

in their bravery on the fighting fronts and all the seas.

It is significant that tomorrow, Christmas day, our plants and factories will be stilled. That is not true of the other holidays we have long been accustomed to celebrate. On all other holidays work goes on gladly for the winning of the war. So Christmas becomes the only holiday in all the year. I like to think that this is so because Christmas is a holy day. May all it stands for live and grow throughout the years.

That was Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1944, December 24, the official government statement by Franklin Roosevelt as President was:

It is not easy to say "merry Christmas" to you, my fellow Americans in this time of destructive war, nor can I say "merry Christmas" lightly tonight to our Armed Forces at their battle stations all over the world, or to our allies who fight by their side. Here, at home, we celebrate Christmas Day in our traditional American way because of its deep spiritual meaning to us; because the teachings of Christ are fundamental in our lives; and because we want our youngest generation to grow up knowing the significance of this tradition and the story of the coming of the immortal Prince of Peace and good will.

He goes on:

But in perhaps every home in the United States sad and anxious thoughts will be continually with the millions of our loved ones who are suffering hardships and misery and who are risking their very lives to preserve for us and for all mankind the fruits of his teachings and the foundations of civilization itself.

□ 2100

The Christmas spirit lives tonight in the bitter cold of the front lines in Europe and in the heat of the jungles and swamps of Burma and the Pacific Islands. Even the roar of our bombers and fighters in the air and the guns of our ships at sea will not drown out the message of Christmas which comes to the heart of our fighting men.

President Roosevelt goes on:

The tide of battle has turned, but slowly, but inexorably against those who sought to destroy civilization. We pray that this day may come soon. We pray, until then, God will protect our gallant American and women in the uniforms of the United Nations, that He will receive into His infinite grace those who make their supreme sacrifice in the cause of righteousness and the cause of love of Him and His teachings.

President Roosevelt finishes by saying:

We pray that with victory will come a new day of peace on Earth, in which all the nations of Earth will join together for all time, that in the spirit of Christmas, the Holy Day, may that spirit live and grow throughout the world in all the years to come.

And then finally, close with this, Madam Speaker. This is Franklin Roosevelt, January 20, 1945. This is part of his last inaugural address. And as I finish with this, may I say, Madam Speaker, that I know all of us here in the House and the Senate, no matter what our persuasions, have these same very best wishes as Franklin Roosevelt had for our American troops, our men and women in uniform today, just as those wishes were made 68 years ago.

This was 1945. Roosevelt said:

As I stand here today, having taken the solemn oath of office in the presence of my

fellow countrymen, in the presence of God, I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail. The Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways. He has given our people stout hearts, strong arms with which to strike mighty blows for freedom and truth. He has given to our country a faith which has become the hope of all people in an anguished world.

President Franklin Roosevelt finishes by saying:

So we pray to Him now for the vision to see our way clearly, to see the way that leads to a better life for ourselves and for all our fellow men, to the achievement of His will, to peace on Earth.

Roosevelt finishes by saying:

In the presence of God, I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail.

Madam Speaker, if we keep that same faith of Franklin Roosevelt, in his official capacity as President of the United States, he is right. God will not let us fail.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

### HONEST REFLECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 30 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the Speaker for yielding, and I thank the leader, Leader PELOSI, for the time and, as well, the Speaker.

It is always appropriate when we rise in this wonderful holiday season to wish Americans of all faiths a wonderful and blessed time with their families, to wish my colleagues a wonderful time with their families, and to reflect a moment on the greatness of this country that has experienced its challenges, of which I believe the Members of this body and the other body are committed to solving.

But I thought it was important today, as we leave for the recess in our districts where we will be engaging with our constituents—and this coming Saturday I will hold the 19th annual Toys for Kids that I have hosted for the past 19 years at the George R. Brown Convention Center, a way of giving back, but a way of hearing the joys and sounds of children enjoying themselves.

So I would like to make this time that I have, these few minutes, a time of joy and happiness. But I also think we must be honest, and it should be a time of confronting reality and the truth. And so I wanted to go back for a moment on work that was just accomplished just a few hours ago, when this body voted on a proposal that was given by the negotiators to the House and will be given again to the Senate on the bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

As many Americans know, we experienced a horrific shutdown just a few weeks ago, unwarranted, bearing no results, and hurting millions of people around the Nation. I remember coming to the floor some 56 times to ask my

Republican friends to cease and desist and to open the government, open the government. So I understand the frustration and exhaustion of the American people and our hardworking Federal employees who could take it no more and asked for some minimal way to avoid the atrocious and catastrophic closing of the government on the basis of whim and opposition to an established law, the Affordable Care Act.

So what came of it was an additional \$1.012 trillion that would be spent over fiscal year 2014 and 2015, and what would allow the restoration of Head Start seats that were lost, child care, housing assistance, educational dollars for higher education, research dollars, the same needs that I expressed during the shutdown that were being denied, the addition of these dollars, minimal that they were, but enough to give us a boost over last year's expenditures, and to save some of the needs that Americans had that were lost. I support that and congratulate that step made. And it got us past sequester, which was trickery that was offered as a hammer over a commission and committee that was supposed to design a grand bargain of moving America forward.

But what we also obtained in this Budget Act, although painful, was the maintenance of our Social Security and Medicare for our seniors and the assurance that those funds would not be tampered with, and that any reform would include the widespread opportunity for Members to engage their seniors and others who were receiving these benefits so that there would be a compliance with the commitment that many of us, such as myself, have made—continued protection of Medicare and Social Security.

In the course of that, this Congress has never abandoned the unemployed, and so it was proposed by the Democratic conferees to include unemployment insurance, and, yes, the SGR that would provide seniors with their doctors by fixing the sustainable growth rate.

That was supposed to be the proposal, Madam Speaker. And tragically, in the constructed, contradictory, conflicted, misrepresented bill that came to the floor through the Rules Committee, they, with the darkness of the night, included the SGR, but they left out the helping of the most vulnerable people.

Twice on the floor today I asked that we not go home so that we could go vote on the Levin-Van Hollen-Lee amendment that would have restored and would have been paid for, the unemployment insurance.

I continue to ask tonight that we not go home or that we be called back to ensure that that insurance continues. I intend to introduce legislation very quickly to require the Congress to come back and for there to be an independent up-or-down vote on actually restoring the unemployment insurance so that it would not expire on December 28 and, as well, for that legislation

to be passed by the Senate and signed by the President.

I would also respectfully ask, humbly in this holiday season, as the President has done often, to please continue to push the House and the Senate to return in order to make a difference.

Let me pause for a moment and share with you why this is so important. The uninsured are not criminals. And let me clarify, those who are not getting unemployment insurance are not criminals, as I heard a Member on the other side of the aisle, the Republican chair of the Budget Committee, indicating that they had stopped criminals from getting unemployment insurance. I thought that was the most dastardly statement that could ever be said in the history of the Congress.

I am shocked. I don't know and I have not run into criminals who are getting unemployment insurance, but I will tell you that 1.3 million jobless workers will lose their unemployment benefits on December 28, 2013.

Please remember that these are individuals who have worked. This is not a handout. They have worked and they paid for insurance, or they have benefits through their work that would warrant insurance that would cover them when they were unemployed and looking for work.

A number or a figure was given by my friend and colleague, Congressman LEVIN, who said when the Walmart opened in this area for 600 jobs, Madam Speaker, 23,000 people applied. Does that suggest they are criminals or people who don't want to work?

In 2014, 3.6 million workers will lose access to benefits because of the lack of action of this Congress. In Texas, 68,900 jobless workers will lose their unemployment benefits on the 28th, and an additional 106,900 in 2014.

The unemployment rates have improved, but nationally, they are 7 percent. And the minimum weekly benefits available in Texas are such that I can assure you it would not break the bank.

So I am committed. The pain is deep in many of us that we would close these doors and not, for a moment, have a solution to the unemployment benefits. So many Members have worked on it.

The hearing was held last week by the Democratic Leader and Democratic Members, listening to the pain of many. But I can move the numbers up to 50. If we went on the streets and found 50 unemployed, our stories would be so moving it would bring tears to our eyes.

□ 2115

It is not as if we had overdone it: for this Congress, led by the Republicans, who passed only 57 bills compared to 2010's 258, 2011's 90, and 2009's 125. So there is plenty of time to do some work. And the reason why I think this is so potent is because this is in the backdrop of my having the honor and privilege of joining my fellow col-

leagues, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressman from Illinois, the Senator from Texas, to go to the memorial of Madiba, Nelson Mandela.

We spoke about him just a few hours ago on the floor of the House, but I just want to make mention of him again, holding a candlelight service that was held in Houston, Texas, and to, again, thank of many of those involved in the apartheid movement. There are two names that I want to put in the RECORD, Representative Al Edwards and former council member Jew Don Boney. There were many others, but I wanted to express my appreciation to them, along with Deloyd Parker and the SHAPE community family who have been entrenched in issues of justice and freedom and were clearly wrapped around the issue of eliminating apartheid.

And to pay tribute to my colleague from Texas, the Honorable Mickey Leland, who as well worked with Bill Gray and then the Congressional Black Caucus to be the voice and conscience that lifted up the antiapartheid movement in Congress with the passage of the sanctions bill that was joined in by the United States Senate, the other body, as was mentioned earlier.

But I mention that because the service was so moving. The President's words were potent and eloquent and were cited by the South African press as the most significant tribute of that day. Thank you, President Obama.

But it also reminded us, in his words, that it called upon all of us to walk in his footsteps and to be reminded of the needs of the vulnerable and always, as JOHN LEWIS, my friend from Georgia, says, get in the way of what is not good to make it good.

It was not good for this Congress to leave and not do what was right, and that is the passage of the unemployment insurance. So I want to call upon my colleagues to push toward this floor and the Republican Speaker to find a way to undo the trickery of the Rules Committee to put in the sustainable growth rate, the SGR, and not put into the rule the opportunity to give unemployment insurance to the needy and the desperate and people who have worked who are not looking for a handout. And that would be the intent of my legislation, to make the point that we should be here, to make the point that we can pass it.

And I want to thank the Democratic leadership for putting in the previous question, the vote for us to go on record that we are appalled and outraged that December 28 will come without extending the unemployment insurance. It does not make any sense.

And for the spirited, emotional time that I have, it is well worth it to say, I was there and to be there and to watch head of state after head of state and to see the joy in that massive stadium and to listen to the songs of the people of South Africa in the dialect and language that is so beautiful and

to match it with the voices of the choir behind Kirk Franklin, a Texan, to say that we are in your hands. To be able to put all of that together and then come back and not in the spirit of Nelson Mandela, who believed in the importance of being courageous, we find ourselves with no unemployment insurance.

So I believe that there are things that we left undone, and I look to have us come and to fix them, but I also want to join as the cochair of the Congressional Children's Caucus to be able to acknowledge the loved ones who now have come at almost a year. They will do so on December 14. And on December 14, in Houston, the mothers that demand action will, at 3:30 in the afternoon, be lighting candles and mourning the tragedy of Sandy Hook.

How unacceptable to note that we have not been able to pass comprehensive gun safety laws, that we have not been able to deal with the universal background check. In actuality, we have done nothing.

So maybe this will raise a concern of my colleagues to know that gun violence has killed children and continues to kill them every day in America. A .45 caliber pistol killed Lucas Higgins, 3, on Memorial Day last year in his Ohio home. It had been temporarily hidden under the couch by his father when he found it and shot himself through the right eye. His mother called 911 and said, It is bad.

A few days later, in Georgia, Cassie Culpepper, 11, was riding in the back of a pickup truck with her 12-year-old brother and two other children. Her brother started playing with a pistol his father had lent him to scare coyotes. He thought he had removed all the bullets; and, tragically, it fired and blood poured from Cassie's mouth.

In Houston, a group of youth found a Glock pistol and shot a 15-year-old; or at a party, 19 were shot, and two teenagers were dead; or the tragedy of the killing of Braveon Terry, who was shot a few weeks ago, a Jack Yates High School student.

So I mourn with the Sandy Hook families for those that they have lost because tragically 31,537 people die from gun violence annually. Those injured, 71,000. It looks as if we can find a way to be able to stop this violence.

So I want to, in tribute to those families who mourn—maybe someone looking will look at this heart that is on the Web site, the Sandy Hook families where it names every one of those who lost their lives through a crazed gunman with guns, guns, who shot his mother and emphasize the need for mental health and the need for the securing of guns, the need for universal background checks, not gun control but gun regulation to be able to save lives. To those families, I pray with you and mourn with you.

That is not all that was left undone. For I have, over the years, introduced legislation every year on reauthorizing the juvenile block grant, as well in preventing bullying and intervening. The

bill, H.R. 2585, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act of 2013, to allow under the juvenile block grants pointedly directing communities across America to address the question of the prevention of bullying and, as well, intervention.

