

MEDIA HELPED ELECT A SENATOR

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the liberal media helped elect a U.S. Senator from Alabama. Their alliance with the Democratic Party is now so close, we should call them mediacrats. Admittedly, the mediacrats got an assist from some Republicans, as well as the candidate himself.

The primary lesson to be learned from the election is that Republicans must confront media bias. They must constantly point it out and remind the American people of this corrosive effect on our election process. Republicans should join the President exposing fake news.

The media should trust the American people with the facts, not tell them what to think. Because the media is so biased, their credibility with the American people is at an all-time low.

For the sake of our country and for the sake of fair elections, I hope the media will return to their paramount responsibility: providing the American people with unbiased news.

MOMENT OF TRUTH

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, Donald Trump claims he has “nothing to do with Russia,” but we have seen damning revelations: secret meetings, business and financial entanglements, and elaborate attempts to conceal information.

In any other era, these would be bombshells, but our nonstop media cycle, fueled by Trump’s constant infusions of drama, make it hard to connect the dots. It is not that we lack evidence of Trump-Russia ties, it is that there is so much, it makes your head spin.

So today, I am beginning a “moment of truth” series of speeches to point out facts that show an administration that is compromised and that not only colluded with Russia, but has obstructed justice to keep us from knowing the truth.

One of many smoking guns is from 2015, when Trump’s associate, Felix Sater, was seeking financing from a Russian bank facing American sanctions to build a Trump Tower in Moscow. This email from Sater to Trump’s personal attorney speaks for itself: “I’ll get Putin on this program, and we’ll get Donald elected.”

There is a lot more to come.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY HOOK SHOOTING

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and commemorate the sad fifth anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, which took the lives of 20 innocent children and six brave educators.

Last night, I stood on the floor of the House and indicated how breathless I felt when the news came in: One child, 2 children, 3 children, 4 children, 5 children, 6 children, 7 children, 8 children, 9 children, 10 children, 11 children, 12 children, 13 children, 14 children, 15 children, 16 children, 17 children, 18 children, 19 children, 20 children, and the brave adults who tried to save their lives, including the mother of the perpetrator.

I rise today to join in the call for acts of kindness. Tomorrow, I will be giving out books at the Blackshear Elementary School. I will be giving out shoes in my district to the Forest Brook Middle School.

I hope that we understand what it is not about: guns don’t kill; people do. Guns kill.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that we have real gun safety legislation. At the same time, I hope that, as we look toward the needs of our Nation, the Children’s Health Insurance Program and those who are suffering from hurricanes will be part of our kindness.

I take a moment for these children. I honor the Sandy Hook children and the brave adults who tried to save their lives. May God bless them all.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join my colleagues in honoring and remembering all of the victims of the tragic shootings at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT five years ago.

Nearly five years after a mass shooter murdered 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook elementary school, Republican politicians are still blocking any attempt to pass tougher federal gun control laws.

The lack of congressional action has prompted outrage, despair, and a sense that the gun debate is intractable.

As the Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children’s Caucus and a senior Member of the Judiciary Committee, I have listened to the tragic testimony of individuals who have survived or lost loved ones as a result of gun violence.

It is still painful for those who recall the news from Newtown, Connecticut on that day five years ago.

The story of Sandy Hook was particularly frightening for those of us who are parents or grandparents.

The community and the families directly impacted continue to reel from the inconceivable tragedy that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary on December 14, 2012.

Our hearts still ache with sadness and disbelief for the families and loved ones of the children and women who lost their lives in this senseless act of violence.

I also recognize and applaud the heroic efforts made by the teachers, administrators,

and law enforcement officials who acted quickly to secure and protect the lives of the children who survived this deadly encounter.

I, along with other parents in America, know that the healing process continues for the parents, siblings, and friends of the 20 children who died on December 14, 2012.

Our prayers go to the families and colleagues of the teachers, councilor, and principle of the school who were also killed in defense of the children in their charge.

This tragedy unlike any other in recent memory touched so many hearts and minds both in the United States and around the world that this weekend is particularly poignant.

The parents and grandparents who dropped off their children and grandchildren in the early morning hours of December 14, 2012, could never have imagined that by 10 a.m. on that morning they would have to face this tragedy.

The deaths at Sandy Hook as well as those at Aurora and Columbine will be etched in our collective memories.

These are moments when lives were needlessly lost due to gun violence.

The nation united in grief one year ago, and many of us who strong support sensible gun safety laws thought the moment had finally arrived when the policy makers, parents, teachers, and law enforcement could join efforts to make our schools, parks, sidewalks, and homes safer from gun violence.

We could all agree that the tragedy should not have occurred, but we could not find the common ground that would take any meaningful step to reduce gun violence in the United States.

We must join together in recognizing that this tragedy can happen in any community and we must immediately begin to address the underlying problems that would lead a young man to take up arms against defenseless women and children.

The tragedy of Sandy Hook took us all by surprise, but there are hundreds of other tragedies around the nation that involve children falling victim to gun violence.

Annually in the United States there are over 30,000 gun related deaths.

The total number of deaths associated with 13 years of war in both Afghanistan and Iraq is 6,778 service men and women.

No other nation had the level of gun violence per-capita as the United States unless they were actively engaged in a civil war or conflict with another nation.

There are some things that cannot be rationalized by any means—one of the things that we as policy makers have to face is the threat of gun violence to our nation, communities, and families.

I read with heartache the September 28, 2013, New York Times article, “Children and Guns: The Hidden Toll,” published in September of this year.

Some of the stories were tragic as they are familiar to those of us who work to reduce gun violence.

Lucas Heagren, 3 years old, killed by a gun he found where his father temporarily hid it under a couch.

Days later, Cassie Culpepper, age 11, who was shot and killed by her brother who thought a gun his father gave him to scare coyotes was unloaded.

A few weeks later, Alex Whitfield, age 11 was killed by a Glock pistol found in a closet by a 15 year old.

These children are the hidden victims of a nation obsessed with guns at almost any cost. The children of gun violence may be any child or grandchild—including your own.

They may be from any home found in any neighborhood or rural community in this nation.

The tragedies of gun deaths of children are not just what your child knows about gun safety, but more often what another child with access to a firearm does not know.

More important—is the lack of adults' knowledge regarding gun safety that can lead to preventable gun related child deaths.

Some parents are the source of their own children becoming victims of gun violence because they mistakenly attempted to clean a loaded gun or handled a loaded gun improperly.

Many of these deaths are not part of official records.

The New York Times conducted research in Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Ohio going back to 1999.

They collected data from medical examiners in Florida, Illinois and Texas.

They found over 259 accidental firearm deaths of children under the age of 15.

These numbers are about twice as many as were reported in federal statistics.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for many minorities in this country.

82.8 percent of young people who are killed, are victims of a killing through a firearm.

Every 30 minutes, a child or teenager in America is injured by a gun.

Every 3 hours and 15 minutes, a child or a teenager loses their life to a firearm.

And in 2010, 82 children under 5 years of age lost their lives due to guns.

Less than 20 states have laws that hold adults criminally responsible if they act negligently in the storage of firearms that may lead to children having access to them.

National data is needed on all forms of firearm related deaths for policy makers, the public and media to fully comprehend the scope of the problem of gun violence in the United States.

The challenge to gaining access to this information is state laws that do not consider death certificate information as public information and who may not voluntarily report numbers to the Department of Justice.

At around the same time that the children in Newtown, CT faced a deranged gun man, thousands of miles away in China, another man also attacked a group of school children.

Again, a tragedy that no one in the community could have anticipated; however, because the man in China was armed only with a knife, he wounded instead of killed 20 children.

The lives of 20 children in China were spared because their attacker did not have in his possession a gun.

I believe the solution to these acts of violence can be found by taking a multifaceted approach.

