

criminals, domestic abusers, those with dangerous mental illness, and other prohibited purchasers. However, those same criminals could buy those same guns at a gun show or over the Internet without any questions asked because those sales don't require a background check.

Our bill closes this huge loophole, greatly reducing the number of places a criminal can buy a gun, because our bill would require background checks at all gun shows and for Internet or newspaper sales.

Our bill is pro-gun owner and pro-Second Amendment. It provides reasonable exceptions for firearm transfers between families and friends. You won't have to get a background check when you inherit the family rifle or borrow a shotgun for a hunting trip, or purchase a gun from a friend, hunting buddy, or neighbor.

It bans the creation of a Federal registry and makes the misuse of records a felony, punishable up to 15 years in prison. It allows Active Duty military to buy firearms in their home States or the State in which they're stationed. It authorizes the use of State concealed carry permits in lieu of a background check to purchase a firearm. And, it allows interstate handgun sales from licensed dealers.

We have a bill that's ready for the floor. It's bipartisan. It will help keep guns from criminals, terrorists, and the dangerously mentally ill, and it supports the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans. If the bill didn't support the Second Amendment, my name wouldn't be on it. I'm a gun owner, and I believe that law-abiding Americans have a constitutional right to own a firearm. But I'm also a father and a grandfather, and I know that we have a responsibility to do everything we can to reduce gun violence.

This bill deserves a vote. The people of Newtown deserve a vote. The families of the nearly 5,000 people who have been killed since Newtown deserve a vote. Our kids and our grandkids deserve a vote. Mr. Speaker, please give us a vote.

#### A CHALLENGE FOR THE FRIENDS OF BRETT BAXLEY GOSNELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, in this country there are children diagnosed with rare diseases every day. While it's a tragedy that anyone is diagnosed with a disease or cancer in this country, it is a particular tragedy that the youngest in our society are diagnosed with oftentimes incurable diseases and ailments.

So today, I rise to support the Kids First Research Act, because it's important that we focus our national resources on fixing these problems, these challenges that as a society we can band together and put research dollars

where our heart is. We all do this in individual ways, whether it's donating to a local charity or focusing our interest on making sure Congress allocates resources necessary to come up with life-saving cures through the National Institutes of Health or other areas of government research.

At home, we have something called "Brett's Ride for Rhabdo." It's an incredible story of a young man at age 17 who is diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma. It's a very rare pediatric cancer that roughly 300 children are diagnosed with each year. It's very rare. This incredible young man named Brett Gosnell was diagnosed at age 17 with this cancer.

Brett was an all-American kid from Hickory. Maryann and Mark Gosnell were his parents. He has two younger brothers. Just a great all-American family. I'm pleased to know the family, and I was pleased to know Brett.

Brett was an all-star kid, the kind of young man that I hope to have as my wife and I start a family. But Brett was a very special guy. He was not pleased with his SAT score—his math SAT score. He got a 740 on the math portion of the SAT. So after a round of chemotherapy he retook the SAT and he scored a perfect 800 on the math portion. Incredible young man.

So what his parents did was come together—and his family—at Brett's urging to come up with a charity bike ride that hundreds of people participate in every October in Hickory, North Carolina. Even folks like me that aren't great bike riders or particularly athletic participate in Brett's honor. Each year they are able to raise tens of thousands of dollars for Rhabdo research.

I tell the story because it's very important. Brett's story is a very important one, and inspiring to so many of us. Brett was diagnosed early and still insisted on going off to college at the University of Virginia. He did lose his fight to Rhabdo in 2006.

Brett left a letter for us that we read every October at Brett's Ride for Rhabdo. He left this letter that he dictated to a friend of his. He calls it: "A Challenge for the Friends of Brett Baxley Gosnell." He says:

I am not here physically, but I am looking down from Heaven on this assembled group. I challenge you to adopt a new goal, a new way of life for yourself. Put helping, caring about, and serving others at the center of all that you do—not just for today or tomorrow but for the remainder of your life. I ask you to look for ways in which to make a difference in the lives of others, regardless of who they are or where you find them. They are God's children and they need us. We must turn away from thinking only of ourselves and remember that each one of us has a capacity for doing something. Discover what you can do—and do it. I ask you to do that. But there is something else. In the act of helping others, think of this. It was my desire to make a difference, and I tried to do that in the opportunities that were given to me. There was so much more that I wanted to do, but I will keep my eye on you from Heaven. Now you can pick up where I left off

and serve so many others. Hear this plea and respond to it. This is your friend who asks you to accept this challenge. Do something meaningful with your life. After all, that is how you can most honor me in my life.

