

U.S. MARINE JON HAMMAR

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the plight of the United States Marine veteran, Jon Hammar, who has been unjustly jailed in a Mexican prison since August. Jon is an American hero and a patriot.

After tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan, including time in Fallujah, Jon began to suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome. In order to help cope with PTSD, Jon and a friend embarked upon a surfing trip to Costa Rica. However, when they got to Mexico, Jon was arrested after receiving inaccurate information from our own Customs and Border Patrol agents. Since then, Jon has been languishing in his own personal hell. He was beaten by other inmates, his parents were being extorted, and he has been chained to his bed.

I'm asking my fellow Members of Congress to join me and over 50 of our colleagues to urge our State Department and the Mexican authorities to resolve this matter immediately and bring Jon Hammar home for Christmas. Please call our congressional office to sign these important letters.

□ 1210

ENACT A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, as both parties continue to negotiate over the looming fiscal cliff, Congress is presented with a real opportunity to pass long-term, comprehensive deficit reduction plans. We cannot let this opportunity pass us by.

Of course, this is not the first time that Congress has tried to solve this challenge, but it is vital that we learn from our past failures. We have to check our partisan talking points at the door and put everything on the negotiating table.

This time, let's work from the middle out to build a bipartisan consensus, instead of searching for solutions at the ideological extremes. This time, let's listen to the vast majority of Americans who occupy the middle ground and who want Congress to enact a bipartisan solution, a bipartisan solution that would help restore the public's confidence in Congress while reassuring the nervous financial markets. And most importantly, it would secure a lasting economic future for our country. The American people deserve nothing less.

RESTORE THE AMERICAN DREAM

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, we must remember America is exceptional, and

the entrepreneurial spirit and innovative drive of our small businessowners is what makes the American engine hum.

Two-thirds of all new jobs created in America are by these men and women who risk capital, give their time and effort, and take risks to grow their business. We call this the American Dream. When we place too many obstacles on small businesses, it stifles their ability to grow, hinders their ability to hire new employees, and slows our economic recovery.

As we discuss and debate the fiscal cliff deadline that is quickly approaching, we must keep in mind this American Dream. Our policies should focus on how our Nation creates jobs and the economy grows. It's the drive and determination of the American people that makes the United States the most prosperous Nation the world has ever seen. Now is our time to unite around sound pro-growth, pro-job creation policies.

Mr. Speaker, let's create long-term certainty when it comes to taxes and regulations. Let's reduce spending and rein in the national debt. Let's help our Nation restore the American Dream.

WE MUST FIND CONSENSUS

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, our constituents across this great Nation are looking to Congress for leadership.

Here we are, back in Washington this week, still in negotiations to find a compromise to avert this so-called "fiscal cliff." The yearend is fast approaching. Before last Friday, almost every conversation I had with my neighbors back in Oregon centered on this question: What will happen after January 1? How much will taxes increase if Congress, as is too often the case, is too paralyzed by gridlock to act?

My constituents found common ground in expressing this simple view: that the middle class families and those who are struggling have done enough to bear the brunt of the country's economic difficulties and should not be asked to pay more. To see people coming together to ask their legislators to do what is right, what is balanced, and what is responsible encouraged me that we might reach some solution.

So I'm here today, Mr. Speaker, to ask that we all join together to do what my constituents and your constituents and all of our constituents have asked us to do. We must find consensus and allow tax rates on most Americans to remain as they are so our communities and businesses can move forward with certainty and faith in their government to work together and do what's right for our constituents.

KEEP CRUSHABLE PILLS OFF THE MARKET

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

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, while the impending fiscal cliff is on our minds, I rise to alert my colleagues to another end-of-the-year deadline with potentially deadly consequences. If the FDA fails to act, on January 1 our streets could be flooded with cheap, crushable prescription painkillers ripe for abuse and misuse.

After OxyContin came on the market 15 years ago, a wave of overdose deaths devastated entire towns in my region of Appalachian Kentucky before spreading like wildfire to the big cities and suburban communities across the country. By crushing these 12-hour-delay pain pills, abusers can experience a euphoric, and sometimes deadly, high.

But today, the FDA has an opportunity to keep these crushable pills out of our children's reach. A number of prescription medicines already on the market use tamper-resistant technologies that can cut back on abuse. No generic pill should come to market without these live-saving features.

The FDA must take the necessary steps to keep us from careening off this pain-pill cliff.

REINSTATE THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, we've been to this place before. Before the gut-churning horror and sadness of the killings at the elementary school in Newtown, there was a movie theater in Aurora, a college campus in Virginia, a high school in Columbine.

On Friday, I couldn't stop thinking about my own grandson, Josiah, who is 6 and a first-grader at a school in Colorado. How much grief is enough? I think this grief is enough.

We need to reinstate the assault weapons ban. We need to ban high-capacity clips. We need more thorough background checks. And we need to offer more mental health services. But a life taken with a handgun is no less of a tragedy. A mother does not suffer less knowing that her child's life was extinguished with a gun that did not have a 30-round clip. Guns kill people. They need to be a lot harder to buy. We need to do a lot more to get them off our streets.

This is our time, colleagues. This is our time. We need to pass bold, necessary, overdue gun control legislation. If we do not, this will happen again.