There are those who will say that “guns don't kill people, people kill people.”

The statistics for the harm that people are capable of doing with guns to themselves and others is alarming.

People are indeed killing people, with guns.

We need to reform how we view guns in this country and also how we address mental health challenges in our communities.

We must act now.

This is the right moment to demonstrate that the safety of our children is one of our most sacred priorities.

It is imperative that this Congress brings to the House for immediate consideration the following gun safety laws.

First, there must be an immediate ban on all assault weapons.

Second, we must close gun show loopholes which allow for the sale of weapons without a background check.

Third, we must reform our current mental health system to provide support for families to enable them to get immediate assistance for mental health issues.

In addition, there should be pathways for families who are facing these challenges to gain emergency access to publicly funded or private counseling services.

Fourth, we must look at the design of primary and secondary schools in which these schools may need to have reinforced bullet proof window and reinforced secure entrances.

Lastly, we must expand current state laws to hold adults accountable and responsible for the security of their weapons.

We can help to prevent tragedies like this one from happening again.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gun violence claims the lives of over 30,000 people.

For every person who dies from a gunshot wound, two others are wounded.

Every year, approximately 100,000 Americans are victims of gun violence.

In addition to those who are killed or injured, there are countless others whose lives are forever changed by the deaths of and injuries to their loved ones.

In 2010, guns took the lives of 31,076 Americans in homicides, suicides and unintentional shootings.

This is the equivalent of more than 85 deaths each day and more than three deaths each hour.

There were 73,505 Americans treated in hospital emergency departments for non-fatal gunshot wounds in 2010.

Firearms were the third-leading cause of injury-related deaths nationwide in 2010, following poisoning and motor vehicle accidents.

Between 1955 and 1975, the Vietnam War killed over 58,000 American soldiers—less than the number of civilians killed with guns in the U.S. in an average two-year period.

In the first seven years of the U.S.-Iraq War, over 4,400 American soldiers were killed. Almost as many civilians are killed with guns here in the U.S. over the course of 7 weeks rather than 7 years.

U.S. homicide rates are 6.9 times higher than rates in 22 other populous high-income countries combined, despite similar non-lethal crime and violence rates.

The firearm homicide rate in the U.S. is 19.5 times higher. Guns were used in 11,078 homicides in the U.S. in 2010, comprising almost 35% of all gun deaths, and over 68% of all homicides.

Over a million people have been killed with guns in the United States since 1968, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated.

On average, 33 gun homicides were committed each day for the years 2005–2010.

Regions and states with higher rates of gun ownership have significantly higher rates of

homicide than states with lower rates of gun ownership.

Where guns are prevalent, there are significantly more homicides, particularly gun homicides.

For years, I have introduced and reintroduced gun safety legislation and supported the efforts of my colleagues who have also worked diligently to protect the lives of our nation's children through adequate gun safety.

I reintroduced H.R. 277, the Child Gun Safety and Gun Access Prevention Act of 2011.

This legislation would prevent anyone under the age of 21 from being eligible to own a handgun and would prohibit youth from possessing semiautomatic assault weapons.

Under this legislation parents and supervising adults will be held accountable if a juvenile is able to gain possession of dangerous firearms that are located in their household.

The statistics are clear, firearms in a household must be properly and adequately stored.

A gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a completed or attempted suicide (11x), criminal assault or homicide (7x), or unintentional shooting death or injury (4x) than to be used in a self-defense shooting.

Higher household gun ownership correlates with higher rates of homicides, suicides, and unintentional shootings.

Keeping a firearm in the home increases the risk of suicide by a factor of 3 to 5 and increases the risk of suicide with a firearm by a factor of 17.

Keeping a firearm in the home increases the risk of homicide by a factor of 3.

A 2009 study found that people in possession of a gun are 4.5 times more likely to be shot in an assault.

My legislation also requires a parent to accompany a minor when attending a gun show.

