

Afghanistan either, so we must absorb that fact and learn, again, what we learned in Iraq. And we need to bring the war in Afghanistan to an accelerated end.

We need to stop throwing good money after bad, poorly conceived and poorly managed reconstruction efforts, and bring our troops home now.

And we need to repeal the 2001 Authorization For the Use of Military Force, which Congresswoman WATERS mentioned, which I voted against right after the horrific events of 9/11. This overly broad blank check has underwritten the past decade of perpetual war.

I have a resolution, H.R. 198, it's the Repeal of the Authorization For the Use of Military Force. This will remove one of the underlying legal justifications for targeted drone killings that has been invoked over and over again, this time, targeted killings, to justify a wide range of activities, including warrantless surveillance and wiretapping activities, and, yes, a blank check for war anywhere, any time, for any length of time.

I hope those who are listening and who care about this, go back and read that resolution of 9/14. What it said was the President, and I'm paraphrasing now, but it was the President is authorized to use force against any nation, organization, individual, deemed connected to terrorism and the 9/11 attacks.

Now, this was in 2001. 2001. No end game, no timetable, a blank check, perpetual war until this is repealed. So Congress really needs to reassert its constitutional authority in the matters of war. Our Founding Fathers were very deliberate in placing war-making powers in this body. In a democracy, such as ours, we have this system of checks and balances.

On 9/14, we did not have a full debate. From what I remember, it may have been an hour, it may have been 2 hours. But we did not fully debate that blank check and what that meant by authorizing then-President Bush, now President Obama and any future President, to use force in perpetuity.

□ 1600

We can no longer abdicate our constitutional duties allowing any President to engage in hostilities without debate, without oversight, and without accountability.

And I want to commend Senator DURBIN for conducting hearings this week looking at the constitutionality and the rationale for targeted killings using drones. This was a very important hearing. I was able to sit through some of that hearing, and it was very revealing. Actually, there was a young man from Yemen who received a State Department scholarship. He went to school here, had gone back to Yemen, and his village was devastated by drones.

So you can see what's happening now. There are more and more hos-

tilities, unfortunately, toward the United States, unless we get this policy straight about the lethal use of drones and have congressional oversight and debate and really exercise our constitutional responsibility to really declare war, if that's what we're going to do.

And so as we embark into this new age of modern warfare, we do need rules. We need oversight; we need accountability; and we need to develop an international legal framework on drones.

And we understand asymmetrical warfare and the new world in which we live. None of us have our head in the sand about that. We just need to make sure that Congress has a role in debating exactly how we're going to, if we're going to, and when the appropriate use of force is necessary.

For me, personally, I believe in SMART Security; and I know that that will lead to a world that our children deserve and is worthy of our children's future.

So let's put this decade of perpetual warfare behind us. We should bring our troops home. We should invest in our veterans and our children, create jobs here at home and really begin to invest in our future for the sake of our children and our grandchildren.

I have this chart here to show you just in terms of the fiscal implications of what these policies have brought. When you look at the deficit, with the war and the economic policies of the Bush era, the tax cuts, we're looking at this line right here. Had these unfortunate policies not occurred, our deficit would be down here. This is very clear. This was put forth by the Congressional Budget Office in February. These are their estimates.

It's very clear, I hope, to everyone that the failed economic policies of the Bush administration and the wars in Iraq are the major contributing factors to the economic crisis that we find ourselves in. And so, aside from the human toll that this 10-year war and the war in Afghanistan has taken, we have a real crisis now, an economic crisis in this country that we need to come to grips with. Our senior citizens did not cause this crisis. Our children did not cause this crisis. The poor, our middle class individuals, and families did not cause this crisis. And we cannot forget what has taken place over the last 10 years of this unbelievably terribly sad time in our history, where we lost so many lives and we lost so much time in terms of rebuilding our country for the future of our children.

I yield back the balance of my time.

KEY IRAQ VOTES FROM THE 109TH CONGRESS

H. CON. RES. 35 [109th]

Latest Title: Expressing the sense of Congress that the President should develop and implement a plan to begin the immediate withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from Iraq.

Sponsor: Rep Woolsey, Lynn C. [D-CA-6] (introduced 1/26/2005) Cosponsors: 34

Committees: House International Relations

Latest Major Action: 1/26/2005 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the

House Committee on International Relations.

H. RES. 82 [109th]

Latest Title: Disavowing the doctrine of preemption.

Sponsor: Rep Lee, Barbara [D-CA-9] (introduced 2/9/2005) Cosponsors: 15

Committees: House International Relations

Latest Major Action: 2/9/2005 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

H. AMDT. 214 [109th]

(A009)

Amends: H.R. 1815

Sponsor: Rep Woolsey, Lynn C. [D-CA-6] (offered 5/25/2005)

AMENDMENT PURPOSE:

An amendment numbered 26 printed in House Report 109-96 to express the sense of Congress that the President should develop a plan for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq, and submit this plan to the congressional defense committees.

STATUS:

5/25/2005 6:20 pm: Amendment (A009) offered by Ms. Woolsey. (consideration: CR H4035-4040, H4043; text: CR H4035)

5/25/2005 7:53 pm: On agreeing to the Woolsey amendment (A009) Failed by recorded vote: 128-300 (Roll no. 220).

H. CON. RES. 197 [109th]

Latest Title: Declaring that it is the policy of the United States not to enter into any base agreement with the Government of Iraq that would lead to a permanent United States military presence in Iraq.

Sponsor: Rep Lee, Barbara [D-CA-9] (introduced 6/30/2005) Cosponsors: 86 Committees: House International Relations

Latest Major Action: 6/30/2005 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

H. AMDT. 750 [109th]

(A050)

Amends: H.R. 4939

Sponsor: Rep Lee, Barbara [D-CA-9] (offered 3/16/2006)

AMENDMENT PURPOSE:

An amendment to prohibit the use of funds from being available to enter into a basing rights agreement between the United States and Iraq.

STATUS:

3/16/2006 4:39 pm: Amendment (A050) offered by Ms. Lee. (consideration: CR H1107-1110; text: CR H1107)

3/16/2006 5:04 pm: On agreeing to the Lee amendment (A050) Agreed to by voice vote.