IN MEMORY OF TOMMY DECKER OF COLD SPRING

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the service and the memory of Officer Tommy Decker of Cold Spring, Minnesota.

On November 29, Officer Tommy Decker was tragically killed in the line of duty, and he was only 31 years old. Officer Decker served with distinction. In 6 years at the Cold Spring Police Department, he received no less than six commendations and letters of appreciation. He touched so many lives in his distinguished career. The overwhelming outpouring of community love and support at the funeral, where there were over 3,000 police cars, was an amazing sight to behold, and I was privileged to be there.

In honor of Officer Decker's service, I'm proud to join with all of Minnesota's colleagues to introduce legislation to rename his hometown post office the Officer Tommy Decker Memorial Post Office. We hope to complete that soon.

And though he is no longer with us, Officer Decker's example of unparalleled courage and compassion lives on, and I pray that his four young children will grow up to know just how much their father meant to the people of Minnesota and what a remarkable hero and an example he was to us all.

□ 1220

PREVENTING THE NEXT SANDY HOOK TRAGEDY

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, in our continuing efforts to turn the tragic events at Newtown to high purpose, I include in the RECORD today two articles from the USA Today newspaper, one entitled, "A Boy Lost in the Shadows," and another, "Newtown Puts Mental Services in Spotlight."

These articles remind me of a conversation I had a few years ago with a caring grade-school teacher from my own district who became quite frustrated with the local school system's inability to help her manage the behavior of a child in her elementary classroom. After repeated attempts that took 3 years—and let me emphasize 3 years—the teacher was able to have the child referred to behavioral specialists and placed in a more appropriate learning environment.

As a society, we seem to lack the methods to identify troubled youth and to put them on a proper path early to healing. Too often, a child is left floundering due to our collective inability to help him find a constructive path forward. Many of our local boards of education often are not properly equipped to identify and assist children who are uncivil or who are completely alienated in their surroundings.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased with the President's announcement the

other night, that of a commission on youth violence to be formed to look into what is happening across our country; let us hope that it provides a national forum to listen to those voices among us who grapple with these human challenges every day. This must be our responsibility to future generations.

A CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise first to offer my deepest condolences to the families of the victims in the recent Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy. In addition, I add my voice to the outcry of my colleagues, constituents, and Americans around the Nation to call for action against gun violence in this country. This Connecticut tragedy was the 30th mass murder in the U.S. since the 1999 Columbine incident, but mass murders only represent a small portion of the gun violence in America. In my hometown of Newark, New Jersey, 348 shootings and 93 deaths occurred last year as a result of gun violence.

Unfortunately, it is too late to save these victims, but it is not too late to prevent the next attack. With stricter gun laws and the ban on certain types of guns, specifically assault weapons, carnage clips, and armor-piercing bullets, it would undoubtedly help to save lives. Now is the time for action.

PREVENTING ANOTHER SANDY HOOK MASSACRE

(Ms. DEGETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, 20 beautiful children and their loving teachers were shot by a deranged man with an assault rifle that had a high-capacity magazine. The time has come for us to have a national conversation about this—about mental health, about the community issues, about school safety, and about these types of weapons.

Now, we know we are never going to be able to stop disturbed individuals from going into a school or a movie theater or a shopping mall to do harm, but we can slow them down. We don't have to give them so many bullets in high-capacity clips so that they can shoot 26 people in 10 minutes multiple times. We can take those away, and that will give people a fighting chance. By limiting those clips, we can save lives.

We can start right now by doing that, Mr. Speaker. There is a bill which Congresswoman MCCARTHY, Congresswoman MALONEY, and I are sponsoring. We can pass the bill this week on a bipartisan basis, and we can tell the moms and dads of America that it's a first step to keeping their kids safe.

FIXING THE ECONOMY

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

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on us to work together quickly.

We have an opportunity to accelerate the Nation's recovery, create jobs, and reduce our deficit but only if we are willing to do it together and take a balanced approach. Failing to do so will hurt millions of families and will create unnecessary uncertainty for small businesses.

We will be hurting families like Blaine and Jeannie Parks, with whom I met last weekend at their home in Redmond, Washington. Blaine is a truck driver, and Jeannie works at an elementary school. Blaine also owns a small fishing guide company. They told me how worried they are about higher taxes and cuts to programs they count on, like our schools. They work hard, pay their fair share; and for them a tax hike would make it harder for them to make ends meet. It would hurt Blaine's business and would prevent them from taking care of basic things like simple repairs to their home.

I hope that the next time I see the Parks family, I will be able to say that Congress came together, saved them from a tax hike, and got our economy back on track.

EXTEND THE MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. On behalf of the citizens of the Fourth Congressional District of Georgia, I wish to extend our condolences to the people of the great State of Connecticut. Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, unless this Congress acts, taxes will go up on the middle class by \$2,200 starting in January 2013. As time is wasted, tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans are being held hostage in order to give more tax breaks to the wealthy. It is ridiculous to hold the whole Nation hostage to protect the top 2 percent of Americans, and it is more egregious to continue offering plans that would balance the budget on the backs of the middle class.

I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle to extend the middle class tax cuts, sending the American people a hopeful message of compromise during this holiday season.

SENIOR CITIZENS ARE COLLATERAL DAMAGE

(Ms. BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Social Security has nothing to do with the debt