

known in Congress, nor in the country, yet is a very significant act because of what it did to empower States and local communities to have the ability to prevent billboards from going up and giving them funds for taking them down and to make sure that people are sensitive to why this is important for our scenery—let's recommit to strengthening the program.

As I said, we sell scenery. We sell watchable wildlife. The economy of the central coast depends on the beauty. As long as the beauty is there, people are going to come to the Carmels and Pacific Groves and Montereys, where California history began.

People are spending more money on watchable wildlife. More people are watching wildlife in America than watch all of the sports combined. It is an unbelievable figure: of all the sports, all the football, all the baseball, all the hockey, basketball, you name it, more people look at wildlife.

So let's protect what is really unique to America, something that God gave us and only we can destroy. These hundreds of thousands of signs are robbing America of its scenic view, of its iconic images that once defined the open road.

I would like to quote Ogden Nash, who summed it up wonderfully in a poem, "Song of the Open Road":

I think that I shall never see,
A billboard as lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall,
I will never see a tree at all.

Let's help protect America's beauty.
Let's ban billboards.

GTMO TRANSFERS TO COLORADO

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

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Obama administration's announcement last week that the President is considering transferring detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, into my home State of Colorado.

Closing Guantanamo Bay was an ill-advised campaign promise in 2007 made by the President, a promise made before he began receiving classified intelligence updates.

In fact, as of March 2015, the Director of National Intelligence reported that 29 percent of detainees released from Guantanamo have engaged in or were suspected of engaging in terrorist or insurgent activity. Those who remain in Guantanamo are "worst of the worst." So it is safe to presume that, if released, an even higher percentage of them will remain a threat to our national security.

I struggle to understand why we would close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp only to finance the incarceration of enemy combatants within the United States.

Ever since 2012, Congress has passed and President Obama has signed annual restrictions against the transfer

of prisoners at GTMO to the United States. The same restrictions are found in the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act passed by the House last week, despite President Obama's promise to veto that bill.

There is broad bipartisan opposition to President Obama's plans to transfer GTMO prisoners into the United States, both among Members of Congress and the American people.

For our Nation's security, I implore President Obama to sign the National Defense Authorization Act when it reaches his desk and halt his reckless plan to place many of the world's worst terrorists on U.S. soil, where they will have all of the due process protections provided to the American people and, thus, could be released through our court system.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 1955 Crispus Attucks men's basketball team, the first all-African American high school athletic team to win a championship, not only in the great Hoosier State, but in the United States.

Although the school was initially constructed out of pressure to segregate Indianapolis high schools, Crispus Attucks High School quickly became a source of pride for the African American community in Indianapolis and across the great Hoosier State.

However, despite its historic championship victory, the Crispus Attucks High School basketball team did not receive the praise and recognition traditionally bestowed upon previous State champions.

After its win, the team took the traditional ride on a fire truck from Butler Fieldhouse to Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis, but the team was not allowed to get off the truck at the Circle for the traditional photo sessions. Instead, the fire truck took one more lap and then headