the administration is considering issuing executive orders to further their radical anti-gun control legislation.

The battle to protect the Second Amendment rights of all citizens rages on in Congress, and this is the appropriate place for such debate—not in the dark of night through executive orders as the Obama administration has become so fond of doing.

Gun control advocates prey on the fears of Americans, claiming that stricter gun laws will result in reduced

gun violence. That theory is false and is dangerous to the sanctity of the United States Constitution. Security can only come through the preservation of individual liberties such as the right to defend one's home and one's family. We should protect the right to keep and bear arms as fiercely as we seek to protect the rights of free speech, the freedom of religion, and of due process.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any efforts by the administration to restrict the rights of gun ownership through executive orders and commit to the American people to tirelessly defend all of their constitutional rights on the floor of this House, including the right of gun ownership.

CONGRATULATING NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY ON FCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

(Mr. CRAMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the North Dakota State University Bison and head coach Craig Bohl on winning another FCS national championship on January 5 this year in Frisco, Texas.

NDSU is well known as a student-focused, land grant research university with more than 14,000 students, offering over 100 majors, covering everything from architecture, pharmacy, food science and engineering, to business, biotechnology, music and interior design.

The victory over Sam Houston State was the Bison's second consecutive national championship, an accomplishment even more impressive when considering the Thundering Herd became a Division I program only 8 short years ago. I look forward to following the Bison on many more championship runs and am pleased that Coach Bohl has agreed to a multi-year contract extension rather than pursuing a career in politics.

CBC HOUR: A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. The Congressional Black Caucus, better known as the CBC, is proud to anchor this hour. My name is MARCIA FUDGE, and I represent

the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, and I'm currently the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. CBC Members stand firm as the voice of the people and as the conscience of the Congress. We are dedicated to providing focused services to the citizens who elected us to these offices.

Tonight, the CBC will focus its attention on the culture of violence. With no end in sight, the culture of violence continues to permeate and define our society, Mr. Speaker. We cannot hide from it. It is everywhere we go.

Merriam-Webster defines an epidemic as "something affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time." It is clear the culture of violence is an American epidemic. It is time for us to face the music.

We are complicit in the violence that takes place in our Nation if we fail to strengthen our gun laws, if we fail to invest more resources into our mental health services, and address the issue of bullying. We must take meaningful and immediate action to eradicate the culture of violence in our country.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I am joined by a number of members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I now yield to the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. DANNY DAVIS.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for not only anchoring this hour, but also providing an opportunity for the rest of us.

I had decided to develop a statement, but then I had 16 young students visit me this afternoon from Oak Park, Illinois, and they presented to me their statement. Their statement was so similar to my statement that I told them that their statement was better than mine and I would use it. So I'm going to read it as they presented it to me. They said:

Hello, my name is Joey Cofsky, and my name is Sebastian Torero, and we are here on behalf of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism to talk about gun violence prevention. We hope that you will offer support for the Fix Gun Checks Act when it is introduced.

Unfortunately, it took an inconceivable amount of gun-related tragedies, and a recent catastrophic elementary school massacre, to once again raise awareness of the need for stricter gun laws. Nearly every day, I hear on the news that a common child has been shot to death in my very own city. Statistics furthermore illuminate this occurrence as eight young Americans die each day under the age of 19 from gun violence. By June of 2012, 228 people were killed in the city of Chicago. In that same period of time, 144 United States soldiers had been killed in Afghanistan. Instead of continuously cringing at these statistics in disbelief every time we read them, it is time to curb the pattern of violence that has made the inner-city streets more violent than our very own battlefields.

Today marks the month anniversary of one of the most horrific mass shootings in our Nation's history. On this day, I personally think about the innocent 20 children whose

lives were prematurely taken at a peaceful elementary school. I wonder about the difference in the world those 20 children could have made. That day, we all seemed to realize we had seen this too many times before. Mass shootings grab our Nation by surprise, and after every one, we feel a sense of *deja vu*. At first, people's passion for change is re-ignited, and the driving force of action is full throttle; but as the weeks go by, the clamor dies down. The memory of the victims fades from our consciousness, that is, until another shooting occurs. I, and the people of this country, have grieved over too many caskets. It is time to match our words with actions.

In the Talmud, a collection of Jewish laws and lessons, we are taught that he who takes one life, it is as though he has destroyed a universe. And he who saves a life, it is as though he has saved a universe. As a Jew, and as a person, this quotation resonates strongly with me. It tells me that it is not only important to save lives in immediate danger, but to prevent the loss of life in general. It has become clear to many of us, and for some it has been clear for quite some time, that an effective way to prevent death in our country and in essence save a universe is to enact a policy that would stem the flow of gun violence. Gun violence in our country takes 12 times the amount of lives that it does in the other 25 wealthiest nations combined. It is clear that in our Nation, guns are a major problem.

We are told to save lives, and we can do that. So I would urge every American to know that lives saved is like saving a universe.

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In America, an average of 30,000 lives are lost to gun violence each year. This, and all we have said before it, explicitly demonstrates how dangerous guns can be, yet it can be easier to obtain a gun than it is to vote. 4 out of 10 guns are sold by unlicensed sellers with no background check conducted. Because of the Gun Show Loophole, anyone can walk up to a private set at a gun show, purchase a gun, and carry it out of the event. Domestic violence abusers, convicted felons, people with mental illnesses, and terrorists can purchase guns because of this loophole. 30% of illegally trafficked guns are connected to gun shows. Actions must be taken to prevent guns from falling into the hands of people who would not pass a background check, but can obtain a firearm because of this loophole. The Fix Gun Checks Act (H.R. 137) would eliminate this loophole by requiring background checks for any gun sales event that provides a venue for the sale or transaction of firearms. We thank you for cosponsoring this bill, and hope you will continue to support it in the future.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank my friend from Illinois for those words and for bringing us the words of young people who are affected by this violence every day.

Mr. Speaker, we are joined by the former chair of the CBC, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. First, let me thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, our new chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, for bringing us here together tonight to discuss this important issue. Also, I wanted to say that Congresswoman FUDGE is such a tremendous leader and now, as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, has really chartered a very powerful course for equity, justice, and for nonviolence. So thank you very much for your leadership.

I can think of no more important subject than the culture of violence which Congresswoman FUDGE has brought us here together to discuss tonight, and specifically gun violence that has been destroying communities, taking lives, and injuring too many people for much too long across America.

□ 1940

As President Obama so eloquently said the Sunday after the tragedy in Newtown which shook the conscience of this country, and which we all still continue to mourn and offer our condolences to the families and friends and the entire community, We cannot accept this violence, the President said. This is visited on children year after

year, and somehow is the price of freedom.

We cannot accept this. We cannot accept one more innocent life being lost to violence, not one in Newtown, not one in Chicago or Cleveland, not one in Oakland, California, not one in any town, in any city, in any school, in any theater or in any place of worship, in any mall, or in any of our neighborhoods.

We have an obligation to our children to ensure that Newtown marks a turning point that made us finally say enough is enough. We must come together to build an America where our children do not have to live in fear and where they do have a future.

Last week I was at an event in my district in west Oakland. It was the unveiling of a mural painted by several talented young artists. This Tree of Life mural depicted the hope and the faith that my young people have for a future without violence. Yet they've seen and experienced so much gun violence in their communities throughout their young lives.

Just over the weekend, 11 people were tragically shot in my congressional district. Too many of my constituents have been affected by gun violence, have pleaded for help in protecting their children from the horrors of gun violence, only to see the status quo continue at the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take some serious action that includes common-sense measures such as Federal gun buyback programs, banning high-capacity magazines, expanding the 24-hour gun background check, closing the gun show loophole, and re-instituting the assault weapon ban. We need to do this immediately.

But we also need to work to end domestic violence in our homes and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. For whatever reason, unfortunately, it got stuck last Congress. We need to do this right away.

We also must seek input from our young people, community stakeholders, faith communities and others. We can work together to identify the root causes of this Nation's more than 16,000 homicides a year.

Let me call to your attention the work of a magnificent community-based organization in my district that I actually am very proud of that I helped found in the early nineties called the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center. These young people continue to work on conflict resolution and violence prevention efforts day and night, but they constantly tell us that their work is thwarted due to too many guns in the streets.

Finally, we must recognize gun violence as a critical public health crisis and continue to support comprehensive violence prevention plans.

This week, Congresswoman DELAURO and myself, we're offering an amendment that would end a prohibition, mind you—and Congresswoman FUDGE, this is mind-boggling when you see

that we have a prohibition at the Department of Health and Human Services that would not allow us to analyze gun violence in terms of public health. We have a prohibition against that. So we're trying to offer an amendment that would take away this prohibition.

As a psychiatric social worker by profession and someone who founded a community mental health center when the psychiatric facilities began to shut down in California, I understand firsthand why we need to help people struggling with mental illness, give them the treatment they need, and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.

So I'm going to introduce, once again, my bill to add mental health counselors to our schools, which will help children and families struggling with emotional issues who could actually be on the brink; but if we had mental health counselors there, they could really help steer them away from whatever tragedy that could occur.

So we can't allow the status quo to continue, to allow our children and grandchildren to grow up in this culture of violence, in a world where violence threatens our schools, our homes, and our communities.

Let me thank again Congresswoman FUDGE for gathering us here tonight to discuss this very important issue. I just want to remind us that next Monday we will once again celebrate the birthday of our great drum major for justice, the prince of peace, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We must rededicate our lives and our work to the principles of nonviolence, which are more important now more than ever. Dr. King reminded us that violence should never be an option if we really want a world worthy of our children and grandchildren.

Yes, as a major part of this, it does mean getting guns off the streets and working for a culture of peace and security.

Thank you again.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from California because, as she was the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, it was she who gave me the opportunity to anchor this hour for my first 2 years as a freshman in this caucus, so I thank you.

My friend from Texas, Congressman AL GREEN, it is a pleasure to have you with us this evening.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank the Speaker for the time.

I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on being the newly elected chairperson of the CBC, and I pledge to work with you to do all that I can to assist you, not only with the many programs that we have, but also with ending this culture of violence.

Madam Chair, on this, the eve of the birthday of Dr. King, it is appropriate to quote him. He reminded us that the truest measure of the person is not where you stand in times of comfort

and convenience, when all is right with the world, your health is good, your bills are paid, friends are all around. The truest measure of the person is where do you stand in times of challenge and controversy.

Challenge and controversy, when young people are dying in the street, when domestic violence is claiming the lives of spouses and paramours and lovers and friends, when churches are being shot up, where do you stand?

Let's talk for just a moment about some of these circumstances. I attended a funeral just recently. It was the funeral of Ms. Latasha Jones. Ms. Jones was killed on Christmas Eve, December 2012. She lost her life in the presence of her son. Her daughter lost her life as well, victim of domestic violence.

It's one thing to know and use the term "victim," another thing to attend the funeral of a victim. It was a sad occasion. Mother and daughter, son there to only suffer heartache knowing that he will never see his mother or his sister again.

I have the program from that funeral, and I have the obituary. I shall place this in the RECORD.

LATASHA R. JONES

October 14, 1977–December 24, 2012

On October 14, 1977 in Houston, Texas, a baby girl was born to Clarence M. Jones and Patricia Jones. They named her Latasha Rochelle Jones. Latasha confessed to Christ at an early age at South Park Baptist Church, in Houston, Texas. She attended Houston area public schools and graduated from North Shore High School in 1997, in Houston, Texas.

On September 27, 1994, she had her first daughter: Chamarea' Schane' Hoskin. On February 8, 1999, she gave birth to her second daughter: JaKaela Neshae Newhouse. On May 24, 2005, she gave birth to her first son: Chance Javion-Lee Adams. Latasha was a kind-hearted, loving caregiver. She pursued her dream of caring for children while she was employed with many different daycare facilities. While employed at KinderCare, she was a Senior Quest Teacher. She truly had a passion for educating and nurturing children. Latasha also traveled down other avenues of care-giving by completing her education and dream of becoming a Certified Medical Assistant at PCI (Professional Careers Institute). Latasha completed the course and graduated on June 20, 2012. While attending PCI. Latasha was employed with Home Depot, where she worked very hard to provide for her family.

Latasha was preceded in death by her father, Clarence M. Jones, her grandmother Shirley McDonald, three cousins: Cheryl L. McDonald, Jermaine McDonald and Byron J. Scranton, her step-brother: Clarence Owens.

Her loving memory will linger on in the hearts of her Mother and Pow-Pow: Patricia A. Wilson and Earnest "Lee" Wilson, Sr.; her daughter: Chamarea' Hoskin, her son: Chance J.L. Adams; her sisters: Candi Jones, Alicia Jarmon (Jai Francis, Sr.), Rashaunda Jarmon; step-sister: Wendy W. Thomas (Randy) and Desiree Jarmon; step-brothers: Ernest L. Wilson, Jr. and Marcus Vivian; her nieces: Jaiicia Martinez (Robert M.), Morgan Francis, Jordyn Lassaint, Avry Francis and Zoey Sarumi; her nephews: Jai Francis, Jr., Tristen Francis, Randall Thomas, Caden Francis, Seven Francis, Shia Francis and Tru Irven, a host of loving Aunts, Uncles,

cousins her God-Mother Emori Davis, and a host of other loving relatives and friends.

May Latasha R.I.P. with her daughter, JaKaela.

JAKAELA N. NEWHOUSE

February 8, 1977–December 24, 2012

On February 8, 1999 in Houston, Texas, a baby girl was born to Herman Newhouse, Jr. and Latasha Jones. They named her JaKaela Neshae Newhouse. She attended Houston area public schools and was currently an 8th grade student at Killough Middle School, in Houston, Texas. She has two older sisters: Janesha McCartaney, who was born on July 19, 1991 and Chamarea' Schane' Hoskin, who was born on September 27, 1994. She became the proud big-sister to her younger brothers, Zaquarius Newhouse, who was born on December 12, 2003 and Chance Javion-Lee Adams, who was born on May 24, 2005.