One in seven students in grades K through 12 is either a bully or a victim of bullying; 90 percent of fourth to eighth grade students report being victims of bullying of some type, and 90 percent of students have personally witnessed some type of bullying. And 70 percent of students report incidents of bullying.

I believe that we are called upon. There is a cry to help the families in Sandy Hook and to be able to intervene in a child's life to ensure that they do not suffer from the siege of gun violence or the siege of bullying that occurs in the Nation's schools and community.

I must take note that on December 10, the same day as the memorial for our dear Madiba, was Human Rights Day. As a member of the Human Rights Commission here in the United States Congress, I want to acknowledge that human rights have become essential to the global conversation regarding peace, security, and development. And tying it in to all that I have said, human rights in America calls for us to be as concerned for the vulnerable who are unemployed without unemployment insurance. It calls for us to do more in terms of a budget that looks to lift America, to create jobs, to provide for child care and Head Start and education.

Human rights calls for us to stamp out the cancer, if you will, the devastation of gun violence and violence by children, against children, using guns. It calls for us to act with a greater humanity toward our seniors. It calls for us as well to respond to the call by the families, the families who are fasting and immediately move to passing comprehensive immigration reform. That is what human rights is all about.

And over the years—almost two decades—I have introduced a comprehensive immigration reform bill. But I am ready to be able to ask that H.R. 15, which is a bipartisan initiative proposed by the members of the Democratic Caucus and, as well, the bipartisan legislation that has been signed onto by Republicans and Democrats that has been introduced with over 180 to 190 sponsors, a simple bill that has the Senate language and H.R. 1417 combined to make a parallel bill, H.R. 1417, a bipartisan initiative passed out of homeland security that I helped author and drew Republican and Democratic votes.

The question is, are we going to leave behind mothers who are torn away from children who are being deported because we have not passed comprehensive immigration reform? Every day in my office, there are those who desperately call and show up for very mer-

itorious cases, cases that, because of the backlog, because of the inability to get into the courthouse, they would have been rendered to be nondeportable. They would have been able to stay with their families. But, one, we don't have a matrix of laws. And these people are vulnerable because they don't have the access to the courts, the representation that is necessary to plead their case.

Today in the Judiciary, we held a hearing on whether we were abusing asylum. Asylum is for people who are fleeing persecution. There is no evidence that any of those people in large numbers of any kind are abusing the asylum request; but if we could get a comprehensive approach that we would include H-1B visas, we would help out DREAMers, the very same young people that come into my office who are brilliant, valedictorians and leaders of their community, and yet they are being denied. We are losing the brain power of America because we do not have comprehensive immigration reform.

So it is a crisis long overdue that should be addressed. And the families that were fasting that have dismantled their tents today, who came to this Congress on the steps, the east steps pleading with this Congress, pleading. It disturbs me that it seems that we can't listen to the pleading hearts. We have turned our shoulders, turned our backs. I would simply hope that in the litany of things that I have offered that we could come to some solution.

Let me quickly mention the issues of education and needs in my own district. I want the children of our school districts to come and feel welcomed and loved. And one instruction that I have to my friends who work so hard in education in my own community—listening to a principal that was arrested from Shady Dale Elementary School for theft, tragically. But that principal replaced a good principal that was not retained by the school district.

Or two individuals involved with Wheatley High School—the same high school that Barbara Jordan went to—and, tragically, they were arrested for drug possession, cocaine and marijuana. I make no judgment on that, except it removed them from the very same school that the principal that the children loved was fired from, or removed from.

And look what we came to. Individuals who were arrested for drug possession who had to be removed from the school—one who was the principal, one who was over principals. And another individual who had to be removed from an elementary school whose beloved principal was taken away.

Madam Speaker, the list of challenges that I have given is not without the recognition that we live in the greatest country in the world, and we are able to do most of what we put our minds to.

I want my colleagues to have a wonderful holiday season; but at the same

time, I did not want to leave here without expressing the commitment of so many and myself that we must have a love of humanity. We must live the Human Rights International Day that was celebrated on December 10. We must be the defender of human rights.

□ 2130

We must ensure that the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights around the world and in the United States are protected. We must reach out to those souls who languish here in the United States—11 million—who need to have us address the issue of their dignity and their status.

We must stop the unending deportation that is unfairly ripping children from mothers and fathers.

We must pay attention to the mourning families at Sandy Hook and respond to their pain in their name and the many others who have died by gun violence. Pass the universal background check.

And we must ensure, again, that we protect those who cannot speak for themselves.

