

the House by July Fourth, we will not see action at all, and it will be left up to the President to rescue the country from the worst aspects of our dysfunctional immigration system.

On the Democratic side, we all prefer a legislative solution where the House, like our counterparts in the Senate, pass bills signed by the President. But in the absence of anything resembling leadership from the legislature, the President will not just sit back and watch a bad situation get worse. He will act in accordance with existing law to protect all immigrants he can. I believe he can protect literally millions of them through executive action.

Immigration reform is not dead. It will just move to the White House for action if none comes from this House. So with 10 days left before July Fourth, where do we stand? The majority leader released his legislative schedule for the month of June, and reforming our immigration system is nowhere to be found. Immigration is the single most important issue to address for the Republican Party's ability to be competitive at the national level after this fall, and it is nowhere on the schedule before this fall.

So what lessons have we learned? Half-measures to legalize some immigrants here and allow legal immigration for some industries there doesn't seem to have much political traction with conservative voters in the South. Blocking sensible immigration reform and sending out mailers decrying "amnesty" at the last minute doesn't seem to have much traction with southern voters in conservative districts.

Articulating, however, a firm argument for why deporting 11 or 12 million people is not a realistic proposition, defending your position that legal immigration is preferable to illegal immigration, and making clear that the only way to actual border security is a combination of enforcement, legal immigration, and addressing the legal status for immigrants already living and working here seems to work pretty well with southern conservative voters.

That is what the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. GRAHAM, would tell us, or the gentlelady from North Carolina, or every poll that has been taken in recent memory. And we know that in every part of the country outside the most conservative districts, mainly in the South, supporting the end of illegal immigration and a broad and rigorous legalization combined with serious workplace and border enforcement is not only the policy that works, it is the only policy that is viable politically.

So every pundit on TV last night said it was time to man the barricades. They said immigration reform with a Republican stamp in a Republican Congress is dead because the American people want to be protected from the threatening world outside, and Republican Congressmen want to be protected from their threatening voters.

But it is still up to the Republican leadership how they plan to proceed.

Not a single Republican who opposes immigration reform needs to vote for it—not one. And we will still have a majority of the House voting to do what a majority of Americans want them to do; that is, address our broken immigration system.

Next week in Judiciary we will have a hearing on the crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing Central America, and we will be pointing fingers at everyone but ourselves, and not, I would note, using the few remaining legislative days available to craft a sensible border and immigration strategy as our colleagues did in the Senate almost a full year ago.

Let us not accept the latest excuse for inaction on immigration, especially from those who want to take no action under any conditions. This Nation—built by and sustained by 400 years of immigration—needs a coherent system, and we need politicians brave enough to craft one.

#### CELEBRATING FLAG DAY AND THE ARMY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Flag Day, which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 14. This date is important to all Americans, as June 14, 1777, is the date the Continental Congress adopted a resolution officially designating a flag of the United States. That same date in 1775 is also recognized as the birthday of our Army.

On our flag, those 13 broad stripes and 50 bright stars are an important symbol of America that is recognized across the globe and, quite frankly, even on the Moon.

Our flag has many meanings. Our flag is raised by our athletes during the Olympics. Our flag is flown with pride and honor during ceremonies. Our flag is worn on the right arm of every soldier. And our flag is draped over the coffins of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the country that it represents and that they served.

This Saturday, June 14, I encourage all to remember why we fly our flag and to also use the opportunity to remember the Army's birthday and the many soldiers who have defended the flag and what it has represented for the past 239 years.

#### GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the 74th school shooting incident since the horrific day at Sandy Hook in December 2012 where 26 people, including 20 children, were slaughtered. Only this time, it was my district.

Reynolds High School, the second-largest in the State of Oregon, was the scene of the tragic murder of 14-year-old Emilio Hoffman, a junior high school varsity soccer player and volunteer soccer coach. He was gunned down; a teacher was wounded, and the shooter, apparently an ex-student, dead.

I was struck by, just a few days earlier, when *The Onion*, the satirical newspaper, had their response to this recent spate of shootings that has shaken us all.

The *Onion* headline read:

"No Way To Prevent This," Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens.

The article read:

In the days following a violent rampage in southern California in which a lone attacker killed seven individuals, including himself, and seriously injured over a dozen others, citizens living in the only country where this kind of mass killing routinely occurs reportedly concluded that there was no way to prevent the massacre from taking place. "This was a terrible tragedy, but sometimes these things just happen and there is nothing anyone can do to stop them," said North Carolina resident Samuel Wipper, echoing sentiments expressed by tens of millions of individuals who reside in a nation where over half the world's deadliest mass shootings have occurred in the past 50 years and whose citizens are 20 times more likely to die of gun violence than those of other developed countries. "It is a shame, but what can we do? There really isn't anything that was going to keep this guy from snapping and killing a lot of people if that is what he really wanted." At press time, residents of the only economically advanced nation in the world where roughly two mass shootings have occurred every month for the past 5 years were referring themselves and their situation as "hopeless."

Well, the fact is we can do something about gun violence. It is a public health crisis, and with any other disease or health product that produced such widespread death and destruction, we would mobilize. First, we need to take some simple, commonsense steps like universal background gun checks. We have them in my State of Oregon. Obviously, it doesn't keep every senseless act of gun violence from happening, but it is often proven effective to keep weapons out of the hands of the mentally unstable and criminal elements.

Universal background checks are supported by an overwhelming number of Americans—over 90 percent by some estimates—and a strong majority, over two-thirds, of gun owners want to make sure there are no loopholes in the background check laws.

Recent events have also demonstrated what you will find out by visiting any jail, emergency room, or simply walking the streets of our communities: too many Americans are facing a mental health crisis. I am looking forward to working with Representative TIM MURPHY on his H.R. 3717, Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

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We have been discussing ways to advance some of the provisions in this

Congress. Recently, my friend and colleague from Tucson, Congressman RON BARBER, himself a victim of gun violence which occurred during the tragic murders in Tucson—which included the serious wounding of our former colleague, Gabby Giffords—has also introduced legislation.

I am looking forward to being able to work with both Congressman MURPHY and Congressman BARBER, so that this Congress produces legislation to strengthen the opportunities to help people who are mentally ill.

We ought not to pretend that there is nothing we can do about these situations. Look at what happened with automobile safety. It has dramatically improved within a generation, once we stopped accepting the carnage on our roadways.

Auto deaths have been cut in half, serious injuries reduced, not with any single magic solution, but by patient, hard work involving step-by-step efforts to improve design and construction of automobiles, the education of drivers, and the enforcement of our laws.

Education, engineering, and enforcement can likewise make a big difference in reducing the epidemic of gun violence in America, and we certainly can do a better job of helping individuals and families in mental health crisis.

Let's not make a parody in The Onion be the reality of this Congress. Let's act. Tens of thousands of victims, past and future, including young Emilio Hoffman, demand our best efforts.

#### HONORING LINDA TOWSE FOR 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress rely a great deal on our staff for policy advice, research, interacting with constituents, and all of the other tasks that allow us to serve our districts.

Today, I would like to take a moment to recognize one member of my staff who has been the backbone of my office for over 35 years. Linda Towse started in my office on June 7, 1979, less than 2 months after I was elected.

Last week marked her 35th anniversary in our office. Before that, Linda worked with Senator Edward Brooke from Massachusetts. All told, Linda has been a congressional staffer for 42 years.

Always patient, always thoughtful, always thorough, Linda is what every Member wants in a staffer. She has helped countless Sixth District residents resolve issues with Federal agencies.

Hundreds of young people will remember Linda for her work coordinating their internship in my office or working with them while overseeing my service academy commission.

