

longer be able to live with that remarkable man, no longer be able to love him and hug him.

So I ask this body to remember those like Rick Eagan who put their lives before themselves, work hard to make our country a better place to live, work, and raise a family. And I ask that the Lord allow Commissioner Rick Eagan to be in His hands, and may my dear friend and my community rest in peace.

MULTIPLE SALES REPORTING

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the ATF announced the results of the first 8 months of its Multiple Sales Reporting program, or MSR, for semiautomatic rifles. The numbers prove the MSR is already an invaluable tool in fighting gun trafficking along the southwest border. There were more than 3,000 reports accounting for the purchase of 7,300 rifles between Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. These reports resulted in more than 120 criminal investigations; and, subsequently, 25 cases involving 100 defendants have been recommended for prosecution. The ATF also reported a decline in large volume rifle purchases, indicating that traffickers are altering their criminal activity due to the new reporting requirement.

The MSR program was created to counteract the dangerous trafficking of guns along our border with Mexico. These guns fuel the cartels' war in Mexico, destabilizing our southern neighbor and third-largest trading partner. According to ATF data, 70 percent of the firearms recovered and traced from drug cartel crimes in Mexico originated in the United States.

So in light of the positive impact the MSR has had, what is the House voting to do just this week? That's right, repeal the measure. A policy rider in the Commerce, Justice, and Science 2013 appropriations bill would cut off funding for reporting the sale of multiple semiautomatic rifles. Yes, this House will vote to block funding that is successfully removing semiautomatic rifles from the underground gun trade. These are the guns that endanger Americans along the border and fuel an all-out war in a neighboring country. Ending the MSR requirement is not about protecting anyone's rights.

Reporting the sale of multiple semiautomatic rifles does not infringe on Second Amendment rights. In fact, a similar Multiple Sales Reporting requirement has been in place for handguns for over 20 years. The necessary paperwork takes gun dealers 12 minutes to complete, but can give law enforcement crucial intelligence on straw purchased rifles.

A George Bush-appointed Federal judge upheld the MSR requirement, finding that it did not disturb the balance between regulation and a gun

owner's right to privacy. So the gun lobby has now turned to cutting its funding because why allow programs successfully fighting gun trafficking to continue undisturbed? This has become an all-too-familiar event for the ATF, which has operated under temporary leadership since 2006 due to blocked confirmation in the Senate. But it's beyond just that administration.

According to The Washington Post, in 2010, the ATF had the same number of agents it had in 1970 while the FBI has grown by 50 percent and the DEA by 233 percent. Gun ownership records are kept on paper because the NRA has successfully lobbied against funding computerized records.

With recordkeeping from the fifties and funding from the seventies, it's no wonder law enforcement struggles in 2012. So maybe it's not surprising the MSR program would encounter such heated opposition. An effective investigative tool for law enforcement with only a negligible effect on gun dealers, that would be evidence of regulatory solutions that can work for everyone—the dealers, the buyers, and, most importantly, the public. And that's exactly what the gun lobby doesn't want.

If commonsense solutions like Multiple Sales Reporting can stand, what's next? Requiring background checks for sales at gun shows, which 69 percent of NRA members support? Denying people on the terrorist watch list the right to buy a gun?

To the gun lobby, there's nothing scarier than common sense winning out. So this week, let's scare them. Let's win one for common sense. Let's keep reporting the sale of multiple semiautomatic rifles like we do with handguns. Let's allow the ATF to continue making progress against dangerous gun trafficking on our southwest border. Let's make a choice that's best for law enforcement, our security, and for common sense.

GOP AGENDA: SHREDDING THE SAFETY NET WHILE PROTECTING DEFENSE

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this body will vote on a Republican budget bill that is nothing short of reprehensible. Once again, my friends on the other side of the aisle are insisting that the poor and working-class families continue to suffer and struggle because heaven forbid we should ask the Department of Defense to do its share to meet our fiscal challenges.

You can't walk into this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, without hearing a self-serving and self-righteous lecture from a Member of the majority about fiscal responsibility. But when they say, Let's cut spending, what they really mean is, Let's shred the safety net.