My closing words are, again, let us come back to extend the unemployment insurance. Let us move quickly to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Let us protect our seniors and our soldiers, and let us go home to register and enroll as many uninsured Americans who need health care as possible. Congratulations on the now 1 million-plus that are enrolled.

Let us be sure to remember that there are others who suffer during this season. We can be tasked with making their lives better by coming together as a Congress and answering their call from the array of issues that I have brought to this Congress and this body tonight. I ask for us to act.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and remember each of the 26 victims of the tragic shootings at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut one year ago on Saturday, December 14, 2013.

As the Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus and a senior Member of the Judiciary Committee, I have listened to the tragic testimony of individuals who have survived or lost loved ones as a result of gun violence.

The community and the families directly impacted continue to reel from the inconceivable tragedy that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary on December 14, 2012.

The story of Sandy Hook was particularly frightening and heartbreaking for those of us who are parents or grandparents.

Our hearts still ache with sadness and disbelief for the families and loved ones of the children and women who lost their lives in this senseless act of violence.

This remembrance of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting one year ago should recognize and applaud the heroic efforts made by the teachers, administrators, and law enforcement officials who acted quickly to secure and protect the lives of the children who survived this deadly encounter.

This tragedy unlike any other in recent memory touched so many hearts and minds both in the United States and around the world that this remembrance is particularly poignant.

The parents and grandparents who dropped off their children and grandchildren in the early morning hours of December 14, 2012, could never have imagined that by 10 a.m. on that morning they would face this tragedy.

The deaths at Sandy Hook as well as those at Aurora and Columbine will be etched in our collective memories.

The Nation was united in grief one year ago over the Sandy Hook tragedy and many of us who have strongly advocated for sensible gun safety laws throughout our service in Congress thought that the time had arrived when policymakers, parents, teachers, and law enforcement could work to reduce gun related deaths.

We could all agree that the tragedy should not have occurred; unfortunately we could not find agreement on a new national gun policy to reduce gun related violence in the United States.

We must join together in recognizing that gun violence on the scale of Sandy Hook can happen in any community and delaying tactics by the gun lobby will only allow another tragedy to occur.

We must immediately begin to address the underlying problems of gun violence that would lead a young man to take up arms against defenseless women and children.

#### FINDING SOLUTION TO GUN TRAGEDIES.

We must look at the tragedy of gun violence and the need for mental health services.

The lack of accessible and affordable mental health care is something that is being addressed by the Affordable Care Act, but more needs to be done to reduce and prevent gun violence. However, this is not to equate mental illness with violence.

The Affordable Care Act takes a positive step forward to address the issue of mental illness and access to care by making it a requirement that all healthcare plans contain care for mental illness and substance abuse.

Because of the health care law, for the first time insurance companies in the individual and small group market are required to cover mental health and substance use disorder services as one of ten categories of essential health benefits. Additionally, they must cover these services at parity with medical and surgical benefits (which means things like out-of-pocket costs for behavioral health services must generally be comparable to coverage for medical and surgical care).

The Affordable Care Act expands mental health and substance use disorder benefits and parity protections for approximately 60 million Americans. That's one of the largest expansions of mental health and substance use disorder coverage in a generation.

Further, the White House announced a \$100 million commitment to improve access to mental health services.

The Affordable Care Act will provide \$50 million to assist community centers to provide more mental health services. The Department of Agriculture will provide \$50 million to finance rural mental health facilities.

The health care law requires most health plans to cover recommended preventive services like depression screenings for adults and behavioral assessments for children at no cost to consumers.

Beginning in 2014, the Affordable Care Act prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage or increasing charges to people due to pre-existing health conditions, including mental illnesses.

In the State of Texas it is expected that 5,189,000 people will now have access to mental health and substance abuse assistance programs.

The link between certain mental illnesses and violence is rare, but the work to provide people in need of care should not be solely motivated by concerns regarding violence.

Often those who suffer from mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence or cause harm to themselves.

The real threat of gun violence comes from those who have guns in their lives and in their homes.

The tragedy of Sandy Hook took us all by surprise, but there are hundreds of other tragedies around the nation that involve children who become victims of gun violence.

Annually in the United States there are over 30,000 gun related deaths, but too often we do not focus on how many of these deaths are children.

No other nation has this level of gun violence per-capita as the United States unless they were actively engaged in a civil war or conflict with another nation.

The total number of deaths associated with 13 years of war in both Afghanistan and Iraq is 6778 service men and women.

