

comfort in song. She never leaves anyone behind.

She had the privilege and honor of giving to President Barack Obama and adding to the song, "Yes We Can: Voices of a Grass Roots Movement." She has sung the national anthem at the BCS national championship football game, as well as making a lot of other contributions to American music. She is a supporter of music education for our children, the mother of a daughter, and, yes, a prominent American.

But I think what says the most about Yolanda Adams is that she never stops evangelizing and seeking to help those who are hopeless and in despair. She brings joy to those who seek it and believes that everyone is a child of God.

I'm grateful to know Yolanda Adams and to claim her as a constituent of the great city of Houston and the great State of Texas. But most of all, she is an American and a believer and understands the value of America's freedom to be able to worship. She continues to soldier on to save souls, and we're delighted to have been able to have her bless us this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a great American artist. I wish to first thank Ms. Adams for her thoughtful, and inspirational prayer. As the representative of the 18th District of Texas I am proud to say that she is a constituent and represents what is best about the State of Texas.

As was reflected in her prayer, Yolanda Adams through her music, has taught us to embrace God's grace and mercy, and for those who will listen, to stand in the sunlight of joy as one looks toward the hopefulness of the future.

Yolanda Adams is an American Grammy and Dove-award winning Gospel music singer and radio show host. The oldest of six siblings, Yolanda Adams was raised in Houston, Texas. She graduated from Sterling High School in Houston in 1979.

After graduating from University of California Berkeley, she began a career as a schoolteacher and part-time model in Houston, Texas. Eventually she gave up teaching to become a professional singer.

Her enormous talent attracted the attention of Thomas Whitfield and Sound of Gospel Records which signed her recording contract and released her first album, *Just As I Am* in 1987. In 1990, she released her second album, *Through The Storm*, released by Tribune Records.

Songs from the Heart, her album released through Verity Records, featured the inspirational "Only Believe," "Still I Rise," a song dedicated to Rosa Parks and inspired by Maya Angelou's poem of the same name.

"Fragile Heart," was dedicated to the memory of Yolanda's long time road manager who died in 1998. Her album "Mountain High . . . Valley Low" in 1999 extended her popularity and appeal outside the urban contemporary gospel arena. The album went Platinum in 2000 and won her a Grammy Award. Notable singles from the album include "Yeah," "Fragile Heart," and "Open My Heart."

In 2001, Yolanda Adams released a live album, *The Experience*, which won her a second Grammy Award for Best Contemporary

Soul Gospel Album. *Believe*, which included the hit "Never Give Up" was released in 2001. She would later go on to perform this song at "The Salute to Gospel Music" at the White House during President George W. Bush's administration. *Believe* was certified Gold in 2002. The *Divas Of Gospel*, with Albertina Walker, (Queen of Gospel), was also released in 2001.

Yolanda Adams recorded the song for the 2003 hit film, *Honey* titled "I Believe" and was also a judge for the 2nd Annual Independent Music Awards.

Yolanda Adams' song "Hold On" is included in a compilation in support of Barack Obama's campaign entitled "Yes We Can: Voices of a Grass Roots Movement".

Yolanda Adams performed the National Anthem at the 2009 BCS National Championship football game at Dolphin Stadium in Miami, Florida.

I want to thank Yolanda Adams for her bountiful contribution to American music, songs which have enriched our lives for a decade and cascade like the blessings from the heaven above.

Mr. Speaker, Yolanda Adams has sold 4.5 million albums since 1991 according to Soundscan. Although she is proud of that achievement, she has said that her greatest treasure is being a child of God.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain five further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

(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 stand today to call attention to the devastating impact that harassment and bullying have on LGBT students around our country. Bullying affects LGBT teens every day in emotional, psychological, and physical ways, and can even lead to suicide. Statistics show that 30 percent of LGBT youth attempt suicide near the age of 15.

While tomorrow has been designated as National Day of Silence, bullies do not stop when the calendar turns. We must all work together if we hope to deter and defeat bullying. I would like to take a moment of silence in honor of those who are harassed and those who have passed away due to this repeated and aggressive behavior.

□ 1010

#### WHERE IS OUR COURAGE?

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

MR. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, what happened on the floor of the other body yesterday is a shame and a disgrace. Leaders of this country must be head-

lights and not taillights. Leaders must lead.

More than 91 percent of the American people say they want us to put strong background checks in place before someone can buy a gun in this country. This is not about preserving Second Amendment rights; it is about saving lives.

How many more little babies, how many more little children, how many more American citizens must die of gun violence?

How many more funerals must we attend before we act?

The blood of the innocent is crying out to us. Where is our courage?

What happened to our heart?

When will we have the guts to do what is right?

We need to pass a strong gun bill, and pass it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members to refrain from improper references to the Senate.

#### SERVICEMEMBERS' TELEMEDICINE AND E-HEALTH PORTABILITY ACT

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

MR. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in the debate over the terrible acts of violence that have been committed upon innocent men, women, and children, there is frequently one common issue, that of mental health.

As we all know, the profiles of the perpetrators in many of the recent acts of mass violence had histories of mental health illness. Deaths from suicide as well obviously have significant mental health implications.

The access barriers to mental health services and the stigma associated with seeking help are significant. The safety of individuals living with these potentially disturbing behaviors, family members and surrounding communities, deserves a more robust mental health system responsive to these issues.