H.R. 5875 [109th]

Latest Title: Iraq War Powers Repeal Act of 2006

Sponsor: Rep Woolsey, Lynn C. [D-CA-6] (introduced 7/25/2006) Cosponsors: 26 Committees: House International Relations

Latest Major Action: 7/25/2006 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. HARTZLER. When I was 10 years old, I got my first job. It would require skill and perseverance and patience, and it would have a real potential economic impact on our family hog farm. My dad hired me. He paid me 15 cents a unit.

What was my job? It was shooting sparrows around our farm. At that time, there was a disease going around rural America, and sparrows were taking it from farm to farm. So it had a real practical purpose.

But, as I'm a parent now, I look back on it. I used to tag around with my dad all the time, and I wonder maybe if he just kind of wanted to give me something to do, in addition to a job.

But I had a lot of fun that summer going around the grain bins and the sheds on our farm and our buildings and trying to catch that bird unawares. And I think over the entire summer, I may have earned around 45 cents. So it wasn't a big moneymaker, but I sure had a lot of fun.

And I learned some important things. I learned that using firearms can be a fun hobby and hunting can be fun; also, that using firearms can have a real practical purpose. And over the years, I've shot a lot of different kind of firearms now and different sizes, but I really appreciate what our Founding Fathers did when they established our Second Amendment and gave us that as our basic right.

This afternoon, my colleagues and I want to highlight not only why the Second Amendment is important to us and to the people in our districts, but how it is also important to this country. We want to dispel the myths that decisions about how to address violence are based on facts and not emotions.

As a lifelong gun owner as well as a former public schoolteacher, I appreciate the thoughtful discussion that our country has been having after the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. My heart has gone out to those families, as I know everyone in America's heart has, and our prayers as well. We want to understand the desire to stop the violence. I share that goal but believe that many of the proposals being put forth miss the mark. So let's look at some of the proposals and compare them to the facts.

One proposal that is being talked about and has been talked about is to ban what's called assault rifles. Well, the fact is that lawbreakers ignore the laws. Banning firearms would only take guns away from our law-abiding citizens and ensure that lawbreakers have guns.

I was watching TV a couple of weeks ago, and I saw the sponsor of the Senate bill to ban these assault rifles and she was giving a rationale why she thought it was important. She was saying, Well, gangs in California have assault rifles, and we've got to get these off the streets and out of the hands of our gang members, so we need to pass this bill. And I just kind of scratched my head and thought, Do you really believe that gang members are going to listen and pay attention to a law that Washington, D.C., passes? They break laws every day. I really can't see them getting together and having an organizational meeting and saying, Well, let's have the legislative report and have

the gentleman, the gang member, say, Well, they passed a new law in D.C., so I guess we can't use assault rifles anymore.

We've got to look at the facts about whether passing this law would really address violence. In this case, it certainly wouldn't.

As far as that legislation, also the word "assault" is an adjective. It is not a gun. What gun control advocates call an assault rifle is actually a regular rifle with only a few cosmetic differences on the outside, such as a pistol grip, a hand guard, and a removable magazine. It is misleading to label firearms with negative words in order to advance a gun control agenda.

The fact is that more deaths have been inflicted using fists and knives and baseball bats than with a gun. In fact, one-and-a-half times as many homicides are committed with blunt objects such as a baseball bat, over two times as many homicides with fists, and five times as many with knives.

So why aren't proponents of bans on firearms calling baseball bats assault baseball bats or assault knives? Well, the reason is because the American people know that objects are only tools of people who wish to do others harm. They are not the cause. Now, it's a slogan, it's a bumper sticker, but it is true: guns don't kill people; people do.

So that's one proposal that I think misses the mark.

Another proposal is to create universal background checks. Well, the fact is that the vast majority of gun sales already have background checks with the sale, because all firearm sales through dealers must complete the instant background check. The only transactions that do not require the background checks are sales between individual gun owners; and they are not the problem. Requiring law-abiding citizens to have to go to a dealer and get a background check on their neighbor in order to sell him a gun would do little to stop mass killings.

Imposing the new law would not have stopped the Sandy Hook killer. He stole the guns he used to carry out his evil scheme. The same with the Aurora, Colorado, shooter in the movie theater. He actually had passed a background check. So passing a new law like this does not really address the issue.

□ 1610

It's time for all of us to address the real issue of how to protect our children and schools rather than to use a tragedy to impose more government control on law-abiding citizens or infringe on our Second Amendment rights.

Several of my colleagues are going to join me today to share their insights into why the Second Amendment matters to them and their constituents, and to discuss how to address the real issues of violence in our country.

I would like to start off with my fellow colleague from the great State of

Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER). So gentleman, what would you like to share about our Second Amendment rights?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Congresswoman HARTZLER. It's always good to work with another fellow Member from Missouri, the Show Me State, where we can give some folks a little insight as to what's going on.

Mr. Speaker, when I was growing up in rural Missouri, firearms were a regular part of my life. Beyond learning how to safely handle firearms while hunting and shooting, I learned also to respect them. Like so many parents, I made sure those same lessons were instilled in my own children.

It is because of the efforts of parents or adults who can have a positive influence on a child that the culture of safety and respect toward firearms have been so well maintained in rural America. Our communities and families work very hard to ensure this heritage, and it is very upsetting when lawmakers—many of whom know nothing about firearms—attempt to place limitations on our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

The Second Amendment is, in fact, a primary constitutional right that sets America far apart from nations around the world. Our Founders got this right. They knew ensuring the right of a citizen to keep and bear arms would always be vital to ensuring personal freedoms.

I have spent my time as an elected official—first in the Missouri State House of Representatives, and now in Congress—working to protect the Second Amendment. However, not only is it important to protect the right to own the gun; it is also important to protect the privacy of the information about the ownership of the gun and the conceal-carry permits and things like that.

I will give you an example. In my State just recently—in fact, we're barely finished working on this—it has come to our attention that the Department of Revenue and Highway Patrol, in working in conjunction with the Social Security Administration's Inspector General, was looking into getting control of the conceal-carry permit list of all the folks in the State of Missouri to compare it for mental health disability fraud in our State. While we were satisfied in going through all the different informational checks and crosschecks with regard to the Federal side of this—that they did everything legally they were supposed to do as well as the information was protected and not compromised—it still pointed out some of the looseness and sloppiness that went on with regards to the way that the State folks handled our information. To me, that is something that we have to be constantly watchful for.

