

Ms. PELOSI. With the Speaker's permission, I acknowledge Elijah Lawrence, the teenage son of John and Deborah Lawrence, who's with us in the Chamber.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HYDROPOWER REGULATORY EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 267) to improve hydropower, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 40]
YEAS—422

Aderholt Chabot Fincher
Alexander Chaffetz Fitzpatrick
Amash Chu Fleischmann
Amodei Cicilline Fleming
Andrews Clarke Flores
Bachmann Clay Forbes
Bachus Cleaver Fortenberry
Barber Clyburn Foster
Barletta Coffman Foxx
Barr Cohen Frankel (FL)
Barrow (GA) Cole Franks (AZ)
Barton Collins (GA) Frelinghuysen
Bass Collins (NY) Fudge
Beatty Conaway Gabbard
Becerra Connolly Gallego
Benishek Conyers Garamendi
Bentivolio Cook Garcia
Bera (CA) Cooper Gardner
Bilirakis Costa Garrett
Bishop (GA) Cotton Gerlach
Bishop (NY) Courtney Gibbs
Bishop (UT) Cramer Gibson
Black Crawford Gingrey (GA)
Blackburn Crenshaw Gohmert
Blumenauer Crowley Goodlatte
Bonamici Cuellar Gosar
Bonner Culberson Gowdy
Boustany Cummings Granger
Brady (PA) Daines Graves (GA)
Brady (TX) Davis (CA) Graves (MO)
Braley (IA) Davis, Danny Grayson
Bridenstine Davis, Rodney Green, Al
Brooks (AL) DeGette Green, Gene
Brooks (IN) Delaney Griffin (AR)
Broun (GA) DeLauro Griffith (VA)
Brown (FL) DelBene Grijalva
Brownley (CA) Denham Grimm
Buchanan Dent Guthrie
Bucshon DeSantis Hahn
Burgess DesJarlais Hall
Bustos Deutch Hanabusa
Butterfield Diaz-Balart Hanna
Calvert Doggett Harper
Camp Doyle Harris
Campbell Duckworth Hartzler
Cantor Duffy Hastings (FL)
Capito Duncan (SC) Hastings (WA)
Capps Duncan (TN) Heck (NV)
Capuano Edwards Heck (WA)
Cárdenas Ellison Hensarling
Carney Ellmers Herrera Beutler
Carson (IN) Engel Higgins
Carter Enyart Himes
Cartwright Eshoo Hinojosa
Cassidy Esty Holding
Castor (FL) Farenthold Holt
Castro (TX) Fattah Honda

Horsford McNeerney Sánchez, Linda
Hoyer Meadows T.
Hudson Meehan Sanchez, Loretta
Huelskamp Meeks Sarbanes
Huffman Meng Scalise
Huizenga (MI) Messer Schakowsky
Hultgren Mica Schiff
Hunter Michaud Schneider
Hurt Miller (FL) Schrader
Israel Miller (MI) Schwartz
Issa Miller, Gary Schweikert
Jackson Lee Miller, George Scott (VA)
Jeffries Moore Scott, Austin
Jenkins Moran Scott, David
Johnson (GA) Mullin Sensenbrenner
Johnson (OH) Mulvaney Serrano
Johnson, E. B. Murphy (FL) Sessions
Johnson, Sam Murphy (PA) Sessions
Jones Nadler Sewell (AL)
Jordan Napolitano Sherman
Joyce Neal Shimkus
Kaptur Negrete McLeod Shuster
Keating Neugebauer Simpson
Kelly Noem Sinema
Kennedy Nolan Sires
Kildee Nugent Slaughter
Kilmer Nunes Smith (NE)
Kind Nunnelee Smith (NJ)
King (IA) O'Rourke Smith (TX)
King (NY) Olson Smith (WA)
Kingston Owens Southerland
Kinzinger (IL) Palazzo Speier
Kirkpatrick Pallone Stewart
Kline Pascrell Stivers
Kuster Pastor (AZ) Stockman
Labrador Paulsen Stutzman
LaMalfa Payne Swalwell (CA)
Lamborn Pelosi Takano
Lance Perlmutter Terry
Langevin Perry Thompson (CA)
Lankford Peters (CA) Thompson (MS)
Larsen (WA) Peters (MI) Thompson (PA)
Larson (CT) Peterson Thornberry
Latham Petri Tiberi
Latta Pingree (ME) Tierney
Lee (CA) Pittenger Tipton
Levin Pitts Titus
Lewis Pocan Tonko
Lipinski Poe (TX) Tsongas
LoBiondo Polis Turner
Loebsack Pompeo Upton
Lofgren Posey Valadao
Long Price (GA) Van Hollen
Lowenthal Price (NC) Vargas
Loweey Quigley Veasey
Lucas Radel Vela
Luetkemeyer Rahall Velázquez
Lujan Grisham Rangel Visclosky
(NM) Reed Wagner
Luján, Ben Ray Reichert Walberg
(NM) Renacci Walden
Lummis Ribble Walorski
Lynch Rice (SC) Walz
Maffei Richmond Wasserman
Maloney, Sean Rigell Schultz
Carolyn Roby Waters
Maloney, Sean Roe (TN) Waxman
Marchant Rogers (AL) Weber (TX)
Marino Rogers (KY) Welch
Markey Rogers (MI) Webster (FL)
Massie Rohrabacher Welch
Matheson Rokita Wenstrup
Matsui Rooney Rokitka Westmoreland
McCarthy (CA) Ros-Lehtinen Whitfield
McCarthy (NY) Roskam Williams
McCaul Ross Wilson (FL)
McClintock Rothfus Wilson (SC)
McCollum Roybal-Allard Wittman
McDermott Royce Wolf
McGovern Royce Womack
McHenry Ruiz Woodall
McIntyre Runyan Yarmuth
McKeon Ruppersberger Yoder
McKinley Rush Yoho
McMorris Ryan (OH) Young (AK)
Rodgers Ryan (WI) Young (FL)
Salmon Young (IN)

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, on rollcall 39 I was unavoidably detained, due to a public hearing scheduled by the Administration in my district. If I had been present, I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall 40 I was unavoidably detained, due to a public hearing scheduled by the Administration in my district. If I had been present, I would have voted "yea."

ELECTING MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 64

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Garamendi.

(2) COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.—Mr. Blumenauer (to rank immediately after Mr. Cárdenas).

(3) COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM.—Mr. Welch (to rank immediately after Mr. Danny K. Davis of Illinois).

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE). Under the speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, we're going to spend the hour talking about gun violence prevention, and in particular, how the National Rifle Association has systematically unwound laws that have already been on the books.

Last night, the President referenced the fact that since the horrific deaths at Sandy Hook there have been a thousand more people that have died due to gun violence. It is not good enough to wear a green ribbon in support of the Sandy Hook families and think you have done enough.

Times have changed, and the polling that's been done is overwhelming in support of sensible gun violence prevention laws. Let's be clear at the outset—the Heller decision by the U.S. Supreme Court has made it very clear: Every American has a right to own a gun for recreational purposes or to have a gun in their home for purposes of safety, and that is not going to change. We embrace that decision, we support it. But we also support safe laws around the use of guns.

NOT VOTING—9

Coble Farr Schock
DeFazio Gutierrez Shea-Porter
Dingell Pearce Watt

□ 1348

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

So let us begin by looking at this, a Quinpiac survey done very recently. Ninety-two percent support background checks for all gun purchases, including 91 percent of gun-owning households; 89 percent support closing the gun show loophole by requiring background checks for all gun purchases; 69 percent support banning the sale of semi-automatic, military-style assault weapons; 68 percent support banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition magazines; and 81 percent favor prohibiting high-risk individuals from having guns, including those convicted of serious crime as juveniles or convicted of violating domestic violence restraining orders.

So Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster, polled NRA members and non-NRA members who were gun owners, and what did they find out there? There they found out that 85 percent of gun owners and 87 percent of NRA members believe Second Amendment rights and gun safety laws can coexist. That's what we're talking about. Eighty-seven percent of gun owners and 74 percent of NRA members support requiring background checks of anyone buying a gun. We're talking about that right now. But in a couple of minutes, I'm going to show you how that has changed among the leadership in the NRA.

Fifty-three percent of gun owners and 57 percent of the NRA members mistakenly believe that everyone has to pass a background check. Eighty percent of gun owners, 79 percent of NRA members, support requiring background checks of gun retailer employees.

Eighty percent of gun owners and 71 percent of NRA members support barring people on the terror watch list from buying guns. It's a surprise to most people that they can in fact buy guns.

All right. Let's move on. Let's talk about the CEO of the National Rifle Association.

□ 1400

What did he say in 1999? In 1999, after the Columbine shootings, when so many children lost their lives at Columbine High School, he said:

We think it's reasonable to provide mandatory instant criminal background checks for every sale at every gun show, no loopholes anywhere for anyone.

That's what he said.

What did he say after 20 children and six adults lost their lives in Newtown at Sandy Hook? In 2013, he says, at a Senate hearing, when Senator LEAHY asked:

You do not support background checks in all instances at gun shows?

Mr. LaPierre said:

We do not because the fact is the law right now is a failure the way it's working. None of it makes any sense in the real world.

Well, we are living in the real world, and the real world would suggest to everyone that a commonsense law is to have a universal background check for everyone.

Let's look at the next time we saw a flip-flop by Mr. Wayne LaPierre. Again, the point here being that the NRA leadership does not reflect the NRA membership.

In 1999, after Columbine, he says:

We believe in absolutely gun-free, zero tolerance, totally safe schools. That means no guns in America's schools, period.

On "Meet the Press" just a few weeks ago, Mr. LaPierre said:

If it's crazy to call for armed officers in our schools to protect our children, then call me crazy. I think the American people think it's crazy not to do it. It's the one thing that would keep people safe.

The point here, colleagues, is that the public, NRA members and gun-owning families in this country believe in commonsense reforms, and we owe it to them. We owe it to them to vote on these commonsense bills that will not restrict anyone's ability to own a gun for self-protection or to own a gun for recreation, but will take these assault weapons that are military weapons that are invented for one reason and one reason only, and that is to tear the hell out of anything they come in contact with.

As one law enforcement officer said very recently:

The energy in an assault weapon bullet will tear open a brick wall.

You don't need that to go hunting, and you don't need that to protect yourself in your home.

I yield to the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. I'd like to yield to my inspiration in so many ways—we share the same name—CAROLYN MCCARTHY. And on this issue, from New York, she is our spokesperson.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I want to thank my colleagues for having this hour to talk about, really, the real issues and certainly hopefully break up some of the myths that are out there on what we're hearing, not only in the papers but certainly from some NRA members.

I've been battling this, and many of us have been battling this issue for many, many years. I think that what happened just about 2 months ago today, that Newtown shooting happened. And that went through everybody's heart to think in this day and age that we could have a shooting that totally rips apart 20 children is unacceptable to the American people—unacceptable to the American people.

Since that, being that we're trying to give as much information as possible to the American people what's happened since that day, over 2,000 people have been killed. Two thousand Americans have been murdered in episodes of gun violence.

There are a number of us here, Members of Congress, that have gone through this kind of violence, either with a loved one, our colleague from California, JACKIE SPEIER, we know what this can mean to a family. Last night, we had 25, 30, unfortunately, vic-

tims. And yet here we are debating, hoping, even after what the President said, give us a vote. Give us a vote. This isn't about us. This is about what our job is. We can have people disagree, and I know it's a lot of tough votes for some Democrats and certainly some Republicans. I believe that when we came here and got elected and we swore to uphold the Constitution, we knew we'd be facing tough votes. Who said this was going to be an easy job? It's never been an easy job. But it is a job that the majority of us here want to do.

When the President spoke last night, and listening to the aftermath late last night on what some of the pundits were saying about what the President was actually trying to do, we heard the NRA say that the reason they're against some of the things that we want to do as far as Members of Congress and our task force that we want to really take everybody's gun away. Do you know that program that we were talking about, the buy-back? What they were saying was it's not really just a buy-back. It's confiscating every single one of the guns. Well, I don't think that would hold up constitutionally. And I think that we have put together, in my opinion, a reasonable, very practical way of reducing gun violence in this country.

