

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating Ms. Jennette and all the teachers who help mold our children's lives every day.

A THREE-POINT PLAN FOR RESCUING THE NATION FROM VIOLENCE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the tragedy at Blacksburg, Virginia, it is becoming painfully obvious that the easy availability of handguns constitutes a growing national crisis of public health and safety, one that calls for a powerful, wide-ranging response from this Congress.

I am urging Members to support H.R. 676, the Conyers-Kucinich bill, which establishes a universal, not-for-profit health care system, which provides full and comprehensive mental health care.

Second, support H.R. 808, a bill establishing a Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which directly addresses the issues of domestic violence, gang violence, and violence in the schools which is reflected in our current homicide rates.

And third, the 33 deaths at Blacksburg constitute a national tragedy. So, too, does the fact that an average of 32 people each and every day in the United States perish in handgun-related incidents. Accordingly, I am drafting a bill to ban the purchase, sale, transfer or possession of handguns by civilians. A gun buy-back provision will be provided in the bill.

It's time for us to rescue this Nation from the violence which is engulfing it, and I have just articulated a three-point plan to do so.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BUILD A BETTER NATION

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

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker and Members, I stand here today as chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus to say thank you to America, thank you to the president and CEO of NBC News network, as well as the president and CEO of CBS News network. I had an opportunity to meet with them last week. They did the right thing.

Our country is in peril. We need to bring our country together. Thank you

very much for the senior staffs of both of those organizations and for the people of America for standing up and speaking out.

We are in trying times at the moment, and there is much we must do to bring our country together and make our families stronger. Kudos, most gracious love, to the women of the Rutgers' basketball team, 10 young women, all honor students, child prodigies, dedicated and working to make life better for themselves and for America, to get to Rutgers, to stay there, to achieve academic excellence, and, yes, then to excel. Also, kudos to the University of Tennessee women's basketball team, the NCAA women's basketball champions.

This is the 35th anniversary year of title IX. Title IX is the legislation 35 years ago that was enacted that would make an equal playing field for women in sports and athletics. We will celebrate title IX and have been all year. I have spoken to President McCormick, and the Congressional Black Caucus, the Speaker of the House and others will be welcoming the Rutgers and Tennessee teams as well as the president and coaching staffs to our city of Washington, DC, very soon. We will hold a 2-hour summit and hear from the National Organization For Women, a psychiatrist from Rutgers University, some renowned women and others who speak to the values of America.

Today we had the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in our Appropriations Committee. He came for his budget today. We talked about how do we make America better; how do we shut down some of the smut and other things that are negatively impacting our children. We are a better Nation than that. He has agreed to work with us and together, through this Congress, the FCC will be stronger. We must strengthen some of the things that they must do.

The 1934 law is archaic. The courts have interpreted that law very narrowly. This is far bigger than a person. This is about the strength and success of our families, of our children.

On behalf of the men and women who serve in this United States Congress, and specifically the men and women of the Congressional Black Caucus, let us rise up and build a better Nation for our sisters, our girls, our women, and, yes, our men and boys.

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

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

OPEN BORDER CHAOS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, recent memos that have been released finally by the Justice Department regarding certain situations in the Federal Government, specifically in the U.S. Attorney's office, have revealed numerous things. No wonder the Justice Department fought releasing these e-mails and memos.

We now understand that the prosecution of Federal drug cases along the Texas-Mexico border has dropped dramatically. All the way from Texas to California, prosecutions of drug cases have dropped. In some places up to 25 percent of drug cases are not prosecuted that were prosecuted just a year ago. What is happening is the Federal Government is not able to prosecute drug smugglers, and they are asking the States to prosecute those cases.

Many States—especially those counties on the border with Texas and Mexico, same was true in Arizona and Mexico, New Mexico and California and Mexico—don't have the resources to prosecute all those drug cases.

