

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of March as Women's History Month and to commemorate the legacy of Jeannette Rankin, the first elected woman to serve in the House of Representatives on this day, March 4, 1917.

Jeannette Rankin furthered women's rights, ensuring universal suffrage and protecting the poor. She began her career as a community organizer, working in low-income neighborhoods in San Francisco, New York, and Washington State, and she witnessed the troubles of women and single mothers living in these communities. Jeannette Rankin became a strong, natural advocate for giving women a national voice through the right to vote.

Remarkably, Jeannette Rankin was elected to Congress when women still did not have the right to vote. The 19th Amendment was passed 3 months after she left Congress. As Rankin herself put it, "We're half the people; we should be half the Congress."

Today, we must continue to honor her work and legacy. With the ongoing budget crisis in mind, it is imperative that we redouble our efforts, as she would have, to come to a solution and to take the lesson of Jeannette Rankin, to fight for women and the poor who are disproportionately affected by sequestration, and to fight for them as Jeannette Rankin fought for them so hard.

CLEAN ENERGY AND EXTREME WEATHER

(Mr. GARAMENDI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, the climate is changing. Climate change is very, very real. You only have to look at the superstorms we have had, Sandy and others, and the \$180 billion of destruction that has been wrought upon us from the environment just over the last 2 years.

The climate is changing, and there's something we can do about it. In fact, there's something this House of Representatives must do about it, and that is to move forcefully, directly, and aggressively to clean energy policies. We ought to be subsidizing those clean energy systems that are out there—solar and wind.

In my own district in Solano County, we have one of the biggest wind farms. My own history goes back to 1978, when I authored legislation for State tax credits. We can and we must deal with climate change, and we can do it with clean energy policies.

SPORTSMANSHIP ON DISPLAY IN EL PASO HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL RIVALRY

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

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mitchell

Marcus, Jonathon Montanez, and the Franklin and Coronado High School basketball teams in El Paso, Texas.

Few teams have a more contentious rivalry than these two schools, who compete to claim the title: Pride of the Westside. So it was a hometown sports miracle when these rivals came together last month to support Mitchell Marcus, a special-needs student who was the Coronado basketball team manager.

With 90 seconds left in the season's final game, Coach Peter Morales put Mitchell in the game to fulfill his dream of making a basket. However, after a few missed shots, Mitchell's opportunity seemed lost. But with seconds left in the game, rival Franklin player Jonathon Montanez passed the ball to Mitchell, and he scored the final basket as the clock hit zero. Fans stormed the court to carry Mitchell on their shoulders, chanting his name.

It is a moment now famous in El Paso and around the world because it shows that character and compassion can transcend even the bitterest rivalries.

□ 1910

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SERGEANT GARY MORALES

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

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Sergeant Gary Morales, who was laid to rest today after being killed in the line of duty at the age of 35 last Thursday in Fort Pierce, Florida. Sergeant Morales was a 12-year veteran with the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office and also proudly served our country as a member of the United States Air Force.

There has been an outpouring of support in the wake of the shooting, with the community coming together to support his wife, Holly, and their two young daughters, Brooklyn and Jordan. The community has also come together to share fond memories of a man that everyone remembers as being an outstanding officer with a bright future and someone who always went above and beyond to help others. It is clear that Sergeant Morales not only dedicated his life to service, but was a true leader and a selfless hero.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Gary Morales dedicated his life to serving his community and his country. I extend my most heartfelt condolences to the Morales family and his extended family at the sheriff's office during these most difficult times. I am humbled to recognize him here today.

GOP FRESHMAN CLASS HOUR: THE SECOND AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the

gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MESSER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as part of the second in a series of Special Orders put on by the newly elected freshman Republican caucus. Our first was on spending; today we rise to speak on the Second Amendment.

I have participated, in the first 50 days of my service here in this Chamber, in 19 public events throughout the Sixth District of Indiana—coffees, meetings with constituents, the public, folks who vote to send us here—and I can tell you in every one of those events people have two topics top of mind: they're focused on spending; they're focused on the sequester. They're tired of the Federal Government that continues to spend money that we don't have, and they want the government to follow the principle that every American family does, which is, you don't spend money unless you have money to spend. But the second topic that I hear everywhere that I go is the Second Amendment and the importance of making sure that that bedrock principle of American liberty is protected.

We all know of the tragic events that have occurred in recent months here in America—obviously the Connecticut tragedy being foremost on top of the mind. I want to make clear in my comments, as I do all throughout my district, that as a Nation we are heartbroken by tragedies like that when they occur. As a Nation, we mourn and weep with the families that had to deal with those tragedies. But as sad and tragic as those circumstances are, we cannot allow those events to be an excuse to undercut the Second Amendment and all that it means for liberty in this Nation.

There are opportunities to make a difference for public safety in this debate. It is time for a national conversation about mental health because the common denominator in every one of these crimes is that the perpetrator is someone who is mentally ill.

There are opportunities to do more on school security, and I'm hopeful that we will be able to work through those as we move forward. But this much must be made clear: gun bans don't work. They are only effective at preventing law-abiding citizens from having guns because the criminals and mentally deranged that commit these crimes don't care about the fact that there is a law that would have them not have a gun. To blame a gun for a

crime is to blame a pen for a misspelled word. I look forward to the opportunity to dialogue with my colleagues today on this important topic.

I appreciate Congressman STOCKMAN and Congressman WILLIAMS for their comments just a few minutes ago.

I yield to the gentleman from Utah to step forward and give comments on this important topic.

Mr. STEWART. I thank the gentleman from Indiana for yielding his time.

I had the great blessing of growing up on a family farm. I know what it's like as a kid to be so excited to go hunting with my brothers and with my father that you can't sleep the night before. I also had the great privilege of serving for 14 years as a pilot and an officer in the United States Air Force. There I learned a little bit about defending our Nation through an adequate show of force. I also, by the way, qualified as an expert marksman in small arms.

Recent and saddening events of violence have brought conversations about guns to the national stage. These acts of violence, as terrible as they are, should not be used by the White House as justification to revoke the rights outlined in our Constitution.

The Second Amendment clearly states that the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. Our Founding Fathers created this amendment to protect the citizens from government tyranny. In 2008, the Supreme Court emphatically stated that the right to bear arms is an individual right. Today, it continues to ensure Americans' right to defend themselves against the evil in the world.

Based on a survey as recently as 2000, U.S. civilians do use guns to protect themselves and others from crime at least 990,000 times a year—almost 1 million times a year. It's critical that we continue to protect this personal and absolute right.

While gun-related violence is indeed tragic—and we all know that it is; as my friend, the gentleman from Indiana, has so eloquently stated, we bleed for those who suffer from this—it's important to note that it only accounts for a small portion of the violent crimes that are committed in the United States.

As an example, the U.S. Department of Justice has said that of the roughly 5 million violent crimes committed in the United States during 2008, only 8 percent were committed by offenders who visibly were armed with a gun. Most of those crimes were committed with guns that were already illegal. Even the U.S. Justice Department conducted a survey in the 1990s and found that approximately 79 percent of the State prison inmates that carried a firearm during an offense that sent them to jail received their gun either through an illegal source or from one of their friends or family.

Stricter laws to ban guns will not solve any of these problems. We already have many laws in place; but in-

stead of creating new and harsher laws, we need to do a better job of enforcing the gun laws that we currently have.

Finally, let me say this: I believe that the timing of this proposal and these bills, it just isn't right. At a time when sequestration just went into effect and our country is on a path towards bankruptcy, it's unacceptable that the White House continues to push its gun control agenda.

We need to be focusing on getting our country back on a path of fiscal sanity. We need the President and his administration to show leadership. We need to ensure that America maintains its leadership role in the world. To do that, we need to budget and to spend responsibly. We need to replace President Obama's sequester—and it is this President's sequester—with common-sense spending cuts and reforms.

Most importantly, we need the President to demonstrate an understanding of the Nation's need to balance our budget and get us back on a path towards fiscal sanity. That is the great fight of our day. That is the great challenge that we are facing.

My heart bleeds for the victims of gun violence—whether they're in Newtown or in New York or in my home district—but the President's proposals will not help.