I also heard last night that assault weapons, long guns, and it only adds up to 8 percent of the people that are killed every year—8 percent. Can we stop putting numbers on everything and remember the faces that were here? Can we remember the people and the families that have lost their loved ones? They are not a number.

Then they had another chart out that talked about handguns. Well, let me tell you something about handguns that affects almost everybody in our communities. Legislation that we are putting forward, the background checks, preventing straw purchasers, which basically is someone else is buying a gun for someone that is legally barred from buying a gun, think about how many handguns would not be sold to criminals. Think about how many lives will be saved.

But, also, let's think about those who have survived gun violence. But many of them, if you think about a lot of the young people in Aurora that had no health care insurance—and I can talk about my own son who was 26 when he was shot with five others, and, unfortunately, his father was murdered that day. I can tell you his medical bills to this day—to this day—they have cost this country millions of dollars.

Now I will say to you that we were very, very lucky; and I have been very, very blessed that he survived. But even back then, the doctors said that we would see changes in him as he got older because of the brain injury. And Kevin—God, I can't tell you how proud I was of my son. Two years of intensive therapy and they said he would never walk. He learned how to walk. Yes, he

is still partially paralyzed, but he learned how to walk.

□ 1410

They said he would never talk. And when I talk about those days and somebody asks how is Kevin doing, I say, “Well, you know, he just said.”

I spent my life as a nurse before I came here. And a lot of times when we think of patients who have had strokes and we’re teaching them how to speak again, when we say they were talking, trying to get the words out is so hard. Every word becomes so difficult, but he had the power to do that.

Our friend Gabby Giffords, who was here last night, to watch, in my opinion, her long struggle reminded me so much of what Kevin had to go through. I will say that Kevin went back to work, and he worked for many years. Unfortunately, he has reached the point now where he can’t work, and he had to go on to Social Security disability.

That has hurt his pride so much because of the work that he has done. All they want to be is looked upon and seen as just a regular person. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of Kevin McCarthys across this country. We are trying to prevent those kinds of injuries.

Background checks, why should anybody be afraid of a background check? Why? Why should anybody—again, as was brought up in an earlier poster—when you go to a gun show—I remember when we closed the gun show loopholes in New York. Gosh, we had the NRA all over us basically saying it’s going to ruin the business. I say to you, go to New York and see the gun shows that are held on weekends. There’s a big difference, though. Nobody can go into that gun show without buying a gun from a licensed Federal dealer.

By the way, the Federal licensed dealers, the gun shop owners in this country, they want everybody to go through a background check because you do have less than 2 percent of gun stores that are selling these illegal guns or guns disappear. It’s ruining their reputations. These are honest businessowners. We’re actually protecting them.

There is so much that we can go on about. When it was talked about the people that are on the terrorist list, do people know that they can actually buy a gun without a problem? God forbid we should put them on background check. I mean, they’re on the terrorist list, but they can go and buy a gun.

I want to thank my colleagues, and I want to give them an opportunity to speak because I know we all care passionately about this. And I certainly will sit here and listen to my colleagues. If we have time, hopefully, we can all speak again.

It’s exactly two months since the shooting in Newtown and since then up to 2,000 Americans have been murdered in episodes of gun violence in our country.

I know that ours is a country that believes in safety and in protecting innocent people.

That’s why we’ve instituted some of the most thorough auto safety laws in the world, and why we regulate access to medicine, and why we inspect food.

It’s also why we should be looking at the most dangerous consumer products in the world and seeing how we can make their use safer for Americans.

When it comes to reducing gun violence, the president has already said everything he could possibly say.

There can’t be any more excuses—the ball is in our court here in Congress.

The president was right in his State of the Union Address that gun violence victims “Deserve a Vote.”

There’s no shortage of options—I’m the sponsor of a bill to ban assault weapons, a bill to ban high-capacity magazines, a bill for universal background checks and a bill to limit online ammunition sales.

Another bipartisan bill by my colleagues cracks down on illegal gun trafficking.

Here in the House of Representatives, too many members of the Majority have been completely silent on these bills. They haven’t even held a simple hearing to discuss the topic, and that’s shameful.

I would ask my friends on the other side of the aisle—what are you afraid of?

I would tell them—you don’t have to be afraid.

Poll after poll after poll since Newtown—national polls—show that the majority of Americans want their lawmakers to take action to reduce gun violence.

The majority of Americans support banning assault weapons. The majority of Americans support banning high-capacity magazines. And over 90 percent of Americans support universal background checks.

Even three-quarters of all NRA members support universal background checks.

So I would tell my friends across the aisle—I know this is a tough issue, but you were elected to make tough decisions.

Tell us where you stand on these measures to reduce gun violence—the American people deserve to know where you stand.

And then, have the courage to hold votes on the measures that are out there.

This is a democracy—it’s our job to represent the American people.

If we don’t hold votes on this issue that the American people are screaming out about every single day since that awful shooting in Connecticut, then this body will have failed in its duties and in its purpose.

I will say to my friends across the aisle—let the people speak, and let their voices be heard.

Over 30 Americans are being killed by gun violence every single day and it would be shameful to turn a blind eye to that fact.

Thank you for doing this.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you to the gentlelady from New York for her always powerful comments.

Now we’re joined by the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY, who has just introduced a bill co-authored by Democrats and Republicans that deals with the trafficking of guns.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Thank you so much to JACKIE SPEIER for organizing this. She has told me she’s going to continue working

with her colleagues in Congress to raise this issue, to focus on it. She’s going to try to get us here at least once a week to keep the focus on this priority of the American people and our President.

We see here some important information. I think what we should do every week, Jackie, is print the names of the innocent children, men, and women who are murdered every day in our great country because of senseless gun violence like my dear friend’s husband and her son who was critically wounded. She told me how hard it was for her to tell her son that he had lost his father. And I want to publicly thank Carolyn for making this a priority in her time in Congress and giving so selflessly of her time to help us pass meaningful gun legislation.

I’m a cosponsor of all my colleagues’ bills. I think they all are common sense and important and should pass. But I want to focus on one that I think every NRA member should be for, and that is to take the guns out of the hands of traffickers, people who are selling guns to criminals, to cartels that are used only to kill, whether it’s gangs or robberies or whatever they use them for. Why can’t we do that? Why can’t we make that a felony and put teeth behind the punishment?

