

visited our men and women in uniform was impressed by their skill, dedication, and patriotism. When CSIS asked military personnel about their life in their services and their units, however, they often found disappointment and frustration. In spite of the high level of pride and commitment, our dedicated people in uniform did not typically have high morale and revealed far less satisfaction from their service than one would expect. Overall, the armed forces are overcommitted, underpaid, and undersourced in the units that form their cutting edge. Expectations for a satisfying military career are not being met."

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason I am on the floor again. I bring my family to the floor because we have 60 percent of men and women in uniform who are married. In addition, we have approximately 10,000 men and women in uniform on food stamps.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is deplorable. The reason I say that is because no one that is willing to give their life for this country should be dependent on food stamps. My colleagues can see that this Marine, who is getting ready to deploy to Bosnia, has his daughter Magan standing on his feet. She is looking at the camera. In his arms, he has a 4-month-old baby named Britney.

Mr. Speaker, this Marine represents everyone in uniform that is willing to give for this country. Again, I say it is unacceptable and deplorable that men and women in uniform are dependent on food stamps.

I introduced, this past year, H.R. 1055. It is signed by about 90 Members of Congress, both Democrat and Republican, that would give a \$500 tax credit to men and women in uniform who are dependent on food stamps. My purpose in saying that is that I do not know that that is the answer or not, but it is a vehicle to find an answer to help those on food stamps in the military.

I look at this photograph, and I look in the eyes of the little girl. She is looking, and in her eyes you can tell she does not know if her daddy will be coming back or not. Hopefully, we pray that all men and women in uniform will be coming back when they are deployed. But there is no guarantee.

So, again, I say to the Republican leadership, I say to the Democratic leadership, please, before this session ends in September, October this year, let us pass legislation to help the men and women in uniform that are on food stamps, because, again, this country is the safe Nation that it is because we have dedicated men and women in uniform that are willing to die for America. Let us not, as a Congress, let us not as a government, allow anyone serving this Nation to be on food stamps.

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

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. HERGER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am going to do something a little bit different this afternoon and speak to a number of topics during the time frame that I have for this special order.

First of all, I think it is appropriate to again do something that many of us wish we did not have to do, and that is to offer sympathy for those who have died at the hands of reckless gun violence. Just about an hour or so ago in Memphis, Tennessee, five individuals were shot, we understand that two fatally, by a seemingly deranged individual. But the facts are not in, and I do not want to speculate.

The police personnel who came upon the house, found a deceased woman in the house. The house was set on fire. Other police personnel came and fire fighters. I believe the news reports indicate that one fire fighter is down along with a police officer. As I said, additional facts are still coming in.

Now, as I indicated last week, I am going to be a regular fixture on the House floor discussing gun violence. I believe that, if we would listen to the American people and listen to good common sense and depoliticize this issue, we might be able to come together in a conference committee and get this matter resolved.

This is not an issue that should be dominated by the National Rifle Association. It should not be dominated by fear. It should not be dominated by misinterpretation of the Second Amendment, which was actually written in the course of history where many Americans were fearful of those from other countries, in particular a recently formed nation, that would take up arms and try to seize this nation back, a founding nation of some 13 colonies. It was to establish a well-organized militia.

There is no intent on behalf of those who believe in gun regulations and gun safety to take away guns from law-abiding citizens. But we have to close the gun show loopholes and take the guns out of the hands of criminals. We must have trigger locks. We must, in fact, hold adults responsible for children who accidentally or otherwise shoot others. We must, in fact, eliminate the fact that children can go to gun shows, which in my community are about every week, without an adult.

We must, frankly, be serious about the fact that America is looked upon as a Nation under the siege of gun vio-

lence, with more guns in this Nation than human beings. Frankly, people are living in fear.

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Now, many would say, Let me arm myself and I will protect myself from those who have the guns. It does not work that way, for we are arming ourselves and endangering other law enforcement officers, and we are creating a Nation at war.

It is time now for Republicans to lay down their political hats. And if one would think Democrats have theirs on, all of them need to be on the conference committee, of which I am a member, and discuss this in a manner that will bring realistic gun regulation to America.

I would hope that as we have marched this past week in commemoration of the march from Selma to Montgomery, which I had the honor in participating in, with faith in politics in Selma, in Birmingham, in Montgomery, that we will see that America can draw upon its spirit. It can draw upon its spirit to create opportunities in civil rights; then it can draw upon its deeply embedded spirit of the fact that we are all human beings and we deserve that kind of respect to pass gun safety legislation.

In addition, I had the honor, I guess, or the challenge of joining some 25,000-some individuals in the capital of Florida, in Tallahassee, to stand up for equal rights for all and oppose the One Florida concept that would eliminate affirmative action. For many, I believe, this is a confused position. Affirmative action is not quotas. They are illegal. Affirmative action is simply outreach to minorities and women, creating an equal playing field.

It seems disappointing that we in America, in the year 2000, have individuals who wish to turn back the clock; who would smile when we talk about civil rights; who would whisper when we talk about affirmative action; and who would snicker when we talk about gun safety. Well, my friends I believe that if we are going to be the world power, the trading Nation of the world, if we are going to promote a strong America, a one America, including everyone at the seat of empowerment, then the snickering and the snide remarks have to stop. We have to realize that 6-year-olds have guns because they come from dysfunctional families but, more importantly, because criminals get guns and others do not.

So I hope that Americans who are fearful of us coming into their homes and taking their guns, if they are law-abiding citizens, they will realize and encourage this conference committee to meet and do plain and simple and real gun safety legislation. Otherwise, we will see us day after day bemoaning the fact of those who have lost their lives to gun violence. How much and how long do we have to see this occur as we near the commemoration and the sadness of April 20, a year after the

tragedy of Columbine High School? We have still not acted and Americans are asking us to act.