JaKaela was a loving, curious and happy teenager. She was a very "studious student" who took pride in her schoolwork. Her favorite pastime was to Sci-Fi books. She loved her family and her best friend Shakira Romero.

JaKaela was preceded in death by her father Herman Newhouse, Jr., her grandfather Clarence M. Jones, her great-grandmother Shirley McDonald, three great-cousins: Cheryl L. McDonald, Jermaine McDonald and Byron J. Scranton, her uncle: Clarence Owens. Her loving memory will linger on in the hearts of her Grandmother and Pow-Pow: Patricia A. and Earnest "Lee" Wilson, Sr. and her paternal grandparents Herman and Norma Newhouse; her Step-Mother, Vondalin Johnson; her sisters: Janesha McCartaney and Chamarea' Hoskin, her Step-Sister, Quawntina Johnson; her brothers: Zaquarius Newhouse and Chance J.L. Adams; her Step-brother, Quiwnton Johnson; her aunts: Candi Jones, LaTricia Newhouse, Alicia Jarmon (Jai Francis, Sr.), Rashaunda Jarmon, Wendy W. Thomas (Randy) and Desiree Jarmon; her uncle: Ernest L. Wilson, Jr. and Marcus Vivian; her cousins: Jaiicia Martinez (Robert M.), Morgan Francis, Jordyn Lassaint, Avry Francis, Zoey Sarumi, Jai Francis, Jr., Tristen Francis, Randall Thomas, Caden Francis, Seven Francis, Shia Francis and Tru Irven, a host of loving Great-Aunts, Great-Uncles, and a host of other loving relatives and friends.

May JaKaela R.I.P. in the arms of her mother, Latasha.

Gang violence. In my district, Robert Baptiste was a victim of gang violence, and on August 2012, at his funeral, there was a shootout at the church.

Where do you stand when you have gang violence and domestic violence?

Joshua Woods, 22 years of age, went out to buy a new pair of sneakers, December 2012. On the way home, accosted, lost his life, shot—died over sneakers.

I had the opportunity to speak to his mother just recently. It was a heart-breaking conversation for a mother to explain how her son worked hard, and this was something that he had worked hard for. He was a good kid. His mother loved him.

When the natural order of things is circumvented, it's very difficult to reconcile.

And then I would call to your attention Ryan Spikes, killed in a drive-by shooting at a spring break party. Indiscriminate violence.

Where do we stand is the question that Dr. King would put to us.

□ 1950

But he would also remind us that we must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish together as fools. And the notion of a gun for a gun is not the solution. We've tried eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. That only leaves us blind and toothless. Guns will lead to shoot-outs.

This is not the solution. We must do more, not only to rid society of these weapons of war, but also to help our children learn that they can live together as brothers and sisters. There is but one race, and that's the human race. We were all created by God to live in harmony, and we must teach our children that they should respect each other and live together with each other.

This is not an easy task. There will be no silver bullet, there will be no easy solution, but we have to do all that we can. When you can't do enough, you have a duty to do all that you can.

I pledge to do all that I can to work with you, Madam Chair, to make sure that we end domestic violence, gang violence, indiscriminate violence, and that we don't resort to a gun for a gun, which is a nouveau version of an eye for an eye.

I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank my friend. Thank you so very much.

I now yield to the vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and my good friend from New York, Representative YVETTE CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlelady from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), for summoning us to be a part of this Special Order this evening. It is quite timely as we mark the 1-month anniversary of the slaughter of the innocents in Newtown, Connecticut, as we all reflect on the many challenges that we face within our own neighborhoods, our own communities, of longstanding reckless gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, just last week a 90-year-old woman by the name of Gloria Johnson, 90 years old, was shot twice as she walked to the laundromat in East New York, Brooklyn. She lived 90 years to be gunned down in Brooklyn, New York.

Two weeks ago, AK-47 shells were found in Queens, New York, at the scene of the murder of a 17-year-old child—AK-47. You find those types of shells in Iraq, in Afghanistan, not in Queens, New York. But there's a new reality that we are all facing, and that is assault weapons in an urban environment.

And this summer a young 13-year-old boy named Ronald Wallace III was shot in the back by a barrage of gunfire in the streets of Brownsville, Brooklyn, within my own district.

Although New York City has some of the strictest gun laws in the Nation, senseless crimes like these occur all too frequently in my district and

across New York City and in other urban communities across the United States.

In 2012, the New York City Police Department reported 226 incidents of handgun violence in Brooklyn, New York, alone.