When we were having hearings on the Fast and Furious program in the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, law enforcement came and testified. They said: Help us. Trafficking and guns is not even a felony. It’s not even a crime. You can be a drug kingpin selling guns all over the place, and you won’t be convicted because it’s not a crime.

No law-abiding person is a kingpin and trafficking guns. One thing that’s good about this bill and why we have so much support on the other side of the aisle is that it doesn’t in any way infringe on Second Amendment rights. Law-abiding Americans, if they want a gun for recreation or shooting practice or defense, fine. But these are guns that are being sold to criminals, to thugs, who then go out and kill more people.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in a Federal courtroom in Las Cruces, New Mexico, two people were convicted of being part of a larger conspiracy to smuggle guns to some really bad people, criminals. They had smuggled guns to folks who worked as “muscle” for a vicious Mexican drug cartel. In fact, one of the defendants had purchased three semi-automatic weapons that showed up a month later at the scene of a triple homicide. Another of the guns he bought surfaced at a Juarez drug seizure. These two men were found guilty, but they didn’t get much of a sentence because it’s not a crime.

The sad fact is that about all the prosecutors could reasonably hope for in the case—under Federal law, gun traffickers can expect to do about as much time as people who illegally traffic in livestock. Illegally sell an assault weapon to a known killer or drug

kingpin or sell a chicken without a permit, and you can expect to do about the same amount of time for each. This is ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, there is something dreadfully wrong with this picture. Right now people known as straw purchasers can buy multiple guns and immediately resell them to cartels or killers and know that if they are caught that they will not be charged with anything but paperwork violations. Law enforcement told us at the committee that they don't even bother to arrest and try to prosecute straw purchasers because there's no penalty. Well, our bill changes that and can give up to 20 years in prison for being a straw purchaser.

Tragically, this is what happened in my own State of New York last Christmas Eve just 10 days after the massacre at the Sandy Hook children's school. Last December in Webster, New York, a convicted felon set fire to a house and then set himself up as a sniper to shoot down law enforcement when they came to protect him. He shot and killed two firefighters and seriously injured two others before taking his own life.

This is a heart-wrenching tragedy, and it is one that could never have happened but for the fact that the gunman's neighbor had acted as a straw purchaser for him. Authorities say she purchased a 12-gauge shotgun and a Bushmaster rifle for the man who, as a convicted felon, could not have purchased a gun in his own name. For knowingly acting as a straw purchaser for a felon, the neighbor has been charged with the only law that really applies: State and Federal paperwork violations.

□ 1420

I believe she would not have been buying these weapons for him if she knew she could have faced 20 years in prison. That's what prosecutors all too often have to rely on—a toothless Federal law that prohibits “engaging in the business of selling guns without a Federal license.” Little wonder then that, according to the ATF, straw purchasers is the most common channel of illegal gun trafficking in America.

Believe me, if guns made us safer, we'd be the safest country on Earth. We are the most armed country on Earth, and we know from statistics that, if you own a gun, the degree of probability of being hurt or injured or killed by a gun is 8 to 15 percent higher than it is for other individuals. It is no surprise then that U.S. Attorneys are forced to decline to prosecute 25 percent of gun trafficking cases. This is an outrage. This is a crime. This is causing the loss of lives. The investigation can take longer than the sentence a trafficker might receive. In the wake of recent tragedies, the voice of the American people has been clear on this issue: They want something done, and they want it done now. They want us to do something to address this prob-

lem. They want something done that shows some bipartisan cooperation.

As our President said, we came here to do a job. Let's have a vote. Let's put this bill out on the floor of Congress, and let's have a vote. If some of my colleagues would like to vote against making trafficking in guns a felony, then let them do it. If some of my colleagues would like to vote against having meaningful penalties for trafficking and a straw purchaser's buying guns to be given to criminals, then let them do it, but let's have a vote. That's a democracy.

I introduced a bill in the last Congress and have reintroduced it in this Congress, H.R. 452. I hope that the listening public will urge their Members of Congress to cosponsor this bill and help us pass it for the American people. It is called the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act. It is a bipartisan bill, cosponsored by my friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Mr. RIGELL of Virginia, who happens to be an NRA member, said this doesn't infringe on any gun owner's rights. He owns guns, but he just wants to go after the kingpins and the murderers and the illegal traffickers; and Mr. MEEHAN of Pennsylvania, who is a former prosecutor and knows firsthand why law enforcement needs these tools.

This bill will help keep guns out of the hands of felons and domestic abusers and the dangerously mentally ill, who cannot and should not be able to legally buy guns on their own. This bill prohibits the purchase or transfer of a firearm if the intent is to deliver the firearm to someone else who is prohibited by Federal law or State law from possessing a firearm. Persons who commit this offense are subject to up to 20 years of imprisonment. For the first time, our bill makes firearms trafficking a Federal crime—something law enforcement officials have been asking for in hearings, in letters. They have been asking for this for years.

The bill also establishes significant penalties for straw purchasers who buy firearms on behalf of someone else. Buy a firearm for a convicted felon and you could look at 20 years in prison. These increased penalties will provide law enforcement officials with the critical tools that they've been asking for, tools that BOBBY SCOTT knows from his judiciary work are critically needed. The increased penalties can be used to encourage straw purchasers to cooperate with prosecutors in order to make it possible to go on up the food chain—after the cartels and the kingpins who now have little to fear.

Let me be absolutely clear that this bill has no impact whatsoever on the Second Amendment, on legal gun ownership or purchases.

As the President pointed out in his speech last night, this bill will not put an end to all gun violence. No bill can do that. No bill can prevent any particular act of violence, but we can stop some. We can do something and we can do this, and law enforcement is begging

for the passage of this bill. We can begin the healing. We can restore some trust. We can stop putting guns in the hands of criminals. We can do it in a bipartisan way, and we can do it together.

Again, I thank my good friend and wonderful colleague, JACKIE SPEIER from the great State of California, for organizing this. I will be with you at all of your future events.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentle lady from New York for making it clear that we are talking about safe and sane, commonsense laws on the books, and I am honored to be a cosponsor of her bill.