So what is happening is many cases are dropping through the cracks, all because the Federal Government has dropped 25 percent of prosecution of drug smugglers into the United States because they say they are overwhelmed with cases.

How many cases are we talking about? What types of drug cases? Well, in some cases they are prosecuting cases of only 500 pounds or more of marijuana. Five hundred pounds, that is just a number. But we can relate it to money, and 500 pounds of marijuana is worth about \$400,000. A drug smuggler smuggling in \$400,000 worth of dope or less, in some cases is getting a pass by the Federal Government because they say they are too overwhelmed with the illegal entry into the United States by drug smugglers.

If the States don't prosecute those cases, as many States are not able to do, what is happening is those drug smugglers are getting a get-out-of-jail-free card.

Drug smugglers are not stupid. They can weigh their marijuana. So all they got to do, before they bring that dope into the United States, is make sure they have less than 500 pounds, because if they are caught by our border agents, the Federal Government won't prosecute them because the Federal Government says we have too many cases.

This is absurd; this is nonsense. This is chaos. Law enforcement is mad about this, and rightfully so. One former DEA official in the El Paso sector made the comment that if the Feds decline to prosecute, and the State lacks the resources to prosecute these drug smugglers, they just go free. You have people violating the drug laws who now get away with it in the United States, all because the Federal Government doesn't do its job. The job is bigger than prosecuting drug smugglers. The job is protect the borders, and our Federal Government doesn't do that.

They claim that they are not prosecuting drug cases because they are prosecuting folks that illegally enter the United States. But maybe that is not true either. These same memos now reveal that in the State of Texas an illegal coming into the United States has to be captured six times before they are actually prosecuted criminally for being in the United States.

What happens is if they are caught the first six times, they are just taken home. Of course, they come right back to the United States. They are not being prosecuted. In Arizona, sometimes it is up to 11 times illegals enter the United States before they are criminally prosecuted for being here illegally.

So what is the Federal Government doing? Well, we do know they are spending a lot of their time prosecuting border protectors. They are spending a lot of taxpayer money to make deals, back-room deals with drug smugglers so that they can prosecute the likes of border agents Ramos and Compean, deputy sheriffs like Gilmer Hernandez, individuals who are enforcing the law.

The Federal Government's duty is to protect the dignity of this Nation. It needs to protect the border from everybody coming into the United States illegally, no matter the reason, but especially those people who are criminals, especially those drug smugglers who bring drugs into the United States and make a profit off of that human weakness, and now giving them a pass, because they are not bringing in enough dope? This is absurd. Not prosecuting illegals until the sixth or eleventh time because we don't supposedly have the resources is absurd, and it is all because we don't protect the dignity of the United States.

Border control in this country doesn't seem to even exist. Third World nations protect their borders better than the United States, and the United States protects the borders of other nations like Korea. Why don't we protect our own border?

While all of this is going on down there on the lawless border of the United States and Mexico, now we hear about a new reform package, a comprehensive immigration plan that is supposed to have little border security, supposed to have a lot of amnesty and supposed to have a whole lot more guest workers in the United States. That is not going to work.

What we need is the National Guard on the border. We need to protect the borders, the dignity of the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

THE FARM LABOR RECRUITMENT SYSTEM

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, on April 9, 2007, 29-year-old Toledoan, Santiago Raphael Cruz, was found bound, gagged and beaten to death in Monterrey, Mexico, in the office of his employer, the Toledo-based Farm Labor Organizing Committee, or FLOC.

Mr. Cruz moved from Toledo, Ohio, to Mexico 3 months ago to legally arrange for Mexican guest laborers to work for a North Carolina pickle plant with which FLOC has a contract. FLOC's efforts assured guest workers were treated humanely, that their papers were legal, and that the notorious crime-ridden labor recruitment system that characterizes farm labor on this continent would cease to exist.