So their bill puts a giant bull's-eye on the programs that struggling fami-

lies need to keep their heads above water, especially in this tough economy. Under their bill, fewer women will get breast cancer screenings, fewer poor children will get meals at school or access to health care, and 1.7 million fewer seniors will get Meals on Wheels and other home-based services. They are willing to cut Medicare child abuse prevention and consumer financial protection, and they want to push 1.8 million people off the food stamp program—a program, by the way, that my family needed to survive when I was a single working mom more than 40 years ago. I don't know what we would have done without food stamps.

But guess which part of the Federal Government—which bloated, well-fed bureaucracy—continues to get lavish support from the majority? That's right—the Pentagon, the military industrial complex. Even though the sequester is supposed to apply across the board, the majority wants to exempt defense and make domestic programs absorb all the cuts. That's the way they do business. They pinch pennies on the very real human needs of the American people. They nickel and dime hardworking families who deserve a fair shot and need a hand up.

For 10½ years, Mr. Speaker, we've been at war. And between Iraq and Afghanistan, the American people are out \$1.3 trillion—that's trillion, with a T, Mr. Speaker—\$1.3 trillion wasted on a policy that is killing our people, hurting our national security, and undermining our standing in the world.

For pennies on the dollar, we could replace permanent warfare with a SMART Security platform that will keep our country safe by focusing on development, diplomacy, and investment in humanitarian needs in the developing world. And we'd have plenty left over—plenty—to shore up the safety net, fund antipoverty programs, and restore the American Dream.

If we're serious about reducing the deficit, then progressives are willing to talk, but there has to be a shared sacrifice. There has to be a balanced approach. We won't take it out on our most vulnerable people, not when we're waging a failed war that is our biggest ticket item, not when we continue to throw billions of dollars at Cold War aircraft and weapons systems that are serving absolutely no purpose.

□ 1040

And not when we continue to maintain a nuclear arsenal that's enough to destroy civilization several times over. Targeting social services while giving defense and war spending a free pass is not fiscal responsibility. It's ideological warfare.

Let's get our priorities straight. It's time to cut defense spending, Mr. Speaker. It's time to bring our troops home. And it's time to reinvest in the American people. And the time is now.

LIFTING OF MORATORIUM ON POSTAL CLOSURES

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

Ms. SEWELL. I rise today in support of America's postal workers, small businesses, senior citizens, and rural communities across this Nation. I stand before this Chamber gravely concerned about the future of the United States Postal Service and the impact of its fiscal crisis on communities across America.

The Postal Service is an iconic American institution woven into the fabric of our everyday lives. For more than 200 years, the men and women of the United States Postal Service have fulfilled their mission to deliver universal, trusted, timely, and effective service to the American people. Americans depend on the postal service, rain or shine, six days a week, from Montana to Alabama, from New York to California, from Florida to Alaska. Whether it's overnight, flat rate, first class, the United States Postal Service delivers.

Today, the Postal Service is teetering on the brink of insolvency and its future remains uncertain. Significant declines in first-class mail volume, evolving consumer trends, and increasing expenditures and operating costs mean that the Postal Service must reduce its footprint, reorganize, and take drastic measures to remain viable and competitive in the 21st century.

On May 15, the moratorium on postal closure will be lifted and thousands of post offices and mail processing facilities across this country will be targeted for closure. If Congress does not act, the lifting of this moratorium could mark the beginning of a slow and painful process of downsizing, layoffs, and reorganization for the U.S. Postal Service. We must take swift and decisive action to create a more efficient business model for the United States Postal Service. I believe that an investment in the future of the Postal Service is an investment in our economy, in small businesses, and in the American people. It requires our prompt attention and deserves our immediate action.

So much is at stake in this debate over postal reform. We know that reform is necessary, given the current market reality. But we cannot reform the postal service on the backs of the rural and underserved communities throughout this country. For so many of these communities, the post office is the meeting place—the place where you send your packages and receive your medicine.

The lifting of the moratorium on May 15 is an issue of utmost concern to the constituents that I represent in Alabama. In towns like Oak Hill, Magnolia, and Sawyerville, Alabama, the local post office is much more than a place for sending and receiving mail. Post offices are vital lifelines for these

rural, isolated communities. These lifelines must be preserved and protected. I am committed to ensuring that we as Americans have access to affordable, reliable, and efficient postal service.