Illegal gun trafficking and gaping holes in Federal background check requirements are to blame for many of these incidents. Eighty-five percent of the guns used in crimes in New York City are first purchased in States like Virginia and Georgia that do not extend the background check to purchase limitation requirements for private sellers.

Mr. Speaker, I stand with my fellow lawmakers in Congress, with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and with Governor Cuomo, in demanding Federal legislation that specifically addresses illegal trafficking of guns across State lines and the requirement of background checks in all gun purchase transactions.

To truly put an end to the random gun violence that plagues New York City and other urban areas, however, we must also address other policy areas that have profound effects on the level of gun violence that we see.

Yes, I agree that mental health and mental illness are important factors that have to be explored and addressed when trying to mitigate against gun violence; however, there's some additional factors that contribute to what has become tantamount to a public health crisis. One such factor is poor educational outcomes.

According to the American Economic Review, a 1-year increase in the average years of education completed reduces violent crime by nearly 30 percent. In fact, between 2000 and 2005, New York State increased its higher education expenditures by roughly 40 percent. During the same period, the State violent crime rate decreased by roughly 20 percent. These statistics are an indication that there is a direct correlation between investment in education and the reduction of violent crime, specifically gun crime.

It is my hope that any legislative measure brought to the floor for consideration also takes into account true and real investment in the inadequate or ineffectual educational systems across this Nation. By bolstering our educational institutions, we help set our children on a path to success instead of one that leads to violent crime, death, and incarceration.

Gun violence is not an inevitable part of life, yet it continues to plague our communities. We are not helpless in this endeavor. We owe it to our constituents, to our Nation, and to future generations to act with urgency and conviction to put an end to the senseless pattern of gun violence, not only in suburban America, but in every community across this Nation, urban America as well.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I look forward to working with you in what-

ever capacity necessary to save another family from the hurt, the harm, and the trauma of the senseless acts of violence that take place in our communities across this Nation due to illegal handguns and gun trafficking.

With that, Madam Chair, I thank you for yielding.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentlelady from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that the gentlelady from New York has been a strong and steady voice in our caucus, and I so much appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to my colleague from Ohio, who I'm so pleased has joined this House, the Honorable JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to take my first opportunity to address my colleagues from the House floor, to participate in a discussion on an issue that I find very troubling, at a crisis point for our Nation.

But first let me thank our chairwoman, MARCIA FUDGE, for her outstanding leadership and for organizing the Special Order hour to address the issue of the senseless violence facing our Nation.

Our country, more than ever, is facing a culture of violence. Unfortunately, we are now living in a society where mass killings have gone from being an extremely rare occurrence to a common occurrence.

According to Harvard Health Policy Review, each year approximately 30,000 people in the United States die as a result of gunfire, and about 80,000 people are wounded. We are faced with living in a culture where, now, more than 6.6 million violent crimes—murder, rape, assault, and robbery—are committed each year.

□ 2000

We are living in a culture of violence where our children see 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence in media and in their communities at a very early age. Colleagues, these statistics are too many, and it is time for action now. This problem must be fixed. We must remember, when we talk about rights, children have a right to be safe.

So I applaud President Obama and Vice President BIDEN for proactively taking the necessary steps to address this critical issue. It's going to take all of us united, regardless of party affiliation or our differing views on constitutional rights, to stem this tide of violence.

More importantly, we must take a hard look at funding for mental health services and other services; we must look at synching technology to ensure proper and tighter access to firearms; we must place adequate controls on ammunition.

Bottom line: We must protect our schools, our communities. Children and families must be safe.

I respectfully ask my colleagues to make this issue of violence a priority

and to support our Nation's leadership as they work through resolving this challenge, which should not be difficult if we compromise and keep focusing on saving lives.

Madam Chair, I pledge to support you and to support all my other colleagues with the Congressional Black Caucus to make a difficult task safe and to protect the lives of our children and families from gunfire and a culture of violence.

I thank you for my time.

Ms. FUDGE. I so much thank the gentlelady from Ohio for participating. We certainly know how difficult this is going to be as we move forward, but I am pleased. Thank you very much.

I now yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, who has joined our caucus and we are so pleased to have him, the Honorable Representative DONALD PAYNE, Jr.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me first begin by thanking my good friend and colleague, my chairwoman, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE from the State of Ohio, for anchoring this evening's Special Order on the culture of violence.

Coming together to address gun violence and bullying in America is long overdue. There must be something extraordinary done to truly curb these atrocities from occurring in our communities. Too many innocent men, women, and children have died because of the ease of access to illegal firearms. Fifteen of the 25 worst mass shootings in our history have occurred in America in the last 50 years.

Harvard Injury Control Research Center studies indicate that in homes, cities, States, and regions in the U.S. where there are guns, both men and women are at a higher risk for homicide, particularly from firearms. These statistics are tragic. We must do something, and we must do something now.