Brett.

I bring this to the House floor to urge my colleagues to ensure that we support important pediatric research so that we don't have to lose another Brett Gosnell.

□ 1030

#### THE SANDY HOOK PROMISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, our hearts are broken, but our spirit is not. That is the Sandy Hook promise.

Tomorrow marks 6 months since the tragedy in Newtown, a tragedy seared in the minds of every person across America—indeed, in the minds of millions across the world. Like the anniversaries of the shootings in Tucson, Arizona, in Oak Creek, and in so many other communities, tomorrow marks an anniversary of shock, uncertainty, violence, horror. Tomorrow marks another solemn reminder of the persistent plague of gun violence in our society and of the ongoing challenge to end it.

Over the past 6 months, many words have been spoken to offer our love and support to the community of Newtown and to the students and teachers of Sandy Hook. Yet, from the start, we have known that words of comfort would never be enough, that there would be no substitute for the action that we must take that would be a truly fitting memorial to the 20 children and six teachers and administrators lost that day.

Yesterday, we had visits from the families, who brought pictures of their loved ones who were lost—Daniel Barden, Lauren Rousseau, Benjamin Wheeler, Mary Sherlach, Dylan Hockley—heartbreaking photos of these children and family members who were lost. I don't know how much more motivation we need than to see the tears in their eyes and the resolve in their voices to use their grief as a source of strength to help save other people.

That would start with a vote on bipartisan legislation by Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman PETER KING, and 180 cosponsors to expand and strengthen our background checks. No one knows better than the people of Newtown—the men and women, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters—who lost their loved ones on December 14, 2012. Since that dark day, the families of Newtown and their supporters have turned their sorrow into strength, their pain into perseverance, their unspeakable loss into unmatched courage and determination to carry on.

Yesterday, these mothers and fathers met with both Republican and Democratic leaders. Yet they had come with

no partisan agenda. They came as Americans who wished to spare their fellow parents and family members the mourning, fear and terror they felt 6 months ago. Their message is clear: honor the memories of the little children of these educators by helping to ensure that no other family is forced to endure such an unimaginable tragedy.

It had been unimaginable. Now we have seen it. Now our task is plain. We must restore confidence in the safety of our communities by taking clear, effective steps to prevent gun violence in our schools, homes, and neighborhoods.

I just read the names and showed the pictures of a few of the people whose lives were lost that day. For them and for others and for the lives we want to save, again I mention the bipartisan Thompson-King, King-Thompson legislation, which means to use this anniversary, certainly, to memorialize the victims of Newtown, but also to answer the call of their families to give gun violence prevention legislation a vote in the Congress of the United States.

Six months ago in Newtown, a lone gunman took the lives of 26 Americans. We all know that. It's emblazoned in our minds and in our souls. Since then, nearly 5,000 more Americans have fallen victim to gun violence. Now in Congress we must summon the courage to act. We must take inspiration from the courage of the Newtown families, from the courage it has taken to turn their grief into action. We must heed the moving words of the Sandy Hook promise: our hearts are broken; our spirit is not. As we mark this anniversary, we must uphold our most basic responsibility: the oath we take—the oath of office—to protect and defend the Constitution and to protect and defend the people of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague Congresswoman ESTY and our colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON for their leadership in bringing us together this morning so that we cannot only remember but so that we can have the courage to act.

