

almost 10 times the number of Americans lost on that tragic day in 9/11; and each year, we face another massacre: Aurora, Tucson, Virginia Tech, and now Newtown.

Time for our outrage to return us to action and reshape this gun culture. It is in our hands.

SIMPLE RESPECT FOR OUR VETERANS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE U.S. TERRITORIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, as we end the 112th Congress, we are faced with two crises: the fiscal cliff crisis; and now a gun crisis and a mental health crisis, that comes to us from Newtown, Connecticut. When you consider that this is a Congress which has not been able to handle even minor issues, much less crises, one begins to wonder whether we will live up to what is required of any person who is a Member of the United States Congress.

□ 1050

This morning, I come for something less than a crisis for the country, something far easier to solve. I am calling on the Defense Authorization Conference Committee to solve a simple noncrisis problem, a problem, though, that casts shame on our treatment of our active-duty military, our veterans, and their families.

Thanks to Chairman BUCK McKEON and Ranking Member ADAM SMITH, the House passed Defense Authorization bill contains a simple provision. That provision says that when you raise the flags of the 50 States at military ceremonies, if you're raising or displaying the flags of the 50 States, you must also display the flags of the District of Columbia and the five territories.

The territories and the District have always served disproportionately in war, but what we are asking for today and what the House bill provides is the simple respect that anyone who wears the uniform and any family member of that active military person or veteran is entitled to.

I thank the House for recognizing that in some matters all of us are certainly equal. We are all equal in according respect for members of our military. I've spoken with Senator LEVIN, the chair of the Defense Authorization Committee, and am convinced that he is for this provision. I have spoken to the White House at the highest levels, and I have asked all concerned to simply recede to the House provision.

For reasons that escape us all, the Senate removed this provision when the House, last year, put it in the Defense Authorization bill. It would be impossible to remove this provision if the Members of the Senate, who are responsible for doing so, could have heard

from our veterans who went to speak to the staff of Senator McCain and Senator LEVIN and told of their own experience. There was the colonel who said that when he was welcomed home from the Gulf War, the flag of every State was raised, but not the flag of the District of Columbia. There was the mother who wrote me, Tomi Rucker, to say that she and the father went to the graduation of her son from Navy boot camp Great Lakes Naval Station full of pride, and as each graduate's name was called, the home state flag was raised, but no flag for Jonathan Rucker of the District of Columbia when his name was called. The colonel's son, who came back three times from war, a combat veteran in Iraq, and each and every time the flag of the District of Columbia was not raised as the flags of others were.

And my colleagues from the territories have come forward with equally heartbreaking stories. This, my colleagues of the House of Representatives, you can solve, you can solve this very day, and my colleagues in the other body need only follow your lead.

The Defense Department some months ago issued a memorandum that said that raising the flags should be done at the discretion of the commander. Well, it wasn't at the commander's discretion that our young men and women volunteered to risk their lives for their country. And would such a memorandum have been put forward to say that the commander could decide whether to honor the flag of Virginia or Maryland, to take my closest neighbors, when their veterans came home? What is the difference between their veterans who have gone to war and the veterans of the District of Columbia?

There are very few ways to honor our veterans. We honor foreign dignitaries by raising their flag. The least we can do is to honor our own military, our veterans and their families, by raising the flags of their home district or territory.

IN RECOGNITION OF MS. CAROLYN COLEMAN'S 45 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WORKING FAMILIES AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS

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

Mr. CURSON of Michigan. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Ms. Carolyn Coleman, executive secretary to the secretary treasurer of the International Union, UAW, on her retirement.

As a Member of Congress, it is both my privilege and honor to recognize Ms. Coleman for her many years of service and her contributions which have enriched and strengthened our communities. Ms. Coleman brings a lifetime of experience to her current position with the United Auto Workers, a career which began in July of

1967 in the UAW's women's department. Carolyn's skill and knowledge led her to be selected to premiere assignments. She directly assisted many great union leaders in their important work, including UAW Vice Presidents Dick Shoemaker and Cal Rapson, as well as UAW President Owen Bieber, and UAW Secretary Treasurer Dennis Williams, her current supervisor.

Her work is impeccable, her advice valued, and her friendship treasured. Carolyn is one of the many unsung heroes of the labor movement. She was never the one who gained headlines for making fiery speeches that inspired the masses or received credit for labor agreements that have lifted so many working families into the prosperous middle class. But behind the scenes, she contributed to both. For 45 years, Carolyn Coleman reported to work for the United Auto Workers with one simple goal in mind: to do her very best work so that working people will have a better life.

Ms. Coleman believes in her community and has shown a commitment which has exceeded the years of her tenure with the UAW. A longtime member of Hartford Memorial, she has long been actively volunteering in numerous ministries of her church. As well as being a member of the Red Hat Club, she has volunteered her time in a broad array of capacities and community activities.