Someone once said the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. I think with regard to Second Amendment rights, it certainly is something that is very true.

Mrs. HARTZLER. I thank you, gentleman. I think well said there. Our rural heritage is based on our Second Amendment rights, and well said.

Certainly, being from Missouri, I appreciate your work—and we've worked together on this. This is a very real concern. I call it the Department of Revenue debacle.

I certainly appreciate State Senator Kurt Schaefer and others there in Missouri who have been on the forefront of getting to the bottom of this and how our conceal-carry list was released to Federal authorities without all of the permissions and all of the safety guards in place. That is very, very disturbing. So thank you for your work on that and for your comments.

I would now like to yield to a new Member here, who has just hit the ground running and who brings so much to our whole delegation with his service. I appreciate the gentleman from New York (Mr. COLLINS), and I would be happy to yield time to you, gentleman.

Mr. COLLINS of New York. I want to thank both the gentlewoman and gentleman from Missouri for their comments.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this afternoon to stand in support of the Second Amendment. I also proudly stand here in support of all the law-abiding gun owners in New York's 27th Congressional District and all across our country.

As a father and a grandfather, the recent violent tragedies in our country have left my heart heavy. But as a gun owner with a carry permit, I proudly carry my dad's Ithaca .45 from World War II. As a Member of Congress representing thousands of law-abiding gun owners, I join my colleagues and say we refuse to allow these tragedies to be used for political gain.

These recent crimes should not be used as a pretense to weaken our constitutional rights. And law-abiding citizens should not fall victim to additional laws and regulations which have no impact on reducing crime.

Let us not kid ourselves. What was recently proposed in the Senate and what has recently become law in my home State of New York would have done nothing to prevent the Newtown or Christmastime shootings of firefighters in Webster, a community just outside my district.

I strongly support the Second Amendment and the right of an individual to protect themselves and their family. The actions of depraved killers should not punish law-abiding gun owners. And the actions of this Congress should not pick away at the rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, gentleman. That is well said. Tragedies should not be used for political gain. That is so true. We want to get at the heart of what causes violence and how to protect children, and not just pass laws that wouldn't even address the problem.

I'm glad to see my colleague from South Dakota here. She is quite a champion of gun rights. We're looking forward to hearing your comments, lady, about the Second Amendment.

Mrs. NOEM. Well, thank you. I appreciate that, and I thank the gentlelady from Missouri for her leadership on this issue.

You know, people sacrificed for the rights that we have. The Constitution is so important to me. It's important to the people of South Dakota and to my family, and the Second Amendment is very dear to our heritage.

That's why I wanted to come to the floor today, because I wanted to talk about how the Constitution guarantees us the individual's right to keep and bear arms. That's why I strongly support the Second Amendment.

This right isn't abstract to me. It's part of my family's heritage, and it's my State's culture. I am a gun owner and a member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus. I'll continue to fight and defend this right for the people of South Dakota and for our way of life.

You know, the Second Amendment has been described in many different ways over the years, such as it is there to support our natural rights of self-defense. It is there for resistance of oppression. It even was described as a civic duty to act in concert in the defense of the State. These are all reasons that we need to make sure that we are continuously talking about the benefits of this right, what it means to mothers and fathers who are protecting their families, and what it means to us growing up in a country where people sacrificed, bled and died to protect the rights that we had.

You know, growing up in South Dakota, I've always had an enormous amount of respect and appreciation for the outdoors and for hunting. If you aren't familiar with South Dakota, I'll tell you that hunting is a very important part of it. It's one of our greatest traditions and ways of life across the State.

I grew up hunting and taking hunting trips—sometimes for weeks on end, one- or two-week trips to the mountains to hunt with my dad and my brothers. It was good family quality time. We had a lot of conversations while we were enjoying the outdoors.

The first person that taught me how to hunt and to carry a gun correctly was my grandmother. She and I and her black lab BJ would go out and spend hours together. It was during those times that she not only taught me the proper way to handle a firearm and to enjoy the wildlife, but also life lessons that I don't think I would have gotten if I hadn't spent that much time with her in the outdoors enjoying that heritage.

This belief in the Second Amendment is critically important to South Dakotans, and I certainly appreciate the fact that I had the opportunity to enjoy it. Now I have the chance with

my own kids and with my husband, Brian.

Opening day of pheasant season is always big in South Dakota. It's a family reunion, but obviously there are many, many friends that show up for that as well. It starts with a big breakfast. We all gather together for good entertainment and conversation until it's time to go out and start enjoying the day together. It's a tradition that we don't want to lose. Every year, sportsmen and -women flock to South Dakota to enjoy this tradition and take advantage of our State's abundance of hunting and wildlife.

I want to give you a few facts about South Dakota. With over 700,000 acres of public hunting land, South Dakota is home to the Nation's best pheasant hunting, and it's the pheasant hunting capital of the world. In fact, last year, pheasant hunters were able to put 1.55 million roasters in their game bags.

In 2011 alone, the pheasant hunting season had an economic impact of over \$225 million to our State. It's our number two industry as tourism, and a big part of that happens during the hunting season. A majority of the money spent from that \$225 million comes in from out-of-state visitors.

Hunting and maintaining a healthy habitat for wildlife is one of the great things that I appreciate about South Dakota, and it's why I'm so proud to call it home.

During the debates that have occurred here in Washington, D.C., recently, I received many, many—thousands, actually—letters from South Dakotans. I just want to read a couple of excerpts from a couple of those if I have the chance.

The first one was from Kevin in Aberdeen. He said:

I urge you to oppose any and all antigun legislation that will simply penalize law-abiding gun owners. Instead, focus on improvements to our Nation's mental health system and enhancing school security, while respecting our Second Amendment rights.

Mike, who is also from Aberdeen, in talking about a bill that had been proposed said:

This is clearly the wrong answer for a real issue. Taking away a right that has been proven to save lives time and again is the wrong reason against obvious mental issues and security lapses.

□ 1620

The last one I want to touch on is from Greg. He says:

I agree that work needs to be done to keep weapons out of the hands of mentally ill individuals, but this isn't the answer. I regularly use a rifle that would be banned under some proposed legislation when controlling coyotes and the rabbit populations on my farm. I've also used the rifle for controlling prairie dog populations on other landowner property, in addition to hunting on public lands.