On the issue of bullying, bullying is also a major concern in our Nation. Who will be able to tell what will become of the next generation if statistics continue to rise with each national report on bullying? I'm very sensitive to this issue because I have three young children at home, and I perish the thought that they would be subjected to such actions.

We are losing our next generation of poets, musicians, doctors, lawyers, scientists, and athletes to senseless gun violence and aggressive bullying. One out of every four teenagers is bullied and, furthermore, deterred from their academic potential. 282,000 students are physically bullied in secondary schools each month. One out of 10 children drop out of school because of bullying.

We must take measures to protect our Nation's future generations. From the mass murder at the movie theater in Colorado, to Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, to the schoolyard killings at Mount Vernon Elementary School in Newark, New Jersey—four youngsters with their whole futures ahead of them were vio-

lently murdered by a gang behind a school—I have seen what damage guns can do in the wrong hands. Let us be steadfast in making sure that events like these never happen again.

Gun violence and bullying in America are not just problems, they are national health issues.

What are the solutions? Well, Federal action is yielding some progress. The Brady law of 1994 has blocked the sale of firearms to over 1.6 million felons, fugitives, and other individuals. Still, more is needed. Proactive approaches include renewing the assault weapons ban, closing the gun show loophole, mandating installation of trigger locks, and eliminating influxes of cheaply made weapons. This does not infringe on anyone's right to bear arms in this Nation, but we have to do things that make common sense.

There are guns that have been outlawed in this Nation's history. You cannot get a submachine gun. You cannot get a sawed-off shotgun. Why shouldn't assault weapons be added to that group?

Also, gun buyback programs in my district and my State have removed hundreds of guns from the streets, and I am considering offering legislation to bring these programs to scale on the Federal level to help stem the tide of violence. These measures would undoubtedly save lives.

Enough is enough. It is time to take action.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much. I thank the gentleman. I certainly am pleased to know how supportive you are of efforts to make this a safer country for our young people.

Mr. Speaker, each year, in its Uniform Crime Report, the FBI compiles a list of the cities with the most murders per capita. According to the most recent report, which uses data from 2011, there were over 3,300 murders that occurred in just 15 cities. There were 515 murders in New York City in 2011; 431 in Chicago, Illinois; 344 in Detroit, Michigan; 324 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 297 in Los Angeles, California; 200 in New Orleans, Louisiana; 198 in Houston, Texas; 196 in Baltimore, Maryland; 133 in Dallas, Texas; 117 in Memphis, Tennessee; 116 in Phoenix, Arizona; 113 in St. Louis, Missouri; 108 in Washington, D.C.; 108 in Kansas City, Missouri; and 104 in Oakland, California.

Now, some people may think that violence is only prevalent in urban America, but that is just not true. Recent mass murders have occurred in places like Tucson, Arizona; Aurora, Colorado; Oak Creek, Wisconsin; and Newtown, Connecticut. Violence is truly all around us. It is at our movie theaters, our shopping centers, colleges, places of worship, and even our elementary schools.

During the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, a gunman took the lives of 26 people, including 20 children as young as the age

of 5. The victims of this heinous crime were killed at a place that we all consider to be safe.

Since 1982, there have been more than 60 mass murders carried out with firearms across this country. We have had 19 mass shootings in the last 5 years alone. That is a rate of more than one every 4 months. The uptick in these types of crimes should be enough to push our Nation forward on reassessing our gun laws. Unfortunately, our country appears to be at a standstill. Each year, 30,000 Americans lose their lives as a result of gunfire, and about 80,000 Americans were wounded in that same period of time.

□ 2010

The number of gun crimes continues to be high; and yet, we, as a Nation, are hesitant to take immediate action to address this issue.

Thirty-three Americans are murdered with guns every single day. Our Nation has the distinction of having the highest rate of firearm violence in the world.

Proponents of gun rights say that there is an absolute right to bear arms. Mr. Speaker, I disagree. All rights are subject to reasonable restrictions. One can support the Second Amendment while also advocating for policies that keep guns out of the hands of criminals and other dangerous people. We must act immediately on creating a comprehensive, national gun policy that eliminates loopholes in the laws, bans assault weapons, and places limits on high-capacity magazines.

Under current Federal law, background checks are only required for gun sales at licensed dealers. According to Mayors Against Illegal Guns, approximately 6.6 million guns are sold each year in America by unlicensed private sellers. That translates to 40 percent of all U.S. gun sales. These transactions typically occur online or at gun shows without the buyer having to pass a background check.

Federal law carves out a broad exception for private gun sellers who only make what are called "occasional sales" or who sell from a "personal collection." What is problematic about this is that there's no set standard for what is considered an "occasional" sale.