In addition to her service to the community, Ms. Coleman is the proud mother of two daughters and a son: Lisa, Tonya, and Jimmie. She is also a proud grandmother to six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

I ask that my colleagues join me today to honor Ms. Carolyn Coleman for her dedicated service to working men and women. I join with many others who have been blessed to have worked beside her and have benefited from her labors to wish her many more years of health, happiness, and productive service to our community.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Lord of the ages, ever faithful to Your promises, be with Your people now and forever.

The sun grows dim and the daylight is measured. In the darkness, phantoms loom. The eye cannot discern as the distance fades. Be a light for us.

Help the Members of this people's House make clear judgments that will propel us into a future filled with hope. Remove all clouds of darkness that they might follow the patterns of light that come from Your gifts of wisdom and understanding.

O Lord of the ages, ever faithful to Your promises, be with Your people now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALDEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

POSTPONING CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR

The SPEAKER. This is the day for the call of the Private Calendar.

Without objection, the Private Calendar will be called after 1-minute speeches today.

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH NEWTOWN

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Friday's massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, was heart-breaking. Americans are devastated as reports emerge detailing how a deranged individual murdered 20 innocent children, six heroic faculty members, and his mother before turning the gun on himself.

As a husband to a former school teacher, a father, a grandfather, and an American, my thoughts and prayers are with the teachers, families, children, and first responders involved in last Friday's school shooting. Our hearts go out to the Newtown community as we mourn.

This kind of senseless, horrific violence has no place in American society. As elected officials, it's our responsibility to make sure work is done to prevent these types of devastating events from ever happening again.

I appreciate the Rotary Club of Newtown for its efforts to assist the victims of the Sandy Hook school tragedy, their families, and those in the Newtown community who have been affected.

SANDY HOOK TRAGEDY

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, today we mourn as a nation with Newtown, Connecticut, and the Sandy Hook Elementary community. My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of this horrendous tragedy and their families.

On Friday, 27 people, including children, had their futures stolen from them as a result of another senseless act of violence. My heart breaks for their loved ones and the community of Newtown.

Unfortunately, this is the fourth mass shooting that our Nation has endured in as many years. This tragedy in particular hits home for the millions of parents across America because the victims were elementary school kids—children who expected to be in a safe and secure environment.

We must begin to have a meaningful discussion not only on gun control, but about the security of our schools, as well as the access to mental health care services. While one bill won't end all evil actions, Congress must begin to work together to improve the safety of our citizens.

I'd like to conclude with honoring our Nation's teachers, those individuals who day in and day out provide for and nurture our children, and in this circumstance, gave their lives.

DUE PROCESS FOR OREGON'S FARMERS

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, over 2 weeks ago, I came to this floor to ask for answers from the Department of Labor on behalf of Oregon farmers. Well, yesterday, I did get a letter from the Secretary, which I appreciated, but it was not answering our questions from the delegation. It was congratulating me on my reelection.

122 days ago, nearly every member of the Oregon delegation, Republicans and Democrats, wrote the Labor Secretary after hearing reports of so-called "hot goods" enforcement tactics that stopped shipments of highly perishable berries with little opportunity for appeal.

One farmer was told verbally that a shipment was on hold because the inspector determined it was impossible for an individual picker to pick as much as records showed. But to lift the hold, the farm was directed to pay an undetermined amount in fines and back wages and sign a consent judgment requiring the farm to "waive further findings of fact"—without even getting an explanation of alleged violations.

The farm was left with the choice of paying the fine and signing the consent judgment or allowing a few hundred thousand dollars of perishable produce to spoil. In the end, the farm felt it had little choice but to pay the \$170,000 and sign the consent judgment so that the fruit could be shipped.

In light of these and other complaints, our delegation asked the Department for detail on its policies and procedures for making these decisions; 122 days later, we've yet to get an answer. That's not right.

CUTS TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I just don't get this discussion about the fiscal cliff.

Republicans are saying that in order to raise taxes on the very wealthiest Americans—and actually, by a historically small amount—that the price that has to be paid is to ask the poorest adult Americans to pay more, that is, to reduce Social Security and Medicare benefits.

I don't get the equivalency that is being asked for: the richest to pay a bit more, and the price to be that the poor, the poorest, have to pay more. Seniors in this country have a median income of just \$22,000 a year. That means half of all seniors are below that. They also spend an average, right now, of \$4,500 a year on health care costs out of their own pockets.

So I think that we have to change the debate here. There is a parable in the Bible that makes this point. When you ask a person with one coat to give up that coat, it's not the same as asking someone with 10 coats to donate one to the cause.