#### NEWTOWN ANNIVERSARY AND GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. HOYER. I rise to join the leader. I rise to join Congresswoman ESTY and Congressman THOMPSON in recognizing this sad anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that we mark the 6-month anniversary tomorrow of the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

On that day, as has been repeated and must be remembered, Americans were united in shock and grief at the senseless murder by a crazed gunman of 26 innocent people—of 20 innocent first graders and six courageous school staff members—who tried to protect them and helped save the lives of others. Since that day, approximately 4,500—the leader mentioned 5,000, but it's a

figure in excess of 4,500—Americans have died as a result of gun violence, according to the Newtown Action Alliance.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just a tragedy; it is an epidemic, one that Congress has a moral responsibility to address. When nine out of 10 Americans support stricter background checks to keep dangerous guns out of the hands of criminals and those with mental illness, there is no reason why Congress shouldn't be able to take swift and decisive action to enact tougher protections. I was deeply disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that the Senate failed to move forward with legislation to protect Americans from gun violence by enacting effective background checks that safeguard the constitutional rights of responsible gun owners and safeguard Americans.

The American people are demanding action, and the House now has a chance to succeed where the Senate failed. Demonstrating that commonsense proposals to reduce gun violence can, indeed, command bipartisan support, Democratic Representative MIKE THOMPSON of California, who chairs the House Democratic Task Force on Gun Violence, and my friend Republican Representative PETER KING of New York have joined together to introduce legislation in this Chamber similar to that which was blocked in the Senate. There is not a single provision in their bill that should be worrisome to those concerned about our longstanding tradition of protecting Second Amendment rights—not a single provision.

It will help us keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous and mentally unstable individuals likely to do harm to others or themselves. Will it keep all of us safe all the time? It will not. We know that. That is the tragic fact of life. But will it help? It will. If we can help, should we? The answer is an emphatic "yes."

□ 1040

This proposal contains commonsense proposals that I strongly support and that most Americans have supported, as well.

Congress has the opportunity to get this right by considering the Thompson-King legislation in the House and sending it to the Senate for consideration.

I congratulate Congresswoman ESTY in particular, as well as Congressman THOMPSON, for their leadership and efforts in this regard. After the backlash many Senators received for opposing expanded background checks, I suspect that a number may be ready to reconsider.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to come together, as Representative THOMPSON and Representative KING have done, to advance this bipartisan solution to this pressing challenge facing our Nation—not just the Congress, but every American.

It should not take and it must not take another tragedy such as Newtown

for us to act. We have a responsibility to keep our neighborhoods and our schools safe. I urge Speaker BOEHNER and Majority Leader CANTOR to allow this bill to come to the floor for a vote.

The Speaker often says that he wants to allow the House to work its will. That's why the people of Newtown sent Congresswoman ESTY to Congress. That's why the people of my district and every district represented in this House, people sent them here to vote on policies, policies to make their country better, policies to make their country more safe.

The memories of those children, the memories of those teachers, the memories of those 26, and, yes, the memories of those 4,500-plus who, since the Newtown tragedy, have lost their lives to violence, their memory, Mr. Speaker, demands and deserves action by their representatives.

#### GUN REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, 6 months ago tomorrow, Newtown experienced unimaginable tragedy and unparalleled loss.

That loss, the painful loss of sons and daughters, spouses, siblings, and friends, is still very raw and will always run very deep for the people of Newtown. Yet, in the face of that unimaginable tragedy on that day and on the days since, this small community that has been through so much has inspired our Nation with tremendous courage and resilience.

Americans have been inspired by the sixth grade educators who gave their very lives to defend and protect their students.

Americans have been inspired by the brave first responders who arrived on the scene to save others and live with the trauma of what they saw that day.

Americans have been inspired by the Sandy Hook families who, despite living with the pain that one can only begin to imagine, have responded to loss not with anger or hate, but with unbelievable love, strength, and courage.

They've taken their call to action to Hartford, where a comprehensive set of commonsense gun laws passed with bipartisan support. They've taken the call to action to State capitols around this country. And they've taken that call to action here in Washington, but here they've faced inexplicable political cowardice.

Mr. Speaker, in the 6 months since that terrible day, since we lost 26 precious lives in Newtown, nearly 4,800 Americans have also lost their lives to gun violence. But during that same time, this House has not held a single vote on commonsense gun reform to reduce and prevent gun violence, not even enhanced criminal background checks.

Forty-six Senators blocked an up-or-down vote on enhanced background