I want to just take a minute and go through a timeline of what has happened under the NRA's leadership in terms of the unraveling of laws that have been on the books but, because of the NRA's leadership, they have been unraveled. Let's start with the very first one.

Between 1980 and 1987, the number of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents was slashed by 21 percent, from 1,500 to 1,180, and the number of inspectors dropped from 655 to 626. What was happening during that period of time? During that period of time, there were more and more dealers. So why would the NRA be so interested in reducing the staffing of the ATF? In 1986, the Firearm Owners' Protection Act was passed—again, sponsored by the NRA. It set a high burden of proof to prosecute violations of Federal gun laws. It limited ATF inspections to once a year, and it weakened the penalty. It allowed unlicensed individuals to sell their firearms as a hobby, avoiding meaningful regulations, thus leading to an increase in gun shows.

What does that mean when you have to establish a standard that is so high that you end up not revoking any firearm dealer's license? Well, willfully—not knowingly but willfully—violating gun safety laws is the standard that is now on the books. It's an extraordinarily high standard, and the loopholes that were created allowed for dealers to hand off their businesses, even when they had these horrendous violations, to relatives or to convert their inventory of guns into a “personal collection,” which they then could sell because it was now a hobby, without doing background checks. Let me give you one example.

An example is Sandy Abrams. He was a member of the NRA board of directors. He was cited with over 900 violations of Federal firearm laws at his shop, Valley Gun, and 483 crime guns were traced to his shop. This is an NRA board member who violated the laws 900 times, and 483 crime guns were traced to his shop. What did the NRA do? The NRA, in a subsequent bill, banned the tracing of crime guns. What happened to him? The only power that ATF had was to revoke his license. So what did they do? No criminal charges were ever brought. Abrams transferred hundreds of his firearms to his personal

collection, despite the revocation of his license, and faced charges of illegally selling those guns from his personal collection. As I mentioned earlier, in 1986, the Firearm Owners' Protection Act limited these inspections and weakened penalties.

We then moved on to the Dickey amendment in 1996. What did the Dickey amendment do? The Dickey amendment held that the CDC could no longer conduct public health research. Now, why would the NRA be so concerned about research going on? Because when you do research, you can link it, and it can create the opportunity for public policy decisions that are, in fact, thoughtful.

Then came the famous Tiahrt amendments in 2004 that placed restrictions on law enforcement, limited access to crime gun tracing data and required approval—background checks—of 24 hours only. That amendment said that if you're going to do a background check, you can only have that document in place for 24 hours, and then it has to be destroyed. So, to the point made by our colleague from New York about what are called "straw purchasers," how would you even know there was a straw purchaser if you had to destroy that record in 24 hours?

Then in 2004 came the assault weapons ban, which was sponsored by Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. The chair then of the Judiciary Committee, our good Vice President, was also the shepherd of that bill.

□ 1430

In 2005, Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, this was heralded by the NRA as being their biggest get ever because that particular bill became law, and it protects gun manufacturers from civil liability suits—the only industry in this country that is not subject to civil liability suits for dangerous equipment and the like. The Sandy Hook families that are looking at trying to bring actions right now are stymied because this law is in place. There's no protection for auto manufacturers if they have unsafe products, but we've given carte blanche protection to gun manufacturers.

And in 2005, the U.S. PATRIOT Act, what did we do there? Well, then the NRA decided that, you know what, that ATF Director shouldn't just be appointed; it should be confirmed by the Senate. So in the PATRIOT Act, they got an amendment that provides that the ATF Director must be confirmed by the Senate. And guess what happens? There hasn't been an ATF Director confirmed in 7 years because of the control that they exhibit.

And then in 2005, ironically, George W. Bush does something his father didn't even do. His father, George H.W. Bush, by executive order, banned the importation of guns in this country, particularly the assault weapons. When President Clinton came into power, he, by executive order, expanded that importation ban to include high-capacity

magazines. George W. Bush comes in as President, and he lifts the ban on the importation of assault weapons.

And between 2009 and 2012, we've had 99 gun safety laws rolled back at the State level. That's what the NRA is doing.

I now yield to my colleague from Rhode Island for his comments.

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentlelady from California for yielding, and also for organizing this conversation about the dangers of gun violence and our responsibility to reduce gun violence in communities all across this country.

I want to also acknowledge the leadership of the gentlelady from New York, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, who long before I arrived here was an inspiration to me and so many others across the country who have been fighting for responsible gun safety legislation.

Just to give a context to the problem we are confronting, the U.S. gun murder rate is about 20 times the average of other developed nations. What that means is someone in this country is about 20 times as likely to be killed by a gun as someone in another developed country. As some have already said, since the horrible, horrible killings, the murders of Newtown, 1,772 people have been killed by guns since that tragedy.

According to the CDC, there are 11,078 firearm homicides that accounted for 68 percent of all homicides in 2010. These are just some numbers that I think give us an understanding of the seriousness of the problem that we face with gun violence in this country. It's an epidemic.

I salute Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Mayor Menino and Mayor Bloomberg, who began that. I was a founding member. I salute the Brady Campaign for their work, but there are a couple of facts that are undeniable:

Number one, the Second Amendment gives individuals the right to possess firearms, and the vast majority of gun owners are responsible and they possess firearms for their self-defense and their own protection. That's a fact.

Two, there are certain categories of individuals that we all agree ought not have access to firearms—dangerous criminals, the seriously mentally ill, and children.

So if we agree on those two facts—guns are permitted by the Constitution to be possessed by individuals, three categories of individuals at least ought not have access to those firearms—then we have a responsibility to design a system and pass laws that ensure that those three categories of individuals, in fact, don't have access to firearms; and we have the ability to do that by closing the gaping loopholes from private sales and from the fire sale that the gentlelady from California just referenced where, when your license to sell guns, your Federal license is revoked, that you're rewarded by having your entire inventory turned into a personal collection,

and then you can sell it free from the constraints of background checks.

We can fix the background check system, be sure that States are putting accurate information into the system. We can ban assault weapons, which are weapons of war which don't belong in the neighborhoods of our cities and towns, and high-capacity ammunition whose only purpose is to kill a great number of people in a very short period of time. We have these very reasonable, commonsense solutions which are available.

Last night at the President's State of the Union, we had 30 victims who suffered the grievous impact of gun violence, who put a face on the devastation, the scourge of gun violence in this country. We owe it to them, we owe it to families all across this country to move on this legislation, to hold a vote up or down so we can take what most Americans support, responsible gun safety legislation to reduce gun violence in our country.

When the gentlelady was just going through the examples of what the NRA has been successful in doing, let's not forget, the NRA doesn't have a vote in this Chamber, so every single one of those actions happened because individuals in Congress voted for them, and they should be accountable for that. And we can fix it by taking votes today to enhance public safety, to impose reasonable gun safety measures that will protect children and families all across this country and continue to honor the right of individuals to possess a firearm as guaranteed in the Second Amendment.

I thank the gentlelady for her leadership and for yielding. This is an important issue.

I'll end with The New York Times headline that said, "Do we have the courage to stop this?" talking about the carnage in Newtown and the courage that family members have displayed who have been victims of gun violence. If we can match that courage, Members of this House can match just 10 percent of the courage that they've demonstrated in sharing their stories, then we'll do the right thing and pass responsible gun safety legislation.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank you for your extraordinarily sound comments on this issue. As you were talking about courage, I remember recently having an opportunity to listen to a family from Newtown who lost a child, who said to me and to others:

You're just a bunch of talking heads. Can't you two groups get together and do what's right?

With that, let me yield to the Member of Congress who represents that extraordinary community and who has done so much to help them heal from what has been a devastating impact on not just everyone in the country but particularly those families in Newtown, Ms. ESTY.

Ms. ESTY. I would like to thank the gentlelady from California for organizing this Special Order hour, and I

want to thank you for your longtime leadership on the gun violence prevention issue; and to our friend and colleague Congresswoman MCCARTHY, for your tireless effort, sadly over decades now, to ensure that this Congress takes action to keep our communities safer.

Last night in this Chamber, people affected by gun violence, including a number of families and officials and first responders from Newtown, were here in this Chamber. I have the honor of representing this small, brave town that now finds itself at the center of this national debate. And, folks, they are the face. They are paying the price of our political inaction.

Among the people here last night was a courageous educator by the name of Natalie Hammond. Natalie was the lead teacher at the Sandy Hook school that day, and she was in the hall trying to stop that madman, and her colleagues on either side were killed and she was seriously injured. She got out of physical therapy and came out publicly for the first time to be here last night to put a human face on the cost of inaction.

These people, as the gentlelady from California suggested, as *The New York Times* and others have suggested, are so courageous. And they have one question for us: What are we going to do? What is this country going to do to address this epidemic?

The President spoke eloquently, yet very directly, last night about how we must do better as a country. As he said, the families of Newtown deserve a vote.

□ 1440

He is right. Commonsense measures that respect Second Amendment rights, like universal criminal background checks, a reinstatement of the assault weapons ban, and restrictions on high-capacity magazines should, at the very least, be voted on in this Chamber and in the Senate.

The voices of the American people should be heard in this Congress. It's up to us. It's up to us, as elected leaders, to see that these families, that every family touched by gun violence has a vote.

Lynn and Chris McDonnell, the parents of Grace McDonnell, were here in the Chambers last night, as witness to their daughter, who loved pink, who did a beautiful painting, which they gave to the President of the United States.

The McDonnells asked me this morning, they said, you know, Elizabeth, what more can we do to ensure that Congress acts? And I was astounded by the question. To think that this grieving family, what more could they do? It's, what more must we do?

They are doing everything they can to make sure that every Member of Congress understands not only their loss—their loss is America's loss, because every child that was murdered, every life lost on the city streets of our country is a loss that ripples through

out families and communities, lives. We will never know what these people could have done, could have contributed to our society, and it is an enormous hole in the fabric of our country.

The price of inaction is too high. The price of inaction is being paid every day by grieving parents like Lynn and Chris McDonnell.

So I want to thank, again, the gentlelady from California for all you're doing to ensure that we do the right thing here today, that we continue the discussion of this critical issue, that we do not lose our will to take action, and that we do bring about real change to save lives in our communities across this country.

The parents, the families, the children of Newtown deserve no less than our best efforts. We must act.

Thank you very much.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire as to how much time we have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 13 minutes remaining.

Ms. SPEIER. It's now my pleasure to yield time to my good, good, good friend and colleague from California, BARBARA LEE, who has been an outspoken advocate for gun violence prevention for decades.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

First of all, let me thank you, Congresswoman SPEIER, for bringing us all together today to speak out on the important issue of addressing gun violence, not next month, not next year, not next Congress, but right now. And I have to just thank you so much for your tremendous leadership.

Yourself and Congresswoman MCCARTHY, both of you have so eloquently laid out why we need gun violence safety measures, both with your intellect and with your heart. Both of you have shared your very painful experiences, really, basically, so that others can live rather than die from gunshots. So thank you so much for staying the course.

I can think of no more important subject than what we're talking about today because this gun violence has been destroying communities, taking lives, and injuring too many people for much too long across America.

As President Obama invoked in his State of the Union speech last night, the families grieving from losing loved ones to gun violence deserve a vote. In fact, though, we're saying they deserve more than a vote. They deserve concrete steps to reduce gun violence, and we can take those steps right here in Congress.

We cannot accept one more innocent life being lost to gun violence, not one in Newtown, not one in Chicago or Cleveland, not one in my district in Oakland, California, not one in any town, any city, any school, in any theater, or any place of worship, mall, or any neighborhood.

We have an obligation to our children to ensure that Newtown marks a turn-

ing point that made us finally say, "Enough is enough." We must come together to build an America where our children do not have to live in fear, and where they really believe that they have a future. Many of my young people in my district don't even think they have a future, and this is a very sad state of affairs that we've got to turn around.

Recently, I had an event in my district in West Oakland. It was the unveiling of a mural painted by several talented young artists. This "Tree of Life" mural depicted the hope and the faith that my young people have for a future from violence and without violence. Yet they've seen and experienced so much gun violence in their communities throughout their young years, but they still have a lot of hope, and they're counting on us here to make sure that their dream lives.