Consider the ripple effect and the economic impact of the closure of a post office and how that may affect an entire community. Imagine small town America, where the local post office lies at the heart of the community and is an integral part of its history and identity. This is the case in many of the communities across my district. The fact is, the closure of postal offices will devastate small towns like Gainesville, Coy, and Myrtlewood, Alabama, and so many across this Nation.

Yes, we must all buckle up. We must all decide to show fiscal responsibility. And in these market conditions, we know that reductions are necessary. But surely we can do something to make sure that these reductions are not on the backs of the rural, underserved, and underprivileged communities. Many of the postal services that are being offered are irreplaceable in these communities. For seniors who can't leave their homes, mail carriers deliver lifesaving medication. And for small businesses, postal services like bulk and flat-rate mail enable them to grow and create jobs.

The United States Postal Service provides Americans with universal and invaluable service, and I urge my colleagues to come together and pass a bipartisan comprehensive plan for the future of the United States Postal Service that will not disproportionately affect underserved communities.

ATF LONG GUN PROVISION IN CJS BILL

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong objection to an unwise and dangerous policy provision that is included in the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill on the floor today. It would undermine the ability of Federal law enforcement to investigate and curb gun trafficking along the Southwest border.

In August of last year, the ATF began a program to require licensed gun dealers in the four most dangerous border States to report when an individual buys multiple assault rifles within 5 business days—just as all dealers have reported multiple handgun sales for over 20 years. The current rule is narrowly tailored to generate useful intelligence on illegal gun trafficking by Mexican drug cartels. According to ATF data, 70 percent of firearms recovered and traced in drug cartel crimes in Mexico originated from the United States. We know that semiautomatic assault rifles sold by U.S. dealers near the border fuel Mexican cartel violence—violence that has killed more than 47,000 people in Mexico, including thousands of police and military personnel.

This rule is working. In just the past 9 months, ATF opened more than 120 criminal investigations based on multiple assault rifle sales reports. And this action is constitutional. The rule is indisputably constitutional. The authority to operate such a program has been upheld by Federal courts. So there's no question about the legal authority. But this bill that we will vote on today, at the behest of the NRA and other gun groups, would block funding for this vital law enforcement program.

Unfortunately, this is only the latest in a long list of irresponsible actions this Congress has taken on gun policy, such as the fact that due to Congressional action, loaded firearms are now permitted in National Parks. The D.C. voting rights bill that enjoyed joint bipartisan support was scuttled by requiring restrictions on the D.C. City Council regarding the type of gun safety laws that they could enact if they wanted their right to vote.

Restrictions blocking State and local law enforcement access to important crime gun trace data were made permanent. Just last year, the House passed legislation to override the concealed carry requirements of individual States, establishing a lowest common denominator Federal standard.

Despite all of these actions to weaken gun laws, judging by the outlandish statements from the NRA, you would think that the Second Amendment was under constant bombardment. Wayne LaPierre, vice president of the NRA, said last year that the claim that the Obama administration has done virtually nothing to restrict the rights of gun owners is "a big fat stinking lie." He went further to claim that the President's lack of action is "all part of a massive Obama conspiracy to deceive voters and hide his true intentions to destroy the Second Amendment in our country." Again, another LaPierre quote.

Actions are supposed to speak louder than words, but apparently for some people, crazy conspiracy fantasies speak loudest of all.

Instead of weakening gun laws further, we should be passing commonsense measures that are supported by the vast majority of Americans. In fact, according to a poll conducted by Republican pollster Frank Luntz, 82 percent of NRA members and 86 percent of non-NRA gun owners support prohibiting suspected terrorists from purchasing guns; 69 percent of NRA members and 85 percent of non-NRA gun owners support background checks for all gun sales at gun shows.

□ 1050

And yet the NRA opposes these commonsense restrictions and gets this Congress to do so as well.

There are bills introduced in Congress right now to address these two issues, the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act and the Fix Gun Checks Act. Neither one has received so much as a subcommittee hearing in this Republican Congress.