

expect that hundreds of thousands more will attempt to flee hostile regions for the safety of Europe and beyond.

Since 2011, at least 4 million Syrians have fled their country, uprooting their families to escape brutal violence and miserable living conditions.

□ 1015

However, the refugees' plight for a safe environment since leaving Syria and escaping to Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey has been bleak.

In just the last few days, we have seen heartbreaking images of refugees making the difficult journey to enter European countries, sometimes paying with their lives. These migrants and refugees will do anything for a better future.

I was proud to see the leadership of Angela Merkel in Germany accepting so many of these people in need. I strongly encourage all European Union countries to follow Chancellor Merkel's lead in welcoming these migrants and refugees and also supporting Germany's efforts in ensuring this undertaking is spread across the continent.

Most importantly, the United States must also offer any humanitarian assistance we can to ensure these vulnerable refugees have all available resources to return to a sense of normalcy. The world must step up, and I hope this Congress will play a role in the process of assisting these refugees.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict in Syria is one of the great blemishes on human history. Approximately 250,000 people have been killed. This administration said early on that Bashar al-Assad had to go. Nothing happened. The administration then said that, if Mr. Al-Assad used chemical weapons, then he really had to go. The dictator did, gassing innocent people, including children, and the world did nothing.

This is a heavy burden we carry now, and that is why it is essential that we do everything we can to assist these refugees. My parents were refugees; my grandparents were refugees, and the United States took us in and gave us an opportunity. The world must also now account for our failure in Syria and do everything we can to help these innocent people.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize today, September 10, as World Suicide Prevention Day. Anyone who has been impacted by the horrible tragedy of a suicide, whether it be a family member, friend, or colleague, is well aware of the devastating impact when one person they love takes their own life.

It is critical that we continue the conversation about not only suicide, but mental health issues as well. People of all ages, races, and socio-economic status can be plagued with mental health problems, and we must ensure those who are suffering receive the proper diagnosis and treatment.

In addition, communities must work together to foster understanding rather

than judgment. If you or a loved one is experiencing difficulties, I encourage you: Please, take the time to seek counseling from a professional.

Every life is worth living, and every life is precious. Let's come together to support our friends and neighbors and work to address mental illness and prevent suicide.

MADURO BORDER CLOSING

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it was recently announced by Venezuela's de facto dictator, Nicolas Maduro, that the single remaining border crossing with Colombia will be completely bolted.

This action is only the latest example of Maduro's weak attempts to search for phantom scapegoats of his regime's failed economic policies. The figment of Maduro's imagination is Colombians are the cause of food shortages, the collapse of the Venezuelan currency, and his country's rampant crime. As a result, the Venezuelan dictator has ordered the border between Colombia and Venezuela closed.

Colombians living in Venezuela have been unlawfully arrested and have had their homes bulldozed, leaving them with no other option but to flee; but with the latest and final border closure, Colombians are forced to return to their home country using very dangerous routes. This has been dubbed a humanitarian crisis by the United Nations.

Make no mistake, this crackdown by Maduro is a sick and twisted attempt to distract the Venezuelan electorate from Caracas' failed socialist and anti-democratic policies ahead of the December elections.

Unfortunately, the horrible suffering these policies have caused for both Colombian refugees and the Venezuelan people are all too real.

WATER AND DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, as we come back from the August recess, I would like to speak on an issue that hits very close to home and to the Southwestern States—yes, the Southwestern States—and this is the drought.

The drought in particular that is facing California is the worst one recorded in history in our State, and I believe it will define this era.

My home State is entering its fourth year of consecutive drought, with nearly 93 percent of residents experiencing severe droughts, and there is no foreseeable end in the future.

The lack of water in California is so serious that our Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency and asked that all residents cut back on water 25 percent. Even with us hitting that, a recent study estimates that it will take at least 11 million gallons of water to replenish our drought losses.