Too many of my constituents have been affected by gun violence, have pleaded for help in protecting their children from the horrors of gun violence, only to see the status quo at the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take some serious action that includes what we've heard today, and I'll reiterate, commonsense measures such as the Federal gun buyback programs, banning high-capacity magazines, expanding the 24-hour background check, closing gun show loopholes, and reinstating the assault weapons ban. We need to do this immediately.

But we also need to work to end domestic violence in our homes and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. We need to do this right away.

We must also seek input from our young people, community stakeholders, faith community leaders, and others. We can work together to identify the root causes of this Nation's more than 16,000 homicides a year.

Let me call to your attention the work of a magnificent community-based organization in my district that I actually am very proud of, that I helped found in the early nineties, called the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center. These young people continue to work on conflict resolution and violence prevention efforts day and night, but they constantly tell us that their work is thwarted by too many guns on the street. And so we have to pass these gun safety measures.

We have to repeal the Tiahrt amendment, which I know Congresswoman SPEIER and Mr. MORAN and myself and other appropriators are working to do. And we must, as part of this, rededicate ourselves to getting the guns off of the street and working for, finally, a culture of peace and security.

Thank you again for your leadership. Ms. SPEIER. Thank you to the gentlelady from California.

We now are joined by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO), who has been a voice for mental health reform in this country for decades. I yield such time as she may consume.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Gentledady Speier, for being our lead on the gun prevention, gun violence prevention.

One of the things we don't talk about is a mental health component on which Congress has got to act. We've got to make sure that we bring it to the forefront. We've got to fund the programs to be able to help our communities deal with the mental health issues, elevate it to the level of other illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, heart issues.

We need to destigmatize it. It will not solve itself. We need to end the school tragedies, the government office attacks. Mental illness is an invisible illness. We don't talk about it, we don't listen to it, and we don't want to share it because of the stigma. We need to educate our public.

Children at a young level can be identified when they're beginning to have emotional disorders that can be addressed at a very early age. Now, that's not to say—there's many reasons why we need to go, and the time does not allow me to go into it, but when you hear that 2,000 people are killed, how many are maimed? What is the cost to society and the cost to our business, to the law enforcement? And, as you say, they are very much in favor of controlling the guns on the street, the high-capacity, the assault weapons.

□ 1450

And women are highly in favor. As you can tell, most of your speakers are women who understand this is our children, our grandchildren, our neighbors, our friends who are impacted. And we need to be able to fund mental health services at the local level so it can be addressed and help can be found for them.

I've introduced the Mental Health in Schools Act, H.R. 628, which was a companion to Senator FRANKEN's Senate bill 195. But I must ask that the public has got to raise their voice. Email, fax, mail, phone your Member of Congress, and tell them we need to pass reform.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentledady from California.

I now welcome our new colleague from California, a colleague who I have served in the State legislature with for many years, Congressman ALAN LOWENTHAL.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I want to thank the gentledady from California for calling us and bringing us together to discuss this very important issue.

I stand here and join my colleagues as we put forth responsible solutions to reduce gun violence in our communities and throughout our country. It was my honor to introduce from my district Peggy McCrum, the chapter leader of the Long Beach Area Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, at yesterday's conference hosted by the Brady Campaign and Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

Three decades ago, her brother, Robert Kelly, was shot and killed by a

complete stranger as he walked to his car, unaware that any peril awaited him. Peggy's brother, Robert; the victims of tragedies that occurred in Newtown and Aurora's mass shooting; and the thousands of Americans whose lives are ended each year by gun violence should serve as a reminder to all of us about the fragility of human life and our ability as Members of Congress to enact commonsense legislation necessary to prevent such horrific tragedies from continuing to devastate innocent Americans.

I stand here today in total support of a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, similar to the gun laws that we have in California. These instruments of mass destruction have no place in our society outside of the military. And I thank my colleagues on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, especially Congressman THOMPSON and Congresswoman PELOSI, for leading the charge on this effort.

The tragedy of gun violence will not be solved just by banning assault weapons and ammunition alone. We must strengthen our current background check system as well as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We must increase access to mental health services, we must increase the student-to-counselor ratio in our schools, and we must lift the research ban on the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health. All of these commonsense proposals are crucial to achieving the meaningful reforms that will save countless lives.

As a community psychologist, I understand that early identification and treatment of mental illness is the key to preventing potentially harmful acts. That being said, I am proud to cosponsor Congresswoman BARBARA LEE's Student Support Act, as well as Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO's Mental Health in Schools Act. Both of these bills will address the growing mental health needs of our Nation's 95,000 students.

I do not believe in taking away any American's Second Amendment rights. Just as you cannot yell "fire" in a movie theater, I believe you cannot own and use weapons that are capable of killing 20 school children in a matter of seconds.

To conclude, I think we all must continue to listen to those who have been injured by gun violence, to survivors, to law enforcement, and even to those who speak out against gun law reforms. We will not be able to reach common ground on this issue unless we keep an open mind to all of the voices in America.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentledady from California for calling us together to discuss this important issue.

I stand here today to join my colleagues as we put forth responsible solutions to reduce gun violence in our communities and throughout our country.

It was my honor to introduce from my district Peggy McCrum, the Chapter Leader of

Long Beach Area Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence at yesterday's press conference hosted by the Brady Campaign and Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Three decades ago, her brother Robert Kelly was shot and killed by a complete stranger as he was walking to his parked car—unaware of the perils that awaited him.

It can be all too easy to see Robert as a statistic on a crime map, but he—like all victims of senseless violence—was much, much more. He was a son . . . a brother . . . and a loved one. He was 28 years old; a graduate of Cal State Long Beach who was excited about starting his career at an accounting software firm. That future . . . his future . . . ended all too soon at the hands of a criminal with a gun. To date, the killer has not been found.

None of us are statistics. We are all living, breathing caring people with real lives and hopes and dreams, and we all deserve the freedom to feel safe from gun violence, be it in our schools, our movie theaters, or our streets.

Peggy's brother Robert, the victims of tragedies like the Newtown and Aurora mass shootings, and the thousands of Americans whose lives are ended each year by gun violence, will never be forgotten; they should serve as a reminder to us of the fragility of human life and our ability as members of Congress to enact commonsense legislation necessary to prevent such horrific tragedies from continuing to devastate innocent Americans.