□ 1920

They aren't designed to address the core problems of mental health or a culture that is steeped in violence, violence that is thrust upon our children through media that are bent upon making more money through the violence that they propagate. Mr. Speaker, let's concentrate our attention on the greatest challenge of our day, not on a Band-Aid of additional laws that are designed to do nothing but to make some liberals feel better.

To the gentleman from Indiana, I yield back and thank you for this opportunity to address the House.

Mr. MESSER. I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Utah.

As we consider the tragedy that occurred in Newtown, Connecticut, it is natural to want to do something to prevent that from ever happening again. The victims of such unthinkable crimes deserve our solemn prayers for their loss and our deepest sympathy for their pain. The perpetrators of such evil deserve justice for their crimes.

The problem, however, is that the President and other opponents of the Second Amendment are seeking to limit our constitutional rights by pitching Americans a false sense of security: that by taking away rights, somehow those who intend to do harm will not do so. History shows that gun bans only keep guns away from law-abiding citizens, not criminals. Those who want to build, modify, or acquire weapons for violence will do so.

I recognize the gentleman from Florida on this important topic.

Mr. YOHIO. I'd like to thank the gentleman from Indiana for his time. Mr.

Speaker, I'd like to thank you for allowing me to rise here today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address this body tonight about a subject that weighs heavy on the minds of many of my constituents and many Americans. It is a subject and a right that has been granted to us by our country's founding principles, the Constitution, not by government. It is the birthright of any law-abiding citizen of the United States of America, and it is their choice to exercise that right. It is the role and duty of government to protect those rights.

In my 2 months as their Representative, more people in the Third Congressional District of Florida have reached out to me with their concerns over how Congress will address our Second Amendment after the much-publicized, tragic event at Newtown, Connecticut.

This, indeed, I think we all agree was a senseless act of violence. This is not a time to make a knee-jerk reaction and challenge our Second Amendment and restrict our rights as law-abiding citizens. This is not a time to play partisan politics. This is a time to come together.

This is a time to go after the cause of this despicable act, the individual and the cause of gun violence. I stand 100 percent with President Obama and all others that want to curb gun violence so long as it does not interfere with our Second Amendment. The Second Amendment states:

A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

This is necessary to protect the Third Amendment:

No soldier shall in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Those who commit the unspeakable crime we've witnessed a few months ago should not be able to hide behind any amendment or law in this country. But the real issue is gun violence, not the gun. We must be vigilant in using the laws already available to the fullest extent possible and look at why people are doing these crimes. Before we punish or infringe upon the rights of the law-abiding individual, we should look more at causes of mental health issues that lead to these crimes.

This point is illustrated by the Department of Justice's own internal memo that we're discussing tonight, which notes that the greatest number of guns used in crime comes from straw purchases, those being purchased by someone for someone else or by theft of a gun, not by the person that abides by the law.

Laws that place even more restrictions on law-abiding citizens who only want the right to own a gun for any legal activity they determine will not deter the person intent on doing harm. People with bad habits tend to do bad things.

The first week of this Congress, I joined many of my colleagues here on

the House floor in the reading of our Constitution. We took an oath at that swearing-in ceremony to uphold the Constitution. I carry a copy of our Constitution with me everywhere I go. Any and all we do in this body, and our colleagues in the Senate, should be done to uphold, to protect, and to strengthen this document; and by doing this, we strengthen America. Our Constitution has set America apart from every other country in the world, and I aim to keep it that way.

Mr. MESSER. Thanks again to the gentleman from Florida. I appreciate your comments today. I thank my colleague from Utah and my colleagues from Texas who had the opportunity to speak earlier, and I appreciate your leadership on this important topic.

Obviously, we face many challenges as a Nation. The Second Amendment is one of them, but an important one. Clearly, we all want to prevent horrible tragedies similar to the loss of those young lives in Newtown, Connecticut; but gun bans and many of the other proposals from this President are not the answer.

For example, an internal memo from the Justice Department said that the universal background checks proposed by this President will only be effective if paired with required gun registration—a list of law-abiding citizens who simply exercise their constitutional right to own a firearm. This is a blatant intrusion of privacy, and it cannot be allowed.

We need real solutions that aim to identify, treat or limit access to the evil few who perpetrate these horrible acts. I am unwilling to turn my back on the Constitution and sacrifice the liberty of the people I represent for a false sense of security. We need real solutions; and despite our disagreements, there are opportunities to work together.