That's one of the things you don't talk about a lot. For many people in the middle of the country out in western South Dakota, they simply wouldn't be able to be in business anymore if they didn't have the opportunity to control predators that could

wipe out their entire livestock herd. The Second Amendment guarantees them the right to have the ability to do that.

This is just a small glimpse into the traditions that we have in South Dakota and the heritage that gun ownership offers all of us.

I want to thank the gentlelady for giving me the opportunity to talk about that. The Second Amendment is critically important. It needs to be defended, and I was very proud to stand here and do that with you today.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, lady. It was sure important, I think, that those voices from South Dakota would be heard and how it is a part of a heritage of so many people in this country and how it has very practical and real benefits to the citizens. We need to focus on solutions that are based on facts and not emotions.

One thing that the lady talked about is that it is a constitutional right. And I wanted to just reiterate that the U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that gun ownership is an individual right. In *District of Columbia v. Heller*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that D.C.'s complete gun ban infringes on the Second Amendment rights of the D.C. citizens, and it clarified that the Second Amendment guarantees a fundamental individual right to have a firearm in the home.

So this isn't something just that was talked about and established years ago when our country was founded; it has been upheld recently. We are very thankful for that and want to continue to protect that right.

We have a gentleman here from Texas, who I'm sure knows all about rights and wants to share a little bit about Texas views on why it's important to have our Second Amendment rights. This is BLAKE FARENTHOLD, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you very much.

As I was listening to the gentlelady from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), her stories about growing up around firearms and the quality time that she spent with her grandmother learning marksmanship and learning gun safety and learning about life in the outdoors really struck home with me.

I remember growing up with my grandfather, driving around the ranch learning to shoot a .22, moving up and learning how to shoot a shotgun and learning how to do so safely. In Texas, gun control is hitting what you aim at, and that's part of growing up, with an understanding of firearm safety and marksmanship. It's part of many American's lives, just like it was a part of my life.

I got a lot of letters as the debate about gun control was going through the Senate, as well, urging me to continue to stand up for the Second Amendment rights that our Founding Fathers realized was so important—the right to bear arms; the right that those in the Revolutionary War fought for.

One of the letters came just this week from a student and a Boy Scout named Caleb. He said:

Dear Representative Farenthold:
I wanted to thank you for your beliefs on gun control in our State. I believe that we all have a right to bear arms and protect ourselves if we are in harm.

And that really kind of sums up the feeling of a lot of folks in Texas and a lot of the farmers and ranchers that I represent.

As Representative NOEM was talking about, spending time shooting with her children, one of the things that I look back on in raising my daughters—they are now in college—and you look back and think, well, what should I have done? I should have spent more time outside with them. I should have spent more time passing on some of the things that I've learned. But there's still an opportunity.

Morgan, my 24-year-old daughter, came to me just a couple of weekends ago when I was back home in Corpus Christi and said, "Dad, can we take a concealed-carry class together this summer?" So that's on the agenda for when I'm back in Texas is passing on the tradition of the safe and responsible use of firearms in my family.

I'm looking forward to spending time with her in that concealed-carry class, and I hope it instills in her the same passion that I have for the sport of shooting. If this plays out well, we're going to spend time on the skeet range; we're going to spend some time out hunting. It's something that I'm really looking forward to. It's an important part of America. It's an important part of folks' family lives.

The Second Amendment has got to be protected, and the traditions of safe firearms use in this country needs to continue for a myriad of reasons—just more reasons than I can list.

I see you've got quite a few other people here who want to talk about their experiences with the Second Amendment and their beliefs, so I'm not going to eat up all the time. Thank you.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much, BLAKE. I'll look forward to hearing how it goes in August with your daughter there.

I think you made a really great point about the important role of protection and how firearms provide a very practical and very, very vital role in self-protection. Estimates range anywhere from 83,000 times a year up to perhaps 1 million times a year citizens of this country use firearms in order to protect themselves. In Missouri, let me share with you just a couple of examples.

In 2008, there was a woman in Cape Girardeau who endured a horrific crime. Someone broke into her apartment through a window and she was raped. Two days later she came home and that person was there again. She had the window repaired, but they were there. This time, though, she was prepared. She had borrowed a friend's

shotgun, and she protected herself this time with the shotgun and the outcome was totally different and the person is in jail now.

There's another example in Kansas City. There was a man who had a restraining order against someone who was trying to do him harm. He entered his home and, once again, he was attacked by this person with a knife. But, thanks to having a gun in the home, he was able to stop him, and that person is behind bars as well.

We could go on with many, many examples, but Americans every day use their Second Amendment rights to protect and defend their families and themselves. It is so important that we keep that ability to do that. That's why our Founding Fathers established this right.

Now I would like to turn to my friend from Michigan, TIM WALBERG, to share your thoughts on the Second Amendment. Gentleman, thank you for being here.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady, my friend from Missouri, for holding this opportunity for us to speak on the Second Amendment.

I've often said at town hall meetings that we're talking about the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights, that namely speaks to the issue that was declared so strongly in the Declaration of Independence, that document, one of two documents that could be considered the greatest man-made documents ever penned, the Declaration of Independence and then the Constitution.

The Bill of Rights understood what the Declaration said, that all men are created equal and endowed with certain unalienable rights, namely, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I think the Framers and Founders understood with the First Amendment, the right to free speech and the freedom of religion, but also that understanding that the right to life involved making sure that I could defend myself, protect myself, care for myself, feed myself with the use of a weapon in the field in hunting, but not simply that. Mr. Speaker, I will say, it was there to make sure that a citizen, a free citizen of the United States, was able to care for himself or herself, his family or her family, in any shape or form.

And so I see the First Amendment as important, but I see equally important the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms. And as my friend Ted Nugent says: "Keep" is defined as "It's mine. It's not yours. You're not going to take it from me."

Very simple. Very simple.

I think we need to understand as there are laws that are being thought of, well-intentioned even, and yet laws that really aren't based in reality of what takes place around civilization, when it understands that we need to make sure that we don't step on other

people's rights and their freedoms and their opportunities, yet there is a place when we must be prepared to defend ourselves so that those rights can be carried on, not only for ourselves, but for those that count on us to care.