Each of their deaths we mourn as a nation as we work to bring to an end military action.

These men and women died to keep us safe. We should work to make them safe when they return home.

I read with heartache the September 28, New York Times article, "Children and Guns: The Hidden Toll," published in September of this year.

Some of the stories were tragic as they were familiar to those of us who work to reduce gun violence.

Lucas Heagren, 3 years old, killed by a gun he found where his father temporarily hid it under a couch.

Days later, Cassie Culpepper, age 11, who was shot and killed by her brother who thought a gun his father gave him to scare coyotes was unloaded.

A few weeks later Alex Whitfield, age 11 was killed by a Glock pistol found in a closet by a 15-year-old.

These children are the hidden victims of a nation obsessed with guns at almost any cost.

The children of gun violence may be any child or grandchild—including your own.

They may be from any home found in any neighborhood or rural community in this nation.

The tragedies of gun deaths of children are not just what your child knows about gun safety, but more often what another child with access to a firearm does not know.

More important is the lack of gun safety knowledge among adults which is a factor in far too many gun related child deaths.

Many deaths of children who are victims of guns are not part of official federal records.

The New York Times report found over 259 accidental firearm deaths of children under the age of 15 spanning several years.

These numbers are about twice as many as were reported in federal statistics for the same time period.

For example, gun related federal death statistics would not include Caroline Starks age 2 who was killed by her 5-year-old brother who was playing with his "Cricket" .22 rifle a gun designed specifically for children.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 28, 2013]

#### CHILDREN AND GUNS: THE HIDDEN TOLL

(By Michael Luo and Mike McIntire)

The .45-caliber pistol that killed Lucas Heagren, 3, on Memorial Day last year at his Ohio home had been temporarily hidden under the couch by his father. But Lucas found it and shot himself through the right eye. "It's bad," his mother told the 911 dispatcher. "It's really bad."

A few days later in Georgia, Cassie Culpepper, 11, was riding in the back of a pickup with her 12-year-old brother and two other children. Her brother started playing with a pistol his father had lent him to scare coyotes. Believing he had removed all the bullets, he pointed the pistol at his sister and squeezed the trigger. It fired, and blood poured from Cassie's mouth.

Just a few weeks earlier, in Houston, a group of youths found a Glock pistol in an apartment closet while searching for snack money. A 15-year-old boy was handling the gun when it went off. Alex Whitfield, who had just turned 11, was struck. A relative found the bullet in his ashes from the funeral home.

Cases like these are among the most gut-wrenching of gun deaths. Children shot accidentally—usually by other children—are collateral casualties of the accessibility of guns in America, their deaths all the more devastating for being eminently preventable.

They die in the households of police officers and drug dealers, in broken homes and close-knit families, on rural farms and in city apartments. Some adults whose guns were used had tried to store them safely; others were grossly negligent. Still others pulled the trigger themselves, accidentally fracturing their own families while cleaning a pistol or hunting.

And there are far more of these innocent victims than official records show.

A New York Times review of hundreds of child firearm deaths found that accidental shootings occurred roughly twice as often as the records indicate, because of idiosyncrasies in how such deaths are classified by the authorities. The killings of Lucas, Cassie and Alex, for instance, were not recorded as accidents. Nor were more than half of the 259 accidental firearm deaths of children under age 15 identified by The Times in eight states where records were available.

As a result, scores of accidental killings are not reflected in the official statistics that have framed the debate over how to protect children from guns.

The National Rifle Association cited the lower official numbers this year in a fact sheet opposing "safe storage" laws, saying children were more likely to be killed by falls, poisoning or environmental factors—an incorrect assertion if the actual number of accidental firearm deaths is significantly higher.

In all, fewer than 20 states have enacted laws to hold adults criminally liable if they fail to store guns safely, enabling children to access them.

Legislative and other efforts to promote the development of childproof weapons using "smart gun" technology have similarly stalled. Technical issues have been an obstacle, but so have N.R.A. arguments that the problem is relatively insignificant and the technology unneeded.

Because of maneuvering in Congress by the gun lobby and its allies, firearms have also been exempted from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission since its inception.

Even with a proper count, intentional shooting deaths of children—including gang shootings and murder-suicides by family members—far exceed accidental gun deaths. But accidents, more than the other firearm-related deaths, come with endless hypotheticals about what could have been done differently.

