

that have been faced with difficult circumstances. I trust that my colleagues in Congress will now come to our aid.

THE NEWTOWN TRAGEDY AND THE NEED FOR TIGHTER GUN CONTROL

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, every corner of America has been deeply affected by the tragic loss of so many lives in Newtown, Connecticut. We mourn for the enormity of grief and for the inconsolable loss visited upon Newtown's families, and we know that our response to Newtown must not and cannot go the way of the many other senseless acts of violence we almost routinely witness. The tragedy in Newtown must be a call to action.

Members from both sides of the aisle have acknowledged that it is time for a conversation about the accessibility of high-capacity weapons in our country and of the culture of violence we live in. This conversation is long overdue, and it is simply not an option to allow this discussion to become stagnant or to be bullied into silence by seemingly untouchable organizations.

America's laws must reasonably control gun manufacturing, sale, and usage. We must act to make real changes that will provide real protection for America's families. In the days to come, let us work together to do just that.

LET US MOURN WITH ACTION

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, you will hear many voices being raised in the backdrop of an unspeakable tragedy from which, even as Members think of it, they cry.

Just a few minutes ago, there was a press conference in which there was probably not a dry eye in that room as Members gave tribute to those lives lost and to those being buried today, and as they spoke of their own anguish, their lost children, and of the loss of their fellow staff members in a gun incident.

So I rise today to say that we must act and can act and can pass legislation even this week. I join with Senator FEINSTEIN's effort and Congressman PERLMUTTER's and Congresswoman MCCARTHY's and that of many others with legislation. I join with the legislation of H.R. 277, that talks about protecting our children, which was introduced by myself. I join with the statement by the Progressive Caucus that speaks about this ammunition, these guns, and mental health. I also join with Dick's Sporting Goods store.

I will just personally say to those who are listening: maybe you'll want to turn in your guns. Oh, no. I am not going to take your guns, but look at

what Dick's Sporting Goods did in the moment they wanted to be part of the solution and a part of America. Let us mourn with action.

God bless those who have lost their lives.

□ 1220

COMMEMORATING LIFE OF JENNI RIVERA

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and commemorate the life of Mexican American singer Jenni Rivera. Jenni used her powerful voice, soulful singing style, and honest lyrics to create a message that spoke to the resiliency of women.

That powerful voice was silenced forever when she and six others were killed in a plane crash on November 9. Born and raised in Long Beach, California, to immigrant parents from Mexico, Jenni Rivera started her career selling her CDs at flea markets. When she died at the age of 43, Jenni was a top-selling artist, an actress, television producer, and entrepreneur.

Tragically, she was on the cusp of multicultural stardom when she died. She had just finished filming her first film and was in talks with ABC to star in her own sitcom.

Her talent and authenticity shined brightly in a music genre dominated by men. Jenni's lyrics offered a new and refreshing woman's perspective.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the memory of Jenni Rivera and the message of empowerment she gave to millions of women that she spoke for.

IMPLEMENTING THE HIRE ACT

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, as more and more of our brave warriors return from Afghanistan, more and more of them are looking for work. It's our duty as a Nation to make sure that we're doing everything possible to get these troops reemployed. That's why I'd like to applaud both the Senate and the House for including in the National Defense Authorization Act the Helping Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Return to Employment, the HIRE Act.

What it does is establish a very commonsense process that encourages State credentialing authorities to consider certain military occupational training when granting licenses. It makes absolutely no sense to force a battlefield medic to spend time and Federal dollars taking redundant training to be an EMT. It makes no sense for a State agency that wouldn't count hundreds of hours driving heavy equipment in Afghanistan to get a CDL li-

cense. The Department of Defense spends \$140 billion a year training our military personnel, the best in the world. It would be ludicrous to not use that investment to get them jobs here at home.

Eight States have already passed legislation to develop the process. I encourage Members of Congress, talk to their State and their Governor to get this done.

FISCAL TURNING POINT

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, as a Nation, we are gaining momentum as our economy gets back on track. For my constituents in San Diego, home prices are on the rise and most employers are adding jobs and hours instead of cutting back. We cannot afford to undo the progress we are making, especially for the middle class.

The only way to accelerate our economic progress is to balance economic development with protection for the most vulnerable Americans from job losses, tax increases, and program cuts. Americans young and old need to know that Congress believes in the future and that we'll work together to keep our country on the rise.

I think often of Gandhi's statement: The future depends on what we do in the present.

Let's not waste this critical opportunity to advance economic growth and invest in our future.

PREVENTING MORE SANDY HOOKS

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, we have experiences in our personal and collective lives that challenge us profoundly, forcing us to search our souls and to change our behavior. Our Nation experienced such a moment on Friday as 20 children were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School, along with six teachers and administrators who were attempting to protect them.

As we mourn and reach out to the families of Newtown, we owe the victims and each other serious consideration of how to prevent more Newtowns and Auroras and Oak Creeks and Tucsons. We must shore up mental health outreach and support, especially for troubled young people. And politically difficult as it may be, we must deal with the instruments of destruction, keeping deadly weapons out of the hands of violent and deranged people and removing weapons of mass killing from our streets.

The horror of Sandy Hook must overcome any temptation to accept the unacceptable or to avoid responsibility for addressing the crying need for change.