□ 1630

In a famous quote, Benjamin Franklin said it this way:

They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither safety nor liberty.

Well said.

I think there are people with well-meaning intentions right now that aren't thinking of the fact that liberty comes with a cost, that it comes with the responsibility and an accountability to continue on to make sure that liberty continues, not only for me, but for you and everyone else, and that liberty is protected from those who would take away our freedoms, our rights, even our lives.

I like to hunt, and I love to trapshoot, and I love to shoot skeets, and I love to shoot sporting clay, and I love to target practice. On my farm, we have a target range, and my wife uses it as well. In fact, she uses it better than I do with a pistol. Yet with the fun and enjoyment that can come from being trained, we also understand the concerns that are there as with any tool, as my dad taught me. He taught me not only how to shoot a gun and about the inherent dangers that were there that also demanded my responsibility and accountability, but he also taught me how to use a radial saw. He said it would work very well in doing the things it was meant for, but you have to be careful with it.

So, yes, we who believe in the Second Amendment believe that there ought to be training and that people ought to care for how they use their weapons, but we believe they ought to be allowed for us to freely use as they were intended for all good purposes. I grew up on the south side of Chicago. Leroy Brown and Junkyard Dog were my neighbors. I love that area of Calumet City where I grew up, but I also know that there are dangers. I also know that protection is required and that the protection to fit the need and the concern is what must be there.

So I would say to my friend and colleague, as well as to the Speaker and to those who might listen to these words, that the Second Amendment is not the problem; and the law-abiding citizen who carries out the responsibilities of the Second Amendment is not the problem. Most of us fit in that category. Nothing in the bill that was put forth in the Senate, or any other thoughts, would take care of those criminals. It would not have changed the Boston bombers in their ability to get and to use for criminal, terrorist purposes any change or impingement on the Second Amendment. They would have still committed their atrocities, and they would have still gotten their weapons. The only negative impact

would have been on law-abiding citizens, the ability to keep and to bear arms, to protect themselves—to carry out the constitutional right.

So I thank the gentlelady from Missouri for allowing us to speak on this issue.

Hopefully, some would hear the common sense of it all and not just hear what some would say: that if we appreciate weapons, we are warmongers or that we are living in danger and producing danger in other people's lives. The fact is just the opposite: we are there to ensure safety, ensure liberty and to make sure that people are protected against criminals who would abuse us regardless of what the law or the Constitution says.

I will defend that, and I thank my colleagues for standing for this reality and truth for the Second Amendment.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. WALBERG. Well said.

I like how you point out that the right to life is tied to the Second Amendment—to be able to defend ourselves and protect that life. That is so true. Also, it's not a safety issue. In fact, violent crime has dropped by 72 percent since 1993 in this country; and, actually, there has been a 47 percent increase in U.S. households that have guns. We now have 47 percent of us who own a gun, and crime has gone down. So an excellent point there.

I would like to yield to my friend from Louisiana, Representative STEVE SCALISE. He is a champion of our Second Amendment.

Thank you for coming.

Mr. SCALISE. I want to thank my colleague, Mrs. HARTZLER from Missouri, for hosting this leadership hour to talk about our Second Amendment rights and for yielding time as well.

I am very proud to rise in strong support of our Second Amendment rights and also in opposition to many of these bills that have been floating around Congress that would take away those rights that are so precious to all Americans. Those rights were so important that the Second Amendment to the Constitution—part of our Bill of Rights, the first set of amendments to our Constitution—enshrined this right to the American people to bear arms. This wasn't a right that they just gave to the militia, to the military, to our local law enforcement. This was a right that was granted to all Americans because it was so precious and important.

We were all shocked and saddened by the murders at Sandy Hook; but I think what is also disappointing is, when you have these tragedies, unfortunately, there are people—Washington politicians—who try to take advantage of those tragedies, who then come behind and try to impose their own agendas in the name of somebody else. When you look at a lot of these bills that have been filed, they have absolutely nothing to do with those murders or with any of these other tragedies that we've seen.

You look at Sandy Hook. He stole the gun. The gun was from his mother.

He murdered his own mother. I think they counted over 40 different laws that were broken by the Sandy Hook murderer. Then somebody is going to tell you that one more law, which makes it harder for law-abiding citizens to get a gun, would have stopped him from doing that when, in fact, he didn't even break the laws that they're proposing.

So I think people see through that. People realize that these bills are, unfortunately, the same bad ideas that have been floating around for decades by people who just want to take away our Second Amendment rights. They just don't share those same beliefs that our Founding Fathers had when they felt that it was so important that all American citizens have these protections.

I am proud to come from Louisiana. We call ourselves a Sportsman's Paradise. There, when you talk about the Second Amendment, we're not just talking about hunting. Some people want to say that the Second Amendment is really just about hunting. It's not about hunting. It's about a lot more than hunting. It's about the ability for people to protect themselves.

I was in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. During those days, there were some very dark days. We had a few weeks, not just hours or days, where you couldn't pick up the phone and call 911. There was no 911 system. In many cases, there was no power for weeks. You couldn't get law enforcement to come if there were somebody trying to come and loot your house or worse, so the citizens at home in their houses with their guns was the only protection that people had for not just days, but for weeks after Hurricane Katrina.

One of the more frightening things that happened after Hurricane Katrina—there were many frightening things that happened during Katrina—but after Katrina, local law enforcement gave an order to have the police actually go door to door in the city of New Orleans and confiscate guns from law-abiding citizens. It actually happened. It has been well documented to the point where I was in the State legislature at the time, and I filed legislation to prevent that from ever being able to happen again. In fact, the NRA, which is so decried by all of these gun control advocates, actually stood up and said that it's wrong for government to go door-to-door and take your guns from you.

People said, Oh, that can never happen in America.

Yet, it happened. It happened in an American city—in New Orleans.

After Katrina, there is actual video footage of a woman, Ms. Connie. She was in her house in uptown New Orleans, and the police actually came to her house to take her gun. She didn't want to give up her gun, and they tackled her. They broke her collarbone. I actually brought her to testify for my bill. I am proud to say my bill passed back then and that no longer can anybody in Louisiana take away your guns

even during a natural disaster. Fortunately, because of the NRA's leadership, they made this a national law. It's now a national law. But that actually happened.

So this Second Amendment right is incredibly sacred, and it's unfortunate that some try to take advantage of disasters to go and try to chip those rights away. That's why we're here today, and that's why I'm proud of my colleague from Missouri and of so many others who are here to stand up for that right that we all hold dear.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much, STEVE.

It's very helpful, I think, to be reminded of the firsthand account of what can happen and what did happen in Louisiana when the government came to take the guns away from the citizens there. We don't ever want to see that happen again because, like you said, it's imperative for personal protection besides its being a personal right. So thank you for sharing that. I appreciate it.

□ 1640

Mrs. HARTZLER. Well, we have my friend and colleague from Indiana, who's come to join us here, MARLIN STUTZMAN.

You brought a couple of guests here with you today to be a part of our Special Order?

Mr. STUTZMAN. I did.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Very good. Well, I yield to you. I want to hear what you have to share.

Mr. STUTZMAN. I thank the lady from Missouri for yielding. I brought my two sons, Payton and Preston, along today. So it's a father and son outing here. Payton asked if he could come along to hear us talk about the Second Amendment.

We, of course, we're farmers back in Indiana, and I grew up with BB guns. And Payton now has his little BB gun and a 410/22, and Preston has a little BB gun. So we enjoy the sport out on the farm.

I want to just thank you for bringing this issue to the floor today because it's such an important issue for our country, and obviously a lot of things have happened over the past several years that brings this issue to us appropriately. I believe that we do need to have a discussion not only about our Second Amendment rights, but about gun safety and how each of us as Americans who owns a gun is responsible.

Of course, my wife, Christy, and I are grieving, along with our family which is grieving for those who lost loved ones in Newtown and, of course, in Arizona, Colorado, Virginia and so many other places. We've had some cases in Fort Wayne of just irresponsibility, but also intended murder. But, of course, as we saw what happened in Boston, bad people can take any device and hurt people with those devices, and it is always sad to see.

But one of the things that I know from constituents back home is that

they don't expect knee-jerk reactions from Washington when it comes to legislation. And now I would like to just quote a couple of quotes from our Founding Fathers that I think are so important and quotes about our Second Amendment rights.

George Washington said, "A free people ought to be armed."

Thomas Jefferson says that, "The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government."

He also says, "The beauty of the Second Amendment is that it will not be needed until they try to take it."

I think that is why this motivates people to contact their Members of Congress, to let them know how they feel.

Madam Speaker, we are a democracy that is represented by people we send to Washington. As we saw the votes unfold in the Senate, I think that each one of those Members in the Senate was representing the people that they were elected by. Of course, the President was very critical of the Senate after they were not able to pass a bill that he had wanted. But when he is criticizing them, he is criticizing each one of those particular Members and also the people that sent them to the United States Senate. To watch each different vote take place, I think it tells us that Americans across the country are not about just knee-jerk reactions but about responsibility when it comes to gun ownership, and it also shows their passion about protecting the Second Amendment. Many of these Members in the Senate did not want to vote for tighter gun control laws because they were representing the people from their particular States.

So I believe that last week the American people spoke. It wasn't just the Senate. The American people, through their representatives, said that they don't want stricter gun legislation. We've already tried Senator FEINSTEIN's so-called "assault weapons" ban in the nineties and it failed to reduce murder rates then, and it would, I believe, fail to reduce murder rates now. The American people understand that, and I believe that the United States Senate understands that, as well. They've seen this before.

So while we watched the Senate work through the gun legislation, there was one particular amendment that I thought was very intriguing, and that was the amendment that Senator CORNYN from Texas offered. That was an amendment that—I have a bill filed here in the House, H.R. 578. It's called the Respecting States' Rights and Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2013, which basically allows law abiding citizens that have a concealed weapon permit to carry across State lines to those States that do have concealed carry permits.

Senator CORNYN offered a very similar amendment to the underlying bill in the Senate. It almost passed. It was

within three votes of passing, which I thought was very interesting that while the President was trying to enact stricter gun legislation, a bill that would actually let us as Americans travel across the country almost passed in the Senate. I think that sends a strong message to all of us as Americans that the Senate does understand and respect the importance of the Second Amendment but also is interested in letting those folks who are abiding by the law to also carry throughout the country.

The bill that I've authored understands that instead of pursuing ineffective gun controls, we really do need to strengthen the protections for law abiding citizens who exercise their right to self-defense every day.

One other comment is that my bill would simply make sure that law abiding gun owners who legally carry a concealed weapon in their home State may do so in other States. Illinois does not have a permit, so they would not be allowed to carry there, but just about every other State does.

I think Americans have seen over the past couple of weeks that both sides of the aisle see that sweeping gun control legislation is misguided and it is an attack on law-abiding gun owners, and it is designed to advance another agenda instead of really saving lives.

I believe what we really should be focused on is the people behind the weapon, the people that plant the bomb, the people that are taking these particular tools and hurting other people, whether it's with a ball bat or a crowbar or any other sort of device that people could pick up with their hands and hurt others. We really need to focus on the mental challenges that these people have. There has to be. There is information that we know about these particular people, and I believe that's who we need to focus on.

We as Americans need to make sure that we teach our children safety. If someone has decided to purchase a gun, they have a responsibility to understand how that particular weapon operates and the safety measures that go along with it, just like I learned in my hunter safety course when I was 12 years old, and also by my father, who threatened me many times if any more windows were shot out that I was going to be paying for them.

There are so many different exciting and joyful opportunities that families can do together as a family with firearms, but also there is a great responsibility that comes along with that.

Also, as the quotes that I read before from our Founding Fathers show, there is an even greater right behind that, a principle behind that, that we do have a responsibility not only to protect ourselves but to protect other citizens that we live with.

So thank you for bringing this issue to the floor, and thank you to all of those who have spoken, as well. I believe that as we continue these discussions that it should be thoughtful, that

it be careful, and we in Congress have a responsibility to let people know that we do understand that this issue is an important matter. But as we've seen in the votes from the Senate, people want to know gun safety is the most important issue that we're dealing with.

□ 1650

Mrs. HARTZLER. Absolutely. Very well said. I appreciate your comments, and I'm so glad you brought Payton and Preston along. I was sharing earlier that I got my start on the farm with my BB gun as well. I'm glad to hear you're well on your way to having a lot of years of fun hunting and doing it safely with your father teaching you.