The rifle association's lobbying arm recently posted on its Web site a claim that adult criminals who mishandle firearms—as opposed to law-abiding gun owners—are responsible for most fatal accidents involving children. But *The Times's* review found that a vast majority of cases revolved around children's access to firearms, with the shooting either self-inflicted or done by another child.

A common theme in the cases examined by *The Times*, in fact, was the almost magnetic attraction of firearms among boys. In all but a handful of instances, the shooter was male. Boys also accounted for more than 80 percent of the victims.

Time and again, boys could not resist handling a gun, disregarding repeated warnings by adults and, sometimes, their own sense that they were doing something wrong.

When Joshua Skorczewski, 11, took an unloaded 20-gauge shotgun out of the family gun cabinet in western Minnesota on July 28, 2008, it was because he was excited about going to a gun safety class that night and wanted to practice.

But for reasons that he later struggled to explain to the police, Joshua loaded a single shell into the gun and pulled the hammer back. He decided he should put the gun back, but his finger slipped. It fired, killing his 12-year-old sister, Natasha, who was standing in the kitchen with him. When his mother called from work to check on them, a shaken Joshua told her he had just called 911: "Mom, I shot Tasha."

Christina Wenzel, the mother of Alex Whitfield, had tried to make sure he did not visit anyone's house if guns were present. What she did not know, when Alex went to his father's apartment last April, was that a family member had stored three loaded guns there.

"I always thought I had Alex protected from being killed by another child by a gun that was not secured," Ms. Wenzel said. "Unfortunately, I was mistaken."

#### UNDERCOUNTING DEATHS

Compiling a complete census of accidental gun deaths of children is difficult, because most states do not consider death certificate data a matter of public record. In a handful of states, however, the information is publicly available. Using these death records as a guide, along with hundreds of medical examiner and coroner reports and police investigative files, *The Times* sought to identify every accidental firearm death of a child age 14 and under in Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina and Ohio dating to 1999, and in California to 2007. Records were also obtained from several county medical examiners' offices in Florida, Illinois and Texas.

The goal, in the end, was an in-depth portrait of accidental firearm deaths of children, one that would shed light on how such killings occur and might be prevented. In all, *The Times* cataloged 259 gun accidents that killed children ages 14 and younger. The youngest was just 9 months old, shot in his crib.

In four of the five states—California, Georgia, North Carolina and Ohio—*The Times* identified roughly twice as many accidental killings as were tallied in the corresponding federal data. In the fifth, Minnesota, there were 50 percent more accidental gun deaths. (*The Times* excluded some fatal shootings, like pellet gun accidents, that are normally included in the federal statistics.)

The undercount stems from the peculiarities by which medical examiners and coroners make their "manner of death" rulings. These pronouncements, along with other information entered on death certificates, are the basis for the nation's mortality statistics, which are assembled by the National Center for Health Statistics, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Choosing among five options—homicide, accidental, suicide, natural or undetermined—most medical examiners and coroners simply call any death in which one person shoots another a homicide.

#### GUN STATISTICS

##### NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED BY GUNS IN THE 12 MONTHS AFTER NEWTOWN

31,537 people die from gun violence annually:

11,583 people are murdered.

18,783 people kill themselves.

584 people are killed accidentally.

334 are killed by police intervention.

252 die but intent is not known.

##### NUMBER OF PERSONS INJURED BY GUN VIOLENCE

71,386 people survive gun injuries:

51,249 people are injured in an attack.

3,627 people survive a suicide attempt.

15,815 people are shot accidentally.

694 people are shot by police intervention.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for many minorities in this country.

82.8 percent of young people who are killed are killed with a firearm;

Every 30 minutes, a child or teenager in America is injured by a gun;

Every 3 hours and 15 minutes, a child or a teenager loses their life to a firearm.

#### APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF UNITED STATES-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term expiring on December 31, 2015:

Mr. Daniel M. Slane, Ohio

#### APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, effective December 16, 2013, pursuant to section 2 of the Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 1975 note), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the Commission on Civil Rights for a term expiring December 15, 2019:

Mr. Peter N. Kirsanow, Cleveland, Ohio

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DOYLE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today until 3:30 p.m. on account of death in family.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and December 13 on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2871. An act to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2922. An act to extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1471. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Army to reconsider decisions to inter or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery, and for other purposes.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 434, the House adjourned until Monday, December 16, 2013, at 11 a.m., as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa.

#### OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Member of the 113th Congress,