Our focus should also be on the owners of guns. Parents need to keep guns and ammunition out of the reach of teenagers.

Parents should be responsible for securing from their minor children access to dangerous firearms.

Further, my bill is a preventative measure, my legislation encourages school districts to prove or participate in firearm safety programs.

It also addresses the underlying concerns related to violence and suicide.

It amends the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to support programs to promote mental health services among all children and their families and to provide early intervention services to ameliorate identified mental health problems in children and adolescents.

This is a multifaceted approach to address this multifaceted issue.

In the 113th Congress I introduced H.R. 65, the Child Gun Safety and Gun Access Prevention Act of 2013, which amends the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act by raising the age of handgun eligibility to 21 and prohibits persons under age 21 from possessing semiautomatic assault weapons or large capacity ammunition feeding devices, with some exceptions.

The bill places limitations and obligations on the transfer of firearms regarding juvenile violations of Brady Act provisions and the transfer of a handgun, ammunition, semiautomatic assault weapon, or large capacity ammunition feeding device to a person who is under age 21.

Prohibits any licensed importer, manufacturer, or dealer from transferring a firearm to any person (other than a licensed importer, manufacturer, or dealer) unless the transferee is provided with a secure gun storage or safety device.

Authorizes the Attorney General to suspend or revoke any firearms license, or to subject the licensee to a civil penalty of up to \$10,000, if the licensee has knowingly violated this prohibition.

The bill also places prohibitions on keeping a loaded firearm or an unloaded firearm and ammunition within any premises knowing or recklessly disregarding the risk that a child: is capable of gaining access to it, and may use the firearm to cause death or serious bodily injury.

Finally, the bill authorizes the Attorney General to provide grants to enable local law enforcement agencies to develop and sponsor gun safety classes for parents and children.

I also introduced H.R. 2665, a bill to ensure secure gun storage and gun safety devices.

The bill amends the federal criminal code to repeal provisions that create exceptions to the prohibition against a licensed importer, manufacturer, or dealer transfer of a firearm to any person other than a licensed importer, manufacturer, or dealer unless the person receiving the firearm is provided with a secure gun storage or safety device; and grants immunity from a qualified civil liability action to a person who has lawful possession and control of a handgun and who uses such a device.

This Congress, I introduced H.R. 4268, the Gun Safety: Not Sorry Act which imposes a seven-day waiting period on the purchase of certain weaponry including bump stocks in response to more recent mass shootings.

Recent U.S. mass shootings include:

1. Las Vegas, 2017: 50+ killed
2. Orlando, 2016: 50 killed
3. Virginia Tech, 2007: 32 killed
4. Sandy Hook, 2012: 27 killed
5. San Ysidro, 1984: 21 killed
6. San Bernardino, 2015: 14 killed
7. Edmond, 1986: 14 killed
8. Fort Hood, 2009: 13 killed
9. Columbine, 1999: 13 killed

I also join in support of the families and survivors of the Community of Newtown, Connecticut who lost loved ones to give them space so that they can heal.

Events such as the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School touch all of us as compassionate, caring people which was demonstrated through the wave of support expressed by this nation.

To keep the memory of the 20 children and six adults killed on that tragic day vibrant—a website has been created by the families—mysandyhookfamily.org.

I encourage you to visit this memorial website and learn more about Charlotte, Josephine, Daniel, Avielle, Rachel, Jessica, Victoria, Benjamin, Anne Marie, Dawn, Carlina, Ana, Madeleine, Catherine, Noah, James, Mary, Emilie, Lauren, Allison, Chase, Dylan, Jesse, Olivia, Jack and Grace.

Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to do all that we can do to reverse this level of gun violence. We must pass commonsense gun safety.

AN AMERICAN HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2017, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, 47 years ago, August 11, a baby boy was born to a mother and father in Detroit, Michigan, named Brian Terry.

Some 18 years after that, Brian made a commitment to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, where he served 3 years honorably, including a tour of duty in harm's way in Iraq.