In a national survey of inmates—listen to this—in a national survey of inmates conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, it was found that nearly 80 percent of those who used a handgun in a crime acquired it in a private transfer. In another troubling statistic, a 2009 New York City undercover investigation at seven gun shows in three States found that 63 percent of private sellers at those shows were willing to sell to someone who admitted that he couldn't pass a background check.

The private-sale loophole has made it far too easy for criminals to exploit the system to obtain guns. For example, in October 2012, Radcliffe Haughton was able to purchase a gun from a private

seller even though he was federally prohibited from doing so. His wife had initiated a restraining order against him. He used the gun that he purchased online to go to a spa where his wife worked. He killed her and two other people and injured four other people before killing himself.

Requiring uniform, criminal background checks for every gun sale is something that has garnered broad support. A 2012 survey by Republican pollster Frank Luntz revealed that 82 percent of gun owners, including 74 percent of National Rifle Association members, support requiring criminal background checks for potential gun owners. This is a prime example of a sensible gun regulation that should be implemented now.

Failing to fully enforce current laws can be just as bad as not having any laws at all, Mr. Speaker. Since its creation in 1999, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, better known as NICS, has prevented more than 1.7 million permit applications and gun sales to felons. The seriously mentally ill and drug abusers have also been stopped in some instances. But despite its success, NICS has a number of gaps and limitations that still enable firearms to be sold to dangerous people. Many prohibited purchasers are able to get their hands on guns because NICS is missing millions of relevant records due to lax reporting by State and Federal agencies.

Twenty-three States and the District of Columbia have submitted fewer than 100 mental health records to NICS—100. Seventeen States have submitted fewer than 10 mental health records, and four States have not submitted any mental health records at all. State substance abuse records have always been significantly underreported. Forty-four States have submitted fewer than 10 records to the Federal database, and 33 States have not submitted any records at all.

Federal agencies have also dragged their feet in fulfilling their reporting responsibilities. Despite being required to do so, many Federal agencies have shared very few mental health records. Only nine of the 60 Federal agencies listed in relevant FBI data have submitted any mental health records.

Incomplete records have allowed dangerous killers to purchase guns. In 2007, Seung Hui Cho shot and killed 32 people at Virginia Tech before taking his own life. Cho had been found mentally ill by a judge; and, as a result, he should have been prohibited from buying a gun. He was able to slip through the cracks and pass a background check at a licensed gun dealer because his mental health records were never submitted to NICS. It is clear that our background check system is broken and needs to be fixed.

The prevalence of assault weapons is another issue that raises great concern for me. These military-style weapons with high-capacity magazines tend to be the weapon of choice in mass shoot-

ings and police murders. Those kinds of weapons have been used to inflict the greatest amount of pain in the shortest amount of time.

In a study of high-profile shootings over the past 4 years, Mayors Against Illegal Guns has found that at least one-third of those shootings involved assault weapons and/or high-capacity magazines.

They were used in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012, to kill 26 people; in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, on August 5 to kill six people and wound three others; in Aurora, Colorado, on July 20, 2012, to kill 12 people and injure 58 others; in Tucson, Arizona, on January 8, 2011, to kill six people and wound 13 others; in Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009, to kill 13 people and wound 34 others; and in Binghamton, New York, on April 3, 2009, to kill 13 people and injure four others.

Assault weapons are also a threat to our local law enforcement. On June 8, 2009, in Chesapeake, Virginia, a gunman shot two police officers with a semiautomatic AK-47 assault weapon, firing at least 30 rounds.

In St. Louis, Missouri, on January 7, 2010, Timothy Hendron entered the ABB, Inc. factory with two handguns, a shotgun, and a semiautomatic AK-47 rifle with high-capacity ammunition magazines. He fired approximately 115 rounds, killing three and wounding five before taking his own life. After the shooting, the police chief of St. Louis, Daniel Isom, said:

Our officers didn't have sufficient weapons systems to engage a person with an AK-47.

On January 26, 2011, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a police officer was ambushed by a teenager who fired a semiautomatic weapon 26 times. Responding to the crime, Oklahoma City Police Chief Bill Citty stated:

There are just more and more assault rifles out there, and it is becoming a bigger threat to law enforcement each day. They are outgunned.

Reinstating the assault weapon ban must be a priority for our Nation. It is estimated that there are nearly 18 million assault weapons in circulation in the United States. A 2010 survey by the Police Executive Research Forum revealed that there has been an increase in criminal use of assault weapons since the Federal ban expired in 2004. Thirty-seven percent of police agencies have reported noticeable increases.

Weapons with the ability to carry out such deadly force do not belong on our streets, Mr. Speaker. There is no justification for the use of these weapons anywhere but on the battlefield for which they were designed. I firmly support banning assault weapons of all types.

A ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines has been endorsed by several organizations, including Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives, the Na-

tional Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Police Executive Research Forum, the Police Foundation, and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators.

□ 2020

The culture of violence doesn't necessarily start with guns. It can often be traced back to mental health concerns and bullying.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2009 national survey on drug use and health, there were an estimated 45.1 million U.S. adults living with a mental illness. That is 20 percent of all American adults. Sadly, only 17 million of these adults received services to address their illness. A significant number of the country's inmates also have mental health problems. According to the Department of Justice's 2004 survey of inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities and its 2002 surveys in local jails, nearly 45 percent of all inmates in Federal prison have a mental health problem; over 55 percent of the inmates in State prison have a mental health problem; and nearly 65 percent of inmates in local jails have a mental problem.

We cannot continue to ignore the fact that we need to do more to address the issue of mental health. Turning our back on this problem will not make it go away.

The issue of bullying has become rampant in our society. Too many of our children are being bullied during and after school and on the Internet. According to Stomp Out Bullying, it is estimated that one out of four teens is bullied during their lifetime. Fifty-eight percent of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 40 percent say it has happened to them more than once. Fifty-three percent of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online, and more than one in three has done it more than once. Fifty-eight percent have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

Many believe that bullying is a right of passage. I'm here to tell you that it is not. Bullying is intentional, it is cruel, and abusive. It can set the tone for a lifetime of hurt. Many people are never the same after being bullied. Depression, anxiety, and many other psychological problems can result from bullying. Some turn to substance abuse, even suicide.

Bullying is no joking matter. It is not something to be taken lightly. We must inform our children of the consequences of bullying. We must be attentive and listen to their cries for help. How many of our children need to fall victim to this cruel behavior before we are moved to act? We must address this issue now.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, it is very clear that we live in a culture of violence. The culture of violence has ravaged our communities, taking the lives of innocent Americans, ripping apart American families, and destroying families along the way. We must act now because our Nation is depending on us. Anyone who believes that it is okay to use a gun in an open theater is not really thinking very rationally. Someone who believes that you can put a police officer at every single entrance into a school is really not thinking very rationally.

We have to do something. No matter what our personal beliefs are, we are all here to work for the American public, not ourselves. We may have a personal opinion as to what should be done about guns, but the people of America are speaking, and we need to listen to them.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my serious concerns about the recent acts of violence throughout the United States. The tragedy that struck the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, last month was a devastating loss for the families and friends of the students and educators who were killed. As the second deadliest school shooting in U.S. history, the Newtown tragedy has underscored the fundamental need to reevaluate our approach to gun violence and mental illness.

Any strategy to reduce gun violence must be inclusive in its approach to finding a solution. Every viable consideration must be on the table as we look to enact comprehensive legislation at the federal level. With the total number of privately owned firearms in circulation estimated to be more than 270 million, we must take reasonable steps to ensure that these firearms do not fall into the wrong hands, while also protecting the Second Amendment rights of responsible gun owners.

The topic of mental illness is one that is neglected, particularly in regard to its connection to gun violence. In 2009, approximately 11 million adults in the United States had a serious mental illness. Forty percent of those adults did not receive any type of treatment for that illness. We now know that each of the shooters in the most recent incidents suffered from mental illness. Addressing mental illness can be a critical component of a comprehensive approach to reducing violence in our schools and other public places.

Mr. Speaker, we must take deliberate steps going forward to prevent another tragedy from occurring. There is absolutely no place for violence in our schools, and we are compelled to do everything within our power to avert future catastrophe. There is a large mental health component to this debate that needs greater consideration, and I hope that my colleagues will continue to take a holistic approach during this process.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENTIVOLIO). The Chair announces the

Speaker's appointment, pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, 113th Congress, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

Mr. BOEHNER, Ohio;
Mr. CANTOR, Virginia;
Ms. PELOSI, California.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2128

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 9 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 152, DISASTER RELIEF APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-1) on the resolution (H. Res. 23) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 152) making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2013 AT PAGE H22

□1656

So the resolution was agreed to. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the word "General" in section 3(j)(1) is changed to "Government." There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. JACKSON LEE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 6:45 p.m. and January 15.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and January 15 and 16 on account of a death in the family.

Mr. CRENSHAW (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of illness.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 41. An act to temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the National Flood Insurance Program.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on January 4, 2013, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 41. To temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the National Flood Insurance Program.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, January 15, 2013, at 10 a.m.

OATH OF OFFICE—MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God." has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Members of the 113th Congress, pursuant to the provisions of 2 U.S.C. 25:

EARL BLUMENAUER, Third District of Oregon; JOHN LEWIS, Fifth District of Georgia; LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Fortieth District of California.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6. A letter from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's final