As I mentioned earlier, blaming a gun for violence is to blame a pen for a misspelled word. If we can come together and focus on the real causes of this violence, then there are opportunities to work together, and I stand ready to work with every Member of this Chamber, regardless of party, to move this country forward.

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

CBC HOUR: THE IMPACT OF SEQUESTRATION

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and my privilege to stand here today as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus to participate one more time as an anchor for the CBC Special Order today on the subject of the impact of sequestration on the American people.

As we know, on Friday, the sequestration took effect, automatic spending cuts of a significant painful amount that will be experienced by the American people all across the land. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it's something that was avoidable had there been a willingness to try and find common ground.

There are many of us who believe that the most appropriate approach would have been to try and find a balanced resolution involving tax reform and revenue and attempting to identify where reasonable spending adjustments could have been made. But instead of all parties trying to come together to find a balanced resolution to the problem that we find ourselves in, there are some in this Chamber who seem committed to trying to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable in our society, balancing the budget on the backs of children and seniors, pregnant women, Superstorm Sandy victims, public housing residents, or national security.

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I'm just hopeful that as we move forward that we can find the capacity, find the ability, find the courage to come together to seek out common ground so we can resolve this sequestration matter and move forward supporting the economy in the manner that will be the healthiest for the greatest number of Americans possible.

I'm pleased today that we've been joined by several distinguished members of the Congressional Black Caucus, including the chairperson of the CBC, to whom I yield as much time as she may consume, the Honorable MARCIA FUDGE, who has been a tremendous leader on so many issues on behalf of working families and the middle class and seniors all across this country.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I certainly do want to thank Congressman JEFFRIES for once again leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour on another timely and important topic: the impact of sequestration.

Mr. Speaker, here we are. It is March 4, and the Congress and the administration are still mired in political gridlock with no resolution on how to avoid the across-the-board cuts, destructive as they may be, and untargeted sequestration cuts. How irresponsible.

Many communities around the country are still reeling from the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. Let us not forget that the national black unemployment rate re-

mains in double digits at 13.8 percent, far higher than the national rate. Now these communities can only watch as the sequester threatens to roll back the modest gains of the last few years.

The Office of Management and Budget estimates that title I education funds could be eliminated for more than 2,700 schools. This cut alone will have an impact on nearly 1.2 million disadvantaged students. In my home State of Ohio, the public schools are preparing for the loss of \$25.1 million in funding for primary and secondary education. You tell me, Mr. Speaker, what have children done to deserve this impact of sequestration?

The sequester will impact every neighborhood and every household. No matter your race or your age, the sequester will have an impact on your life.

What does the sequester mean for our economy? What does it mean for our neighborhoods? What does it mean for your household? It means cuts to education. The jobs of 10,000 teachers are now at risk. It means cuts to small business. Small business loan guarantees will be reduced by up to \$540 million. It means cuts to food safety. There will be roughly 2,100 fewer food inspectors. It means compromising workplace safety. Workers will be less safe due to about 1,200 less safety inspections. It means cuts to mental health funding. Up to 373,000 mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children will go untreated.

The American people expect and deserve more. While Congress debates the policies of deficit reduction, our struggling communities must cope with the consequences of our inaction. While politicians argue over tax cuts, our cities and towns—rural and urban—become less secure. Our children's futures become less secure. Our children are important.

We could talk all night about how and why we got here, but many of you at home, our constituents, only want to know how we're going to end the sequester, escape this fiscal limbo and set our Nation back on the right track.

The path to prosperity is built on compromise. As long as House Republicans insist on the Grover Norquist cut-only approach to budgetary health, Congress will not move forward. Simply put: A cut-only plan will not work. A true path forward will be a compromise built upon raising revenues and targeted cuts.

Just last week, this caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, delivered a plan to House leadership on how to responsibly replace the sequester. The CBC budget replaces the sequester with commonsense cuts and revenue options that don't make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Mr. Speaker, this constant cycle of fiscal calamities and cliffs is bad for the Nation. It's bad for our economy, and it is bad for our people. We were sent to Congress to move America forward. Time has run out for games. The