These children, their parents, and all of the families who have been affected by the senseless acts of violence that left our country shocked and in disbelief are counting on us to do something—anything to ensure that they have the freedom to feel safe in their schools and communities.

I stand here today in open support of a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, similar to the gun laws we have in California. These instruments of mass destruction have no place in our society outside of the military, and I thank all of my colleagues on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, especially Congressman THOMPSON and Congresswoman PELOSI, for leading the charge on this effort.

The tragedy of gun violence will not be solved by banning assault weapons and ammunition alone. We must strengthen our current background check system, as well as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) system; we must increase access to mental health services; we must increase the student-to-counselor ratio in our children's schools; and we must lift the research ban on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). All of these commonsense proposals are crucial to achieving meaningful reforms that will save countless lives.

As a Community Psychologist, I understand that the early identification and treatment of mental illnesses is the key to preventing potentially harmful acts. That being said, I am proud to cosponsor Congresswoman BARBARA LEE's Student Support Act and Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO's Mental Health in Schools Act. Both of these bills would address the growing mental health needs in our nation's 95,000 public schools.

The American people want action, and they are demanding a plan. My colleagues, I stand

here wanting and demanding a plan. As the President said in his State of the Union address, these victims deserve a vote.

However, I do not, I repeat, I do not believe in taking away any American's Second Amendment right. Just as you cannot yell "fire" in a movie theater, I believe you cannot own weapons capable of killing 20 school children in a matter of seconds. The United States Supreme Court ruling on *Heller v. DC* clearly stated that there are, indeed, limitations to the Second Amendment, and I stand with that ruling. *Heller v. DC* was not meant to strip gun owners of the rights, it was meant to instill a greater sense of responsibility that comes with owning a gun.

I am in favor of protecting an individual's right to own a gun; I also want to help create a more accountable gun culture—one that upholds Americans' constitutional right to bear arms, and keeps us safe from harm. The constitutional right to own a gun and the God-given human right to feel safe from gun violence is not mutually exclusive.

I want to conclude by saying that we must all continue to listen to the victims, the survivors, and even those who speak out against gun law reforms; we will not be able to reach common ground on this issue unless we keep an open mind to all of the voices of the American people.

Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentleman from California for his thoughtful remarks. And I want to thank each and every one of you who has participated in this Special Order. It's something that we must do week after week so that our message gets out to the American people and so that they truly understand what has happened in this country over the last 20 years that has taken away so many commonsense laws that were on the books to provide the kind of safe and sane laws to make sure that everyone who owns a gun has it appropriately and everyone who shouldn't own a gun, doesn't have a gun.

This is our to-do list:

Pass the universal background check, pass a ban on large magazines, pass an assault weapon ban, crack down on gun trafficking, remove the handcuffs on law enforcement, remove the gag order on gun safety research, keep illegal and unwanted guns off the street, invest in gun safety technology R&D, close the holes in our mental health system, and take steps to enhance school safety.

Someone said:

Too many children are dying. Too many children. We must do something. It will be hard, but the time is now. You must act. Be bold. Be courageous. Americans are counting on you.

These are the words of our own Gabby Giffords in the Senate just a couple of weeks ago. It still sends shivers up and down my spine. Gabby almost lost her life. We owe it to Gabby, we owe it to the 26 people who lost their lives in Newtown, the countless people who lost their lives in Aurora and Columbine, and the 32 people each and every day in this country who lose their lives to gun violence. We owe it to the American people. Let's act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great passion and urgency to talk about our need, as Members of Congress, to strengthen our Nation's gun violence prevention laws. Last night at the State of the Union, President Obama said it best—gun violence victims deserve a vote. From Newtown to Aurora, Oak Creek to Tucson and Blacksburg—these victims deserve a vote. Every day in this country, men, women and children die from gun violence. It doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live in fear when we send our children to school.

I'm proud to be a member of the House Democratic Task Force on Reducing and Preventing Gun Violence. Last week, we issued a series of commonsense priorities that could make the difference in preventing future gun violence. One of the most basic priorities is implementing universal background checks. It is the only way to ensure that people who are legally barred from owning a gun are prevented from buying a gun. Right now, the law is voluntary—someone who fears failing a background check can simply avoid it by acquiring a gun from a private seller.

Another commonsense measure is a bill I introduced, the Fire Sale Loophole Closing Act, that prevents gun dealers whose licenses were revoked from reclassifying their inventory as personal and then selling the same guns as a private seller. We have to close these loopholes. These practices of getting around the law need to stop. I urge my colleagues to bring these commonsense gun safety laws to the floor for a vote because President Obama was right—our victims deserve a vote.

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.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO LIBYA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 113-9)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond February 25, 2013.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates took extreme measures against the people of Libya, including by using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians. In addition, there was a serious risk that Libyan state assets would be misappropriated by Qadhafi, members of his government, members of his family, or his close associates if those assets were not protected. The foregoing circumstances, the prolonged attacks, and the increased numbers of Libyans seeking refuge in other countries caused a deterioration in the security of Libya, posed a serious risk to its stability, and led me to declare a national emergency to deal with this threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

We are in the process of winding down the sanctions in response to developments in Libya, including the fall of Qadhafi and his government and the establishment of a democratically elected government. We are working closely with the new Libyan government and with the international community to effectively and appropriately ease restrictions on sanctioned entities, including by taking actions consistent with the U.N. Security Council's decision to lift sanctions against the Central Bank of Libya and two other entities on December 16, 2011. The situation in Libya, however, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States and we need to protect against this threat and the diversion of assets or other abuse by certain members of Qadhafi's family and other former regime officials. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Libya.

BARACK OBAMA,
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 13, 2013.

HONORING CHIEF PETTY OFFICER CHRIS KYLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle, who, unfortunately, was killed on February 2. Normally, you would think that this would be honoring a soldier who was killed in action. Unfortunately, Chris Kyle gave his life while trying to help a fellow soldier who was dealing with some big issues.

□ 1500

And so today my colleagues and I want to spend the next hour honoring the life and the sacrifice that Chris Kyle did and gave for his country.

This is a difficult time for me, not only to honor Chris like this, but Chris