

in this country could have had any other reaction. We must take action here to make sure these mass shootings never occur again.

While there is no single answer to preventing mass shootings, we do know some things. We know, for example, that untreated or undiagnosed serious mental illness has been a factor in many of these tragedies. It's important to note as we say this that more than 95 percent of people with a mental illness never will commit a violent act. They are far more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators.

The young man who killed six people in Tucson and wounded 13 of us had displayed symptoms of mental illness for many, many months before the tragedy. He never received either a diagnosis or treatment. He ended up getting a diagnosis and treatment when he was in prison. I believe this and other such mass shootings could have been averted if the public was more aware of the indications of symptoms of mental illness and how to get help.

We must do more to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. We must invest in the early identification of mental illness and treatment programs. Sixty percent of people living in this country with mental illness are not receiving the care they need. We must do better. It is clear that we must expand mental health services and awareness for 100 percent of the individuals with mental illness in the country.

That's one of the reasons I introduced the Mental Health First Aid Act earlier this year with strong bipartisan support. This legislation would provide training to help first responders, educators, students, and the general public identify and respond to signs of mental illness.

This is just one of many actions we can take. You've heard of others from speakers before me today. There are many things we can and must do. Congress must act. I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand with me and the families of Newtown and of Tucson and all the other places where there have been mass shooting tragedies in the last 2 years and take action. We must act. We must do it now. The families of Newtown, Oak Creek, Aurora, Tucson, and across this Nation, are waiting for our answer. Will we answer? I hope we will do it, and do it soon.

MORE VALUE FROM DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 4 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Budget Committee hearing, we had Secretary Hagel and Joint Chief of Staff Dempsey walk us through the impossible position that the Department of Defense has been placed in.

Now, I'll be the first to admit—as I think they would; in fact, they said as much in the hearing—that there are areas of opportunity for additional savings, and that the Department of Defense can itself do a better job.

When you have almost half of the world's military spending by the United States, even though we are only 5 percent of the world's population and less than a quarter of the world's economic might, we can and should be able to squeeze more value. But the problem is not so much that the Department of Defense isn't willing to come forward with changes that need to be made; a great part of this problem is Congress itself.

□ 1100

I have proposed, from the Department of Defense, that we actually close bases, that we reform compensation and health care, that we don't force weapons systems on the Department of Defense that the military doesn't want or need. These are things that gets Congress weak in the knees. It's time for us to step up to make sure that we are having the world's most powerful military, but that we are squeezing more value out of it.

One critical area that needs greater attention is our nuclear deterrent. We have far more nuclear weapons than we'd ever want, need, or could use. It's been 68 years since the United States used a nuclear weapon in war; and no matter what you do in terms of deterrence, there's no question that we don't have to blow the world up hundreds of times over to have that deterrent work. Yet, sadly, we are poised to spend almost three-quarters of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years.

The administration was forced by former Senator Kyl, as a concession for the START Treaty, to invest even more in weapons modernization. We need to step up and change that.

There are other details that need attention. When the military looked at a proposal to streamline the PX operation, where military families shop, there was a proposal by major retailers to provide exactly the same service, in many cases, equally convenient, saving a billion dollars; and yet the political pushback was such that the Pentagon turned away.

Now, dealing with things like military bands and the PX and NASCAR sponsorship are appropriate, but that's rounding error. Those are small items.

We need to deal with reforming the military, to deal with the new threats and challenges that are more serious and immediate and largely impervious to the major military footprint we've got. We need to start now, in partnership with the Department of Defense, to reduce the footprint, to restructure the force, and reform pay and benefits.

We were told yesterday that we can either reform TRICARE over the next 5 years, or we'll have 25,000 more troops to lay off. These proposals are stark, but they are immediate and they are

real; and we should take advantage of them.

THE REALITIES OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I come before the House today to talk a little bit about the food stamp program. I want to talk about it because it is proposed in the farm bill that we'll be talking about soon that there will be a \$20 billion cut from the program.

Now, I just thought that I would come before the House today, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the realistic implications for regular people, and maybe even to try to stand against some of the misconceptions that people may have about the food stamp program.

Last Monday, I was in my district and nearby there in St. Paul, and I and BETTY MCCOLLUM sat down with a number of our neighbors and friends and colleagues to talk about the food stamp program. And we had three groups of people who were talking to us.

One was a group of people who are using the food stamp program. One of them was a senior citizen, and she was working, she was in her early sixties, got sick, couldn't work anymore, and was hoping to get to the age where she could retire and get her Social Security, get other benefits, but she wasn't quite there yet. She got sick before she did, and she needed the food stamp program.