Discharged from the Marine Corps honorably in 1994, Brian Terry followed his calling to serve by becoming a police officer. He then made another commitment not to serve just his community, but our Nation. In 2007, he joined the Customs and Border Protection.

But this wasn't good enough for what his mother characterized as a brave, strong defender of people. Brian decided to join the elite Border Tactical Team of the Border Patrol unit.

Seven years ago today, Brian was part of a four-person team tasked with pursuing and apprehending a "rip" crew. This rip crew has been alleged to be affiliated with the Mexican drug cartels. What they did was exploit those who took advantage of the unwillingness of those in leadership in this country to perform that basic, principled responsibility, which is to secure our borders.

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The rip crew would rob drug mules as they carried drugs across the border, but would also routinely detain and shake down those who snuck through our porous borders. This cartel-affiliated rip crew had weapons, and they used those weapons to rob, terrorize, and exploit in the worst possible ways people who were essentially invited here by our failure to do our jobs.

Seven years ago today, Brian Terry and three of his colleagues set out not just to protect our border, but to protect innocent people, who came with their entire life savings, because we chose to leave that border porous.

Yesterday, the House Homeland Security Committee took up H.R. 4433. H.R. 4433 is entitled Securing DHS Firearms Act of 2017. We learned during testimony on this bill that in a 2-year period, just over 200 firearms were stolen from people who worked for the Department of Homeland Security, or lost. At least one person was killed by these firearms. I would concur that that is unacceptable.

I certainly support the bill, but having served in the United States Army as a leader of soldiers on deployment, all of whom were issued at least one weapon, I wonder if it literally requires an act of Congress to suggest that the DHS promulgate regulations to oversee the loss or theft of DHS supplied weapons.

Yes, over 200 weapons is horrible. Yes, one life lost is horrible. But should there be an act of Congress?

Because, as I recall, as a leader in the army while deployed overseas, we had protocol for dealing with lost weapons, with lost sensible items, and with lost COMSEC. We didn't need an act of Congress to tell us to promulgate it.

While I support this bill, it began to make me wonder and then think of a Bible verse, Matthew 7:3:

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Certainly it is unacceptable that over 200 weapons should be lost or stolen from DHS employees in a period of 2 years. But it is, quite literally, one-tenth of the scale of the weaponry that our government intentionally put into the stream of commerce to be used by those who would visit harm not only on their neighbors and family members south of our border, but right here on our own soil.

So, weapons like this, to the quantity of over 200, were lost or stolen from members of DHS. Meanwhile, 7 years ago, weapons like this were put into the stream of commerce by our very government. Weapons like this took the lives of at least one person. Weapons like this, put into the stream of commerce by our very government, have taken, at the very least, 70 times as many lives.

Yesterday, the Committee on Homeland Security promulgated a bill—an act of Congress—to address 200-some weapons like this that have cost at least one human life. And 7 years after Brian Terry set out on patrol that fateful night in Arizona, days before he was to fly home to Michigan to see his family for Christmas, nobody is talking about the weapons like this that our government intentionally placed into the stream of commerce, where we knew, to a metaphysical certainty, they would go to those who would do harm to their neighbors and their families and Americans.

Seven years later, we have seen justice. The killers of Brian Terry have been arrested. The first man arrested for having shot Mr. Terry in the back with a military-style rifle, leaving him to bleed to death in the medical chopper that flew him out in an effort to save his life, had, I think, ironically, already been deported from this country seven times.

The night that Brian Terry set out to protect not only the borders of this Nation, but the people who seek to enter it because we will not uphold our responsibility, the man who killed him was about robbing the very people who were coming here because we allowed it by not doing our jobs, and he had already been deported seven times.

Now, we know that close to 70 people have died because we intentionally, as a nation, put into the stream of commerce military-style weapons. In fact, we have lost track of over 1,400 of the over 2,000 weapons that the Obama administration thought it would be a good idea to intentionally let go to Mexico.