Water conservation and infrastructure is a life or death issue, not just for the residents of my district, but for all of California. Without water infrastructure, farmers in the Central Valley cannot adequately grow and sell their crops; the price of foodstuff skyrockets; wildfires rage and destroy acres of property; State energy production is crippled; the economy slows; and the list goes on and on.

While other areas of California are just now setting the initial framework for water conservation and recycling projects, my home district recycles almost 70 percent of the water that we use both in business and at home.

How are we able to do that? Well, when I came here 19 years ago, I championed a project called the Groundwater Replenishment System, and it is located in Orange County. It is the water table underneath our homes.

This system recycles treated waste water into clean drinking water, which exceeds Federal and State standards; and it has produced over 160 trillion gallons of new water and serviced millions of Orange County residents since its creation.

This system has become the largest reclamation project in the world. In fact, people from around the world and from across our great States come to take a look at how we replenish our water supply.

Legislation to fund projects like our groundwater replenishment system—well, it should be commonsense to fund those. However, the drought has continued in the past 4 years, and there has been no meaningful action on infrastructure improvements to move water, to reclaim water, to save water.

While residents of California are feeling the effects of our historic drought, this Chamber continues to stall on meaningful drought relief and water infrastructure legislation. Back in my home district, I have held numerous briefings about the drought and recognized community members who are cutting back and being more efficient with their water.

I recently spent part of this August recess meeting with community members of the Central Valley to discuss water storage and recycling projects.

In this Congress, I have cosponsored the Drought Recovery and Resilience Act of 2015. It is commonsense legislation which addresses innovative water financing, it improves water infrastructure and water management, and it assists in planning for future droughts.

The residents of my State have been doing their part to conserve the water; so now, it is time for Washington, D.C., to help us to do what is right for California and to do what is right for the other Southwestern States.

While the House Republicans are bickering amongst themselves to avoid another embarrassing government shutdown, I will continue to fight for meaningful water infrastructure to secure the water independence of future

generations because with water comes growth and California will grow.

HONORING TYRELL CAMERON

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Tyrell Cameron, a young man from northeast Louisiana whose life was cut tragically short in an accident on the football field last Friday night.

Tyrell was a bright student at Franklin Parish High School with a promising future, surrounded by a supportive and loving community.

I live about 20 miles from the high school. I consider Winnsboro an extension of my home. I know their people well. I know that this is a strong community that supports each other, helps each other, and loves each other.

As Tyrell's family and friends come to grips with this tragedy, we will mourn; we will grieve, and then we will start the healing process.

While we pray for Tyrell, his family, his teammates, and Franklin Parish, I also ask that you keep the Sterlington community in your prayers. They were on the other sideline during the game, and I know this has been a difficult experience for them as well.

Louisiana is a special place. We love our high school football. Our young men play with heart for their schools every Friday night. As competitive as it can get, we know what is most important. I have been so impressed with the outpouring of support for Tyrell and Franklin Parish that has come from high schools throughout the entire State of Louisiana.

Many local teams will wear Tyrell's number, number 48, on their helmets for the remainder of the season. That says a lot to me about the strong character of our young men back home.

Others like me are wearing blue today, his team color, to honor Tyrell, just as his teammates are doing this week also.

My thoughts and prayers are both with Franklin Parish and Sterlington communities, and I encourage them to keep playing for Tyrell.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, time and time again, I have come to this floor to urge my colleagues to stand with me against the rampant plague of gun violence spreading across our Nation, and I stand here again heartbroken.

I recently had the difficult and tragic duty of speaking at Tamara Sword's funeral. Tamara was the mother of five and the daughter of Chicago gun violence prevention advocate Andrew Holmes, a personal hero of mine.

Andrew is a man who has dedicated his life to preventing gun violence and supporting families of gun violence victims. For decades, he has traveled to hundreds of crime scenes to console those who lost friends and family members. In a cruel twist of fate, he was the one who needed consoling when Tamara was caught in the crossfire while at a gas station.