Birthdays are always remembered and celebrated thanks to her, and fellow staff rely on her years of wisdom and experience for learning the ropes and succeeding in their jobs.

She is our office historian and somehow locates any specific piece of paper when needed from the stack of papers on her desk.

We see staffers come and go, but it is rare to have one as dedicated as Linda and one who has served the Congress for over 40 years. Thank you, Linda, for your service to the Sixth District of Wisconsin over these many years.

#### CONGRATULATING AUDRA McDONALD

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Audra McDonald, an award-winning actress and singer from my hometown of Fresno, California.

Audra, who I have the pleasure of knowing personally, made history on Sunday, if you were watching the Tony Awards, when she received her sixth Tony Award. This win makes her the most statue-laden Tony Award winner in our Nation's history. Audra's most recent Tony Award was for her incredible portrayal of Billie Holiday in "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill."

Audra, who grew up in Fresno, began her career with my friend Dan Pessano and the Good Company Players while attending Roosevelt High School. She then went on to graduate from the Juilliard School of New York in 1993. Audra has seen great success on Broadway, television, and in the opera.

In addition to having won three Tony Awards at the age of 28, Audra has also received numerous Grammy Awards, Drama Desk Awards, and Outer Critics Circle Awards. There is almost nothing that she hasn't performed in her field. She also has been able to display her talents at the White House and on the greatest stages in the world.

Audra is not only an exceptional actress, but also a wonderful, giving person. She actively gives back to her community and seeks to improve the lives of those around her, including her family.

Earlier this year, she held a benefit concert for Hands in the Community and is a supporter of marriage equality. She also sits on the advisory committee for Broadway Impact. Most importantly, she has always given credit to where credit is due, beginning with her parents who are respected educators in Fresno, who motivated and taught students as they taught Audra.

Audra McDonald is a source of pride and inspiration in the San Joaquin Valley and her hometown of Fresno, as well as around the world. I think it is important that we take special note of the talented people throughout our country who provide joy and the expe-

rience of the arts as this very, very fine individual has done, a star in her own right, Audra McDonald—hometown, Fresno, California.

#### FEDERAL RESERVE

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I have the Federal Reserve on my mind this morning.

You can't really get through the Federal Reserve in 5 minutes, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to start down the road today because I saw a headline Bloomberg reported to say that what had been intended to be the beginning of an unwinding of a Federal Reserve balance sheet wasn't going to occur in the timely fashion that had been intended. This was news to me, based on what we have seen in the Budget Committee.

I have with me this morning the Federal Reserve Act authorization. Folks often wonder where the Federal Reserve comes from. The truth is it comes from the Federal Reserve Act.

I point to section 2A, "Monetary policy objectives." It says that:

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve and the Open Market Committee shall maintain long-run growth of the monetary and credit aggregates commensurate with the economy's long-run potential to increase production, so as to promote effectively the goals of maximum employment, stable prices, and moderate long-term interest rates.

Now, I know there are some high school economic students out there who are thinking: Hey, wait a minute. Can you really promote stable prices, maximum employment, and moderate long-term interest rates with the same set of policies?

I share that high school economics concern about whether or not those three goals can be pursued collectively, but this is the mandate the Federal Reserve has, and this is why the Federal Reserve is involved in what they are involved in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I have here is the Federal Reserve balance sheet. It goes back to 2007, back when the Federal Reserve balance sheet was relatively stable. By stable, I mean it was at about \$800 billion—\$800 billion, the balance sheet of the Federal Reserve.

I want you to watch on the chart as we go out through these stable times, right up until the balance sheet triples in 2008. Now, when we are trying to promote economic stability, the tripling of any government balance sheet should be of concern. The Federal Reserve balance sheet triples in 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand a hearing transcript from my very first month on the Budget Committee. That occurred 3 years ago. It was 2011, and Chairman PAUL RYAN was questioning Ben Bernanke, then the Federal Reserve chairman.