FLOC, which is part of the AFL-CIO, is a farm labor union and social movement based in our district led by Baldemar Velasquez. FLOC is perhaps most recently known for achieving a fair labor contract for guest workers in the United States with H2A visas in North Carolina. Mr. Velasquez led that campaign, as well as one to organize pickle workers in Ohio in the 1980s, and has been recognized as a MacArthur Foundation fellow.

In Mexico, FLOC offered a safe, legal alternative to the exploitative promises of coyotes and those who charge exorbitant fees to smuggle Mexicans across the border. The union had been burglarized, and the workers harassed for their efforts to protect Mexicans wishing to work in our country.

I learned, as I learned more about Mr. Cruz's brutal murder, I asked myself whether this horrendous crime could have been encouraged by FLOC's noble efforts to stop the illegal trafficking and continental labor caused by NAFTA. I have called upon the governments of the United States and Mexico to fully investigate and bring the perpetrators of this horrendous crime to justice. These coyotes prey upon desperate Mexican workers whose lands were taken from them by the Mexican Government under NAFTA. NAFTA set up conditions in North America for cruel exploitation of millions of landless peasants and workers in Mexico.

Mr. Velasquez and FLOC worked endlessly to give people not only legal rights but hope for an end to the harsh treatment handed to them by the governments of the United States and of Mexico. The current and often illegal labor recruitment system is rife with corruption. It exploits landless peasants through a corrupt bounty system imposed by unsavory labor recruiters.

Many times I have said NAFTA fuels illegal immigration by creating an exodus of massive proportion of people from the Mexican countryside who need something to eat after their livelihoods are taken from them. The manner in which these people are being ex-

ploited is a continental sacrilege. The problem with NAFTA and NAFTA-style trade agreements is they fail to take people into account.

NAFTA and NAFTA-style agreements serve the interests primarily of the money classes. They reduce risks for Wall Street investors while raising the risk that workers in our heartland will lose their jobs and health care. They are manna for hedge funds, but a threat to the economic security of blue collar workers.

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They leave people out of the question. Whether it is campesinos in Mexico trying to provide food for their families and eke out an existence taken from them by their own government in cahoots with ours through NAFTA, or auto workers in the Midwest pursuing the American dream of a house, a car, and a better life for their children, they are the forgotten people in our global economy.

As Mr. Velasquez noted, Mr. Cruz had a good heart and was working for the people. Mr. Cruz gave his life in service to the forgotten people. We honor his commitment and we extend our sympathies to his family, to his friends, and to the entire FLOC community of which our community is so very proud.

His horrific death reminds us how brutal and unforgiving the NAFTA-induced labor system has become across our continent. It is time to renegotiate NAFTA. It is time not to extend it further. It is time to require continental labor standards that uphold the dignity of human life, not extinguish it.

Mr. Speaker, I submit extraneous material for printing in the RECORD, and I thank my colleague from Washington for allowing me to speak.

[From the toledoblade.com, April 12, 2007]

U.S. DEMANDS PROBE OF SLAYING

(By Clyde Hughes)

The U.S. General Consulate Office in Mexico is pressing for a complete investigation in the beating death of a Toledo union worker found dead early Monday at the union's office in Monterrey, U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo) said yesterday.

Law enforcement officials from the state of Nuevo Leon are investigating the death of Santiago Rafael Cruz, 29, a Mexican native who has lived in Toledo since 1998 and had worked for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee as manager of its Monterrey office for three months, said Baldemar Velasquez, longtime president of the union.

Mr. Velasquez said he believed Mr. Cruz's death is directly related to FLOC's efforts to organize workers in the Monterrey area.

He said the union's education efforts made workers there less susceptible to people who would charge workers large sums of money to enter the United States illegally.

FLOC's program there recruits Mexican residents interested in going to the United States as part of a guest-worker program through a contract the union has with a North Carolina pickle company, union officials said.

Mr. Cruz was bound, gagged, and beaten, Miss Kaptur said yesterday.

She said she talked with Edward Hartney, consul for politics and economic affairs with the U.S. consulate general in Monterrey,