RESOLVING FISCAL CLIFF

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, people have no idea what we're doing because we don't know what we're doing. It reminds me of being in traffic: we all hurry to get to where—to another bottleneck and to wait.

Resolving the fiscal cliff is an opportunity to show that we can work together in a bipartisan manner; but to do so, we must listen and put the people first and the party second. If we don't, a middle class family of four will see their taxes rise by \$2,200 in 2013. Unemployment will go up to 9.1 percent.

Remember, the cost of extending all of the Bush tax cuts is \$2.4 trillion in 10 years. Extend the middle class tax cuts and let the Bush tax cuts for the upper 2 percent return to the Clinton rates. We cannot sacrifice the middle class, the steady job growth that we've seen just to protect the upper 2 percent. This is not the message we want to send, and this is not the message Republicans want to send.

ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I joined my colleagues in the Connecticut delegation in Newtown last Sunday night. We will never forget that vigil—the despondency, the anger, the hopelessness. But over time, that emotion turns into the imperative that we act as public officials to make sure that this never happens again.

We have so much to do in a Nation awash in guns, and not just guns, but guns that are designed for the explicit purpose to do nothing but to kill lots of people quickly, in a Nation that celebrates violence as a solution and as entertainment, in a Nation that does not do enough to address the needs of its mentally disturbed.

One thing we should do right away, though, is put to rest forever the pernicious fantasy that more people carrying arms will make us safer. That's not backed by fact. It's not backed by data. It's not backed by history. It is a testosterone-laden fantasy. A gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a suicide or a murder or violent assault than it is likely to be used in self-defense.

The RAND Corporation studies show that police officers trained in a situation of an exchange of gunfire hit their intended target less than two in 10 times—trained police officers. Ladies and gentlemen, more guns do not make for a safer America.

COMMONSENSE GUN SAFETY LAWS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, yesterday my office hosted the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and I met with families whose lives have been devastated by gun violence, families who lost loved ones in Columbine, at Virginia Tech, at Aurora, and in other incidents. No words of mine could ever match the pain that these families felt as a result of these losses.

The recent tragedy in Newtown, unfortunately, is the most recent in a long series of mass killings involving guns. But this incident is especially horrific because it involved the slaughter of 20 innocent children and their teachers. This must mark a turning point in the debate over commonsense gun safety laws. It's critical for lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to commit themselves to do everything we can to end this violence because commonsense gun laws aren't Democratic values or Republican values; they're American values. And if our values as Americans mean anything at all, then surely all Americans are entitled to enjoy their lives and live in neighborhoods that are safe and free from gun violence.

There is lots of talk about a national conversation, beginning a dialogue. The time for talking is over. Now we must act: banning assault weapons and high-capacity assault clips, fixing our criminal background check system, and closing loopholes that allow 40 percent of gun sales to go forward without background checks.

□ 1230

RECENT DECREASE IN MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, in view of what has happened in Newtown, Connecticut, it is important to place on the Record the fact that our Nation has been experiencing the largest reduction in State mental health services of this generation. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, States have cumulatively cut over \$1.8 billion from their mental health services between 2009 and 2011. This is the largest reduction in State mental health services in half a century.

With 1 in 17 people in America living with a serious neurological condition, how is this tremendous decrease in funding possible or humane?

Often, those who suffer the most are angels of destiny. According to a report from the Federal Bureau of Justice statistics, more than half of our country's prison population suffers or has suffered from mental disorders, but only a fraction of that population receives treatment during their incarceration. And, in fact, individuals with mental illness are far more likely to be victims of crime than the perpetrators.

Newtown is a national tragedy, Madam Speaker, but it reveals again

our shared responsibility to support and treat those in this country who need our help so desperately. I urge our colleagues to support a more constructive Federal role in assuring proper and early diagnosis and intervention of affected youth and appropriate treatment.

I congratulate President Obama and Vice President BIDEN for their leadership in moving our Nation to a better day for us all. So many of us here in Congress wish to join them in this great national challenge.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

REFERRING QUAPAW TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA TRUST CLAIMS TO COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 668) to refer H.R. 5862, a bill making congressional reference to the United States Court of Federal Claims pursuant to sections 1492 and 2509 of title 28, United States Code, the Indian trust-related claims of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma (O-Gah-Pah) as well as its individual members, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 668

Resolved,

SECTION 1. REFERRAL.

Pursuant to section 1492 of title 28, United States Code, the bill (H.R. 5862), entitled "A Bill relating to members of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma (O-Gah-Pah)," now pending in the House of Representatives, is referred to the chief judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a determination as to whether the Tribe and its members have Indian trust-related legal or equitable claims against the United States other than the legal claims that are pending in the Court of Federal Claims on the date of enactment of this resolution.

SEC. 2. PROCEEDING AND REPORT.

Upon receipt of the bill, the chief judge shall—

(1) proceed according to the provisions of sections 1492 and 2509 of title 28, United States Code, notwithstanding the bar of any statute of limitations; and

(2) report back to the House of Representatives, at the earliest practicable date, providing—

(A) findings of fact and conclusions of law that are sufficient to inform the Congress of the nature, extent, and character of the Indian-trust related claims of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma and its tribal members for compensation as legal or equitable