I believe the commemoration of the Selma to Montgomery march, the March 7, 1965, Bloody Tuesday, or the Bloody Sunday it was called at that time, where we turned people back because they wanted the right to vote, out of that act the Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Does America have to wait for more violence and more bloodshed to pass real gun safety laws? I would hope not.

Frankly, I hope America will come together with people of good will, put the snickering aside, the snide remarks aside, and get the good people of America to join us and encourage us to pass real gun safety legislation.

MINIMUM WAGE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to first mention to the gentlewoman from Texas who just spoke, it was in fact a senior member of the Democratic caucus that may have derailed the efforts on gun safety that she claims today on the floor.

I would also like to strongly suggest that we keep talking about the NRA as if they are somehow responsible for the deaths around this country. Last I checked, none of the crimes committed were perpetrated by a member of the NRA. Now, we can have different positions on this issue, but how anyone can think for a minute that that crackhead, where that gun was found and that young innocent life was snuffed out by a gun, would have put a trigger lock on their gun, is beyond me.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what I am here to speak to, however. I do not want to talk about this issue. We do need to debate it in fairness. We will have an opportunity to have this debate, but I want to strongly urge Members once again not to point fingers or accuse groups, whether it is the NRA or Hollywood, for the decline of values in America. Let us talk constructively on trying to make something that will work, that people will obey and abide by. Let us construct a law that will have some teeth for those criminals who are violating the law.

I applaud the President on his efforts to increase funding for ATF, to increase the outreach to find out who is selling guns illegally. There are a lot of things we can do. But let us not sit here and point fingers and say it is the Republicans or it is the Democrats, it is that or that. It is too serious of an issue.

Let me also rise today to talk about an issue that is coming to the floor tomorrow, and that is on minimum wage and the economic growth act that we will be discussing tomorrow.

The President said clearly today that it should be a clean bill and it should not have amendments. But I would urge the President once again to at least tone down the rhetoric and discuss this in a very fair manner.

I can assure all of America that members of the Republican Party have in fact been meeting in good faith to try to structure a bill that will in fact increase the minimum wage. I commend people like the gentleman from New York (Mr. QUINN), the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), and others who have been working constructively to find a way to increase incomes for those at minimum wage.

I was involved in a restaurant. I owned a small business. I understand full well the impact of increasing expenses, such as payroll, through minimum wage increases. But at the same time I recognize that with rising gas prices, insurance costs, health care, it is probably timely that we look to seek to raise the level of people who are in fact working at minimum wage.

Let me also suggest to the President that we can in fact come to some kind of agreement here today or tomorrow and discuss this with some clarity. Raising the minimum wage will in fact cost small businesses money. What is the solution? Offset the cost with some benefits that we could structure, that are targeted, that are reasonable, that will be effective to not only assisting the low-income worker on minimum wage but helping the business owner meet the obligation of continuing to provide things for his community, his family.

We could accelerate the increase in the self-employment health insurance deduction to 100 percent. That would help insure more people and provide a good write-off for that business owner. We could increase section 179 expensing. We could raise the business meal deduction. As a restaurant owner, raising meal deductions would in fact incentivize people to come to eat in a restaurant, would increase income, and would allow the employer to increase minimum wage through that effort.

Real estate tax relief is in the bill tomorrow that we can talk about. Tax credits encouraging the move from welfare to work. Getting people off of welfare into the workplace. This is something that would extend work opportunity tax credits. So there are some very, very good things in this bill. Tax relief for America's farmers and ranchers. Death tax relief.

The bill is constructed in such a way that I think, if we can talk logically and fairly, we can find an increase in minimum wage over 3 years, we can provide some relief and incentives for small businesses, and we can go away making a lot of people happy.

Regrettably, though, I hear the word bipartisan used around here a lot. If they would only work in a bipartisan manner, we would solve this issue. But that only assumes that one side agrees

100 percent with the other side's argument. Nowhere can we disagree without being accused of being obstructionists, stalling or doing those types of things. I would suggest to my colleagues that we could in fact work very clearly and quickly on this very, very important issue.

We want to help Americans, but I will also say that 1.2 percent of the American work force is at minimum wage. Those that are on minimum wage are usually just starting their job, or teenagers seeking their first jobs. Yes, I agree, and I said it before, I will vote to increase over 3 years a dollar per hour because I think it is important and it is warranted. But make no mistake about it, those people who are successfully fulfilling their jobs in the workplace are exceeding minimum wage because employers need employees and they will pay in order to retain good qualified workers.

SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

LAWSUIT ALLEGES VIOLATION OF EQUAL PAY ACT BY ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to report to my colleagues something that I am certain is as much of a piece of embarrassment to them as it is to me, and that is that on February 29 a Federal Court declared a class in a lawsuit against the Architect of the Capitol, our agent, that is to say the Congress of the United States, alleging that there has been a violation of the equal pay act; that we have been paying women less for doing the same work as men.

The women I am talking about are the women who clean the offices of Members, who keep this Capitol clean, and who, in fact, are responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the place where we work.

This was the first class action under the Congressional Accountability Act, the new act we passed, in order to hold Members and Congress itself accountable in the same way that we hold others. May I say that it should not have been necessary for this case to go this far. I am a former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and I have to tell my colleagues that when a case that looks like this is filed before the commission today, and for years now, they simply get settled out before they get this far.

This case not only did not get settled out when it was in our own administrative process, in the Office of Contract