Now I'm proud to be the author of one of the only new laws in recent years to expand access to mental health services and reduce the stigma of seeking help. The STEP Act, or the Servicemembers' Telemedicine and E-Health Portability Act, expands access to care in a confidential manner, through telemedicine.

While the STEP Act serves only our Active Duty, Reserve and Guard, it provides a template that can be expanded to all those living with mental health issues.

#### THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE MORE

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

MR. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with

the remarks of the legendary JOHN LEWIS.

I also stand in praise of CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, who, yesterday, came with all the grace and eloquence to talk about the need to bring the country together in the aftermath of what took place up in Boston, and to bring comfort to families.

Yesterday, the other body brought little comfort to families, especially families from Newtown, Connecticut, who had traveled there, who had lobbied, and were looking for a common-sense, practical answer to a solution that plagues this country.

They got a vote. The vote was 54-46. But no fifth-grader waking up in America today says how could you get a vote of 54-46 and lose?

This is the most deliberative body in America, the House of Representatives, and we owe the people of this country, whether from Newtown, or whether from Aurora or wherever you are, in Chicago or across this great Nation of ours, we come here with a responsibility to vote.

#### SIMPLIFY THE TAX CODE

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respect to those faithful Americans who filed their tax returns this week, only with a stark reminder of the enormous burden we have placed upon them with our complicated Tax Code.

You know, it's been like a snowball going down a hill. It just gets bigger and more bloated and more cumbersome with each passing year. It's become an avalanche on the back of the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, this needs to stop. We've added 4,400 changes to the Tax Code just in the last 10 years. We can make it better.

House Republicans have a plan. We have a plan to reform the Tax Code, to make it simpler, to make it fairer, to make it responsible to the American people, to put more money in their paychecks and to give more money to them to take care of their families.

Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers deserve better, and we're going to do it.

#### CAP TO CAP

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, this week, over 300 individuals, community leaders from my hometown of Sacramento, came out here to share with us their vision of how we move forward. They came here on the 43rd Annual CAP to CAP visit. This is the largest trip of its type.

Here's what those community leaders asked. They wanted us to understand the number one job for us to do is to

create jobs, to get America working again. They wanted to make sure we invested in the innovation economy, and they wanted us to do what we've always done historically, rebuild our infrastructure. For us back home that means rebuilding our levees, our roads, and our highways.

They want Washington, D.C., to start getting about the business of pushing this country forward. I applaud these community leaders because this is exactly what citizen-led democracy looks like.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce for their leadership, and I look forward to the 44th Annual CAP to CAP next year.

#### REFLECTIONS ON TAX FREEDOM DAY

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, for my neighbors and friends back home in Illinois, and families across the country, today is Tax Freedom Day, the date after which the average American worker will finally start earning money for themselves after working just to pay their Federal, State, and local tax obligations in 2013, meaning it takes all of the wages earned by the average worker from January 1 to April 18 just to pay off this year's tax debt. Pretty astounding.

To put it in perspective, back in 1900, Tax Freedom Day was January 22, when taxes amounted to 5.9 percent of a person's income. Today that figure has grown to 29.4 percent.

We've come a long way in the past century, digging deeper and deeper into the pockets of hardworking men and women in America, and digging ourselves deeper into debt in the process.

The tax reform component of the budget this House passed in March would take a major step forward, allowing families to keep more of the money they earn and making government more accountable.

Let's finish the job this year.

#### SENATE VOTE ON BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR GUN BUYERS

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

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House as the Representative for Newtown. Over the last 4 months, I've had the honor of getting to know many families in Newtown. These parents live with grief so deep that any mother or father can only begin to imagine.

I was honored to join these families, Governor Malloy, and members of both parties as a bipartisan gun violence prevention law was signed into law in Connecticut.

Connecticut has shown that Democrats and Republicans can work together, that a special interest and their small minority cannot stand in the way of common sense and doing the right thing.

Yesterday was a shameful day. I'm outraged that 46 Senators prevented a compromise to reduce gun violence which 92 percent of the American people support. Forty-six Senators ignored the voices of the courageous Newtown families, who have paid the ultimate price of political inaction.

I join the message of the Sandy Hook Promise and Mark Barden, who lost his son, Daniel, in the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary.

Our hearts are broken. Our spirits are not.

#### AMNESTY DEFINED

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there is much discussion these days about immigration and what amnesty means. But the definition is clear.

In Black's Law Dictionary, "A pardon extended by the government to a group or class of persons. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act provided amnesty for undocumented aliens already present in the country."

That's exactly what the Senate immigration bill does.

And from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, amnesty is "The act of an authority (as a government) by which pardon is granted to a large group of individuals."

Again, that's exactly what the Senate immigration bill does.

You could say that the Senate immigration bill amounts to amnesty-plus, since illegal immigrants are pardoned, plus are allowed to become citizens.

□ 1020

#### NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

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

Mr. POCAN. I join today with my colleagues to observe the National Day of Silence, which began 13 years ago, to raise awareness of the hurtful and often long-term silencing effects that anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment has on our young people. It's a tragic fact of our society that almost all LGBT youth know what it's like to be bullied or harassed because of their identified or perceived sexual orientation. Surveys show that nearly 9 out of every 10 LGBT students have experienced harassment in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, our schools should be a place of learning and growth, where every student, no matter their background or orientation, should be safe and free to reach their full potential.