I wish Tamara's story was an exception, but we know it is not. It is a tragic reminder that only in America does an everyday trip to the gas station, the movie theater, or church end in gun violence or maybe you are a reporter and a photographer just doing your job or a sheriff filling your car with gas.

All across America, gun violence is surging. More than 30 cities are reeling from a summer of senseless shootings, with death tolls reaching historic levels. In Chicago last week, we marked the highest number of gun homicides in a single day in more than a decade.

After each mass shooting, Congress launches into its ritual that is used as an end run around real reform. We give our speeches; we hold our moments of silence, and then we wait for the national buzz to fade.

My colleagues seem to forget that our actions may fade, but the violence remains. Violence—gun violence—is a major public health problem in the United States. Every moment that we don't act, we risk losing even more lives to senseless gun violence, which might be homicides, suicides, or accidents.

Last week, I hosted a dinner for a group of parents who lost their children to senseless gun violence. They think we simply do not care. They wonder. There has been Newtown; there is Hadiya Pendleton; there is the church shooting, movie theaters, the mall, but still, we do nothing.

Today, I rise again on behalf of victims of gun violence. I rise to say that we can no longer dismiss the mass shootings as isolated incidents and ignore everyday shootings altogether because the fact is, when our Nation is averaging one mass shooting a day, they aren't so isolated. When shootings are so commonplace that they are called everyday shootings, they cannot be ignored.

□ 1030

Over the Labor Day weekend, 9 people were killed and 34 were wounded by gun violence in Chicago. It is time that we own up to the gun violence problem that is gripping our Nation and robbing us of a generation of young people one shooting at a time.

This year, for the first time in history, gun deaths are on pace to be the leading cause of death of Americans aged 15 through 24, and the suicide rate is climbing, also. The future of our Nation is hanging in the balance here.

It is time for Congress to act. There are a number of gun violence reform bills that truly make sense and that are truly bipartisan.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the American people and to take action, because the American people are on the side of gun violence reform that makes sense.

The other thing you can do is to try attending a funeral of an innocent person—of a mom of five kids, who cling onto her coffin, or of a young teen who lost his life to senseless gun violence. I wonder how you would feel then.

IRAN

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard so far during debate on the Iran Joint Plan of Action, there are dozens of shortcomings and concerns when it comes to this administration's nuclear deal—the so-called P5+1. No doubt, we will hear dozens more before all is said and done.

The more we study this agreement—Republican or Democrat—the clearer it is to see that it does not measure up to its ultimate goal: to prevent a nuclear Iran.

The essential restrictions on Iran's key bomb-making technology sunset in as soon as 10 years, leaving an internationally recognized, industrial-scale nuclear program with breakout times shrinking down to nearly zero—and that is if Iran doesn't cheat—but we will have a tough time knowing because what was “anytime, anywhere” inspections of Iranian nuclear sites has now become “managed access,” leaving Iran as long as 24 days to scrub sites, enough time to nearly completely remove incriminating evidence of wrongdoing or the option of self-reporting compliance in places like their military base at Parchin.

However, what this deal does accomplish is to precipitate a nuclear arms race in the Middle East—a reality we are already seeing as nations like Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have already begun building up their nuclear infrastructure in response.

Any of those details should be enough to reject this deal, but that would not even mention the most objectionable portion: that this good-faith agreement with the world's largest state sponsor of terror frees up hundreds of billions of dollars in economic sanctions and frozen assets seemingly without any regard for what that money will be used for.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 6 months, I have had the opportunity to chair the Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing, which is a bipartisan group that was established by both parties of the Financial Services Committee, to look into the increasing ability for terror groups to fund and finance their actions and to evaluate the United States' response to these challenges.

Specifically, the task force examined the impact of this nuclear agreement on Tehran's state sponsorship of terror proxies across the region.