My friend from Indiana brought up so many great points. The quotes from the Founding Fathers really bring home what this is all about and why it is so important that we as a country retain the right as citizens to be able to protect ourselves, not just from individuals, but from the government even. Well said there.

As far as the Senate vote, I think you brought up an excellent point as well, that the American people really did speak. I think overwhelmingly the American people understand that taking away guns or putting new restrictions on law-abiding citizens is not going to address the problems of violence in our society, and it would not have prevented the tragedy that occurred in Connecticut or any of the other shootings that we have experienced. So we need to, as I said earlier, focus on the facts and not on emotions.

I wanted to share with you some of the comments from people in my district. I think lots of times people in the country have the pulse of what is common sense and what is wise policy for our country, more so than in the heat of the moment sometimes with some things that have gone on here at the Capitol.

This is an example from Samantha of what happened recently in our district in Randolph County, and I think she has a very interesting perspective on this. She said:

I am a citizen of Randolph County, and on Easter Sunday, two men went on a crime spree in our area and shot two very close friends of mine, pistol whipped an elderly lady, and killed a woman from Moberly. These suspects were on the run from police for over 12 hours, including overnight. The residents of this area didn't sleep well not knowing what was going on. Houses were on lockdown. It was a horrible feeling knowing the armed men were able to get away from police officers for several hours and not knowing where they would go next.

As a mother, I was terrified for my family. Knowing that we were protected in case these perpetrators came in our neighborhood was the only thing that made that night even bearable. Please vote to keep our Second Amendment rights. It is our right to protect ourselves from these criminals who will always be able to get guns no matter what they do, such as drugs, because drugs are illegal as well. If they want them, they will get them. Let normal, law-abiding citizens keep their guns to protect themselves. We should not have them taken away because

there are people who are irresponsible for them. Those people will get guns no matter what, but law-abiding citizens need to be able to protect our families. It is our right, just as freedom of speech is, and should not be taken away.

Well said, Samantha. I think that is a perfect example of what happens potentially when a crime is occurring, and how important it is for families to be able to defend themselves in that event.

Here's a comment from Carol from Lowry City. She said in an email to me:

By definition, criminals do not care about laws. They will acquire guns and whatever weapon they want to use for their nefarious activity regardless of what the law is. The only thing that this unconstitutional gun grab will do is put innocent, law-abiding citizens in harm's way by preventing them from protecting themselves, their property and their family. If stringent gun control which stripped Second Amendment rights from the people were the answer to alleviating violence, then the city of Chicago would be a model of safety. Instead, Chicago, which has some of the most strict gun control laws in the Nation, led the country in number of deaths related to firearms at 532. The people could not protect themselves against the criminal activity around them, and many paid for it with their lives.

I wanted to share some statistics from the World Health Organization. It lists, and you probably can't see it, but two pages' worth of countries here that have a higher percentage of murders per 100,000 citizens than we do. You have countries everywhere from the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Panama, Brazil, Greenland, Costa Rica, Russia, British Virgin Islands, Philippines, Uruguay, Thailand, and on and on. Two pages of countries that have very high murder rates, and yet here is the United States below all of them. And you know what all of these other countries have in common? All of these countries have banned guns 100 percent from their citizens.

So this validates what Carol from Lowry City said to me in her email, that when you take guns away from individuals, crime rates actually go up because criminals will have the guns and the law-abiding citizens won't be able to protect themselves. I thought that was a really good point that she makes.

Here's a comment in an email from Vicki Jo from Clinton, Missouri. She said:

I would like you to know that I do not support more regulations on any guns, accessories, or ammunition. These items are only tools some people choose to use as weapons against others. I feel the Second Amendment gives me the freedom to own and operate any firearm that I choose. I'm a hunter and, if needed, would use my firearms for protection from harm. I feel that more attention needs to be spent on those dealing with mental illness and pose a threat to others' welfare. We law-abiding citizens don't need more laws to take more freedoms away from us. Please pursue the violators of these crimes and not their ill-chosen tools.

Well said.

Larry from Mexico, Missouri, said:

Guns can do no harm by themselves. They are no more harmful than any large vehicle like a truck or bus that has mass or weight as a part of their structure.

It's interesting that Larry would say that because yesterday I saw a clip on the news of someone who actually went after someone else in a car. The other person was on a bicycle, and they tried to kill them. They were able to save the person. Thankfully, he wasn't hurt, but they are still looking for the person in the car. So are we going to ban cars because they can be used to kill people? Of course not, because what we need to do is find the person who was trying to commit the crime.

Continuing on, Larry says:

Sick individuals can take any truck and drive it into a school or mall, killing our loved ones just as a gun can. I don't want anyone to be hurt or die, but feel that this path of legislation is wrong. As others have suggested, we need to focus on people. People are the motor driving the gun, truck, bus or any other object. The focus has to become helping the mentally ill.

And we have Jessica from Warrensburg. She said:

If a fraction of the time, energy, money and passion that went into debating gun control went toward establishing a more efficient national or State mental health outreach campaign, perhaps we would have less heartbreaking tragedies involving individuals who felt unheard, isolated, and alienated. A commonly heard phrase is guns don't kill people, people kill people. If that is true, What are we doing to help people?

I think that brings up the point of mental health issues in our country and how we should be focusing more on these killers and what caused them or led them to do it. What about violent video games? If you look at the Newtown, Connecticut, shooter as well as the Aurora, Colorado, shooter, Madam Speaker, you'll find that both of them spent an inordinate amount of time playing violent video games where they actually were carrying out scenarios of shooting people. How come we aren't hearing proposals talking about that from gun control advocates or from those who say that they want to do this to help children. Let's get to the heart of the issue here.

We have Kelly from Sedalia who adds:

The one thing all of these misguided proposals have in common is that they won't reduce crime. Criminals by definition are law breakers. They are not deterred by laws against murder, rape, armed robbery, et cetera; and they won't be affected by additional gun control laws on top of the tens of thousands of existing laws we have on the books at every governmental level. Again, I urge you to oppose any and all anti-gun legislation that will simply penalize law-abiding gun owners and instead focus on improvements to our Nation's mental health system and enhancing school security while respecting our Second Amendment rights.

The gentleman from Indiana brought up some really good points awhile ago, and we share a lot in common. We both come from a farm background, and we both still have a farm today. We both have children still in school, and we enjoy sharing our heritage. I say to the

gentleman, my daughter, we've had a lot of fun with her, teaching her how to shoot a gun and going out also in our pasture. We have an area that we've blocked off, and we target shot, and it's a lot of fun and she enjoys it. But just as importantly as it being enjoyable, I think just being familiar with guns and for the potential of having self-protection is so important, as well. And I know you would agree.

□ 1700

Mr. STUTZMAN. Absolutely. I think that as Payton, our oldest, we've given him a bow and arrow, and he has his straw bales out in the back of the barn. And I think that any time he goes out, we always talk to him about look what's beyond your target and make sure that you're not shooting in a direction towards a house or towards any other one that's behind there.

And it really does come down to awareness and responsibility and making sure that any time you're shooting, whether it's a bow and arrow, or whether it's a baseball, for that matter, throwing a baseball or shooting a firearm, that there is an awareness always around you.

I know we see a lot of the tragedies that happen in cities, whether it could be from a stray bullet, and that's where we need to continue to focus on those people, whether it's through our churches, whether it's through charitable organizations, through schools, education, and helping people understand the great responsibility that comes with firearms.

I feel fortunate to be raised on a farm where I could start at a very young age and was taught the lessons of responsibility with gun ownership. And then we're teaching the same with Payton and Preston.

There is that point of fun and the enjoyment of having firearms as you're out in the woods or wherever you're at. But it also goes deeper than that. And I think that's why the Second Amendment goes to the very heart of Americans and how we were founded. Obviously, the men who fought in the Revolutionary War needed to have the access to a gun to defend themselves against the Redcoats at the time, and so they obviously had to learn the same thing.

And it wasn't just to defend themselves from another army. It was also a tool used to provide food for themselves.

We're very fortunate in so many ways that we don't have the responsibility of using a gun on a daily basis like people used to. With that, people don't use a firearm as often, and they do have a responsibility to make sure that they're trained when they do purchase one, and recognizing those that are around them when they're using them.

But again, it goes to the heart of us as Americans and defending our freedom. And if it has to absolutely come to that, to defeat tyranny. That is

what Thomas Jefferson mentioned about the Second Amendment.

Mrs. HARTZLER. It's certainly a deterrent, I think, from any government who would want to take on their citizens. And you look at this list that I was sharing, two pages of people and countries who have very high murder rates. I feel for the people of those countries.

I can't imagine what that would be like to live in a country where you're basically helpless. You and your family are helpless. You are totally open to and vulnerable to anyone, whether it's somebody in government, a rogue government, or a criminal who wants to do yourself or your family harm, and you don't have that ability to protect yourself.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on our Nation's need for comprehensive immigration reform. I did want to, however, congratulate my friend, MARLIN STUTZMAN, and his family. What a beautiful family. And it was a delight looking over and seeing both boys. What a terrific family.

I come today, though, to thank, really, the faith community in this country that has come together around comprehensive immigration reform. It's been interesting to see how, literally, every denomination, every faith group, has come together and said that we must have comprehensive immigration reform because of the values that they have, as religious people and religious groups, but also, more importantly, the religious values that we share as Americans.

So I want to thank all of the groups that have been praying for us, that have come to the Capitol to speak to us, to say, open up your hearts, open up your minds and take a look at the stranger among you.

I would like to read a letter that I received yesterday that, I think, puts it into context, certainly in the Judeo-Christian context, and that was a letter that I received from Rabbi Ron Stern from the Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles, California.

He wrote this:

Among the fundamental stories of the Jewish people is the classic telling of the experience of slavery in Egypt.

The story is not only told each year during the Passover Seder held by Jews around the world but it is also referenced repeatedly as the rationale for many Jewish ethical principles.

The tradition teaches us that we must always remember that we were strangers in a strange land, that we were powerless immi-

grants with no choice but to rely upon the grace and mercy of others who not only had power over our subsistence, but sometimes over our lives.

The truth of the Exodus story for the Jewish people is eternal because we have often been wanderers in lands that were not our own.

Subsequent to the Exodus story, the first encounter with the landless powerlessness occurred nearly 2,500 years ago in the land of Babylonia.

It was there that we also learned the strength that comes when a people exits the shadows and is able to take its place in the light of the Nation's destiny. A vibrant Jewish community thrived there for thousands of years as citizens of a Persian nation.

Elsewhere in the world over the centuries Jews encountered wandering, rootlessness and powerlessness in Europe, Russia and Northern Africa. With each move, we endured the insecurity of foreigners never fully welcomed in a land that benefited from our labor and our skills.

The all too infrequent eras of stability, security and peace were welcomed isles of harmony that allowed our people to prosper.

Because of our history, because of our collective memory of wandering and existing as immigrants in lands that were not our own from birth, because we were wanderers who traveled to nations looking for better fortunes and left nations where fortune and safety eluded, the Jewish people have a mission to extend compassion and embrace to others who seek the very security that we often sought for ourselves.

Now that we have found peace, comfort, stability and strength in this great country, we demand nothing less than that for others who seek these essential components of life for themselves and for their families.

Eleven million immigrants have cared for our children, attended our schools, worked in our factories, fought our wars, frequented our businesses, and made our way of life possible.

The time is now for those who have become a part of our American fabric through the sweat of their hands to be given the place in our society that we cherish for ourselves as well: citizens of the United States of America.

Sincerely, Rabbi Ron Stern.

I want to thank Rabbi Stern. I think that he, along with so many others, have really set the stage for something that I think is not only overdue but that we're going to do, and that is, we're going to look into our hearts, and we're going to see that the stranger among us is not so strange.

It was interesting that the rabbi mentioned fought our wars. For those of us that have been working with immigrants, I think probably the saddest things, the saddest occurrences that we've encountered are these, when military men and women have spouses who are undocumented.

□ 1710

A good example is a story I gave before, and I'll give it again, it was so compelling.

Here in the Capitol, on the Senate side, we heard testimony from an Army soldier who had, unfortunately, been injured. He came home and his wife is taking care of him and his young family. And what he's had to do is line the car windows and all over the car with stickers that say, "Injured Soldier,"