Now, personally, as a taxpaying American, I've got no problem helping this wonderful lady meet her food needs.

Another was a young mom. Actually, she didn't have any money for child care, so she brought her baby to the meeting, who was across her shoulder in a sort of a wrap. And this young mom explained how she tried to get the best options for her baby, wanted to get back to work, but, while she was in the middle of trying to find work, needed to have good nutrition for her child.

We also talked with a person who was a young adult, 19-year-old guy, didn't get any food stamps until he passed out one day because he hadn't been eating.

And then we talked to a person who was not a food stamp recipient, but who was a health care professional in Hennepin County. She explained that the food stamp program was essential for good health because she had had a number of people, she talked about one woman in particular named Mary, who was complaining, was not taking her medication. And her doctor said, Mary, you're not compliant on your medication. Mary said, well, it hurts my stomach.

And so when the doctor talked to her more, he found out she wasn't eating, so the medication was sitting on her empty stomach. When she got some

food in her stomach, she was able to take her medication and be in compliance and stay well so that she could stay out of the emergency room.

So we talked with these folks. Then we talked with people from the faith community—Jewish community, Christian community, and Catholic community—and all of them said that, look, you know, we do a lot of food aid. We're trying to make sure that folks have enough to eat; but if the government steps away from nutrition assistance, then that's just going to leave a bigger hole for us.

They talked about how their food shelves were already being used a lot, and how they already were struggling to meet the needs of the folks who came to them. So at the end of the day, they said, look, you know, we're not going to be able to step in where the government steps out.

And so at the end of the conversation, it was clear to me that, aside from statistics, aside from all the numbers, there is a human face on the food stamp program; and the cuts that have been proposed will be devastating.

Let me just tell you this, Mr. Speaker. If there was a program which said that it would improve children's math and reading scores, it would prevent diabetes, asthma and depression, it would contribute to healthy babies with fewer developmental problems, it would decrease health care costs and lower the poverty rate, would you support it?

That's the food stamp program. It needs to be supported.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at noon.

PRAYER

Pastor Ron Dunn, Revolution Church of God, Harrison, Michigan, offered the following prayer:

Father, You have given us this land for our heritage. We humbly ask that You will keep us mindful of Your favor and Your will.

Bless our land. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion and from every evil way. Turn us into one united people.

Give wisdom to our leaders who have been elected and entrusted with the authority to govern this great Nation. Let these leaders be obedient to Your law, and may Your glory shine throughout our Nation.

Bless this Nation as we put our trust in You in times of trouble and give You our thankfulness in times of prosperity.

Father, pour out Your Spirit on these men and women as they commit themselves to Your service and the service of our Nation.

We pray this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MULLIN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING PASTOR RON DUNN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. CAMP. Today, I rise to welcome Pastor Ron Dunn to the House floor and to thank him for sharing his inspiring words this morning.

Pastor Dunn has served in a number of ministry roles for the last 15 years. Currently, he is the senior pastor to the Revolution Church of God in Harrison, Michigan, where he has encouraged the church to serve the community by offering counseling services and donating items such as clothing, diapers, and formula.

Before joining the ministry, Reverend Dunn was a member of the United States Army for 8 years and served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He and his wife, Stephanie, have three daughters—Chelsea, Abigail, and Sara—and they join us here today.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I would like to thank Pastor Dunn for offering this morning's prayer and for his service to God, his community, and our country.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 13, 2013 at 9:32 a.m.:

That the Senate agrees to return the bill to the House H.R. 2217.

Appointment:
Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

VIOLA MEEKINS

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. I rise today to recognize Viola Meekins and her lifetime of service to her community and to the State of Arkansas.

The life of Mrs. Meekins will be remembered in every corner of Arkansas County as well as in the halls of Upchurch and McRae High Schools in Prescott and by her classmates of Philander Smith College.

When Mrs. Meekins and her husband, George, first moved to Stuttgart in 1958, he became the principal of the former Holman School. Mrs. Meekins was the school's secretary as well as a teacher. After desegregation in 1971, the couple moved to Stuttgart High School. Even though Mrs. Meekins retired from teaching in 1989, her work in the community was just beginning. She spent countless hours volunteering at many places, including at the Holman Heritage Community Center. Upon the passing of her husband, George, Mrs. Meekins was appointed to fulfill his term on the quorum court and went on to serve for over 20 years.

In closing, I want to highlight the reason Mrs. Meekins sought a career as a teacher: to add value to the lives of the students and their families she taught. The life of Mrs. Meekins will live on, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that everyone who came in contact with Mrs. Meekins will honor her legacy by finding ways that they, too, can add value to the lives of those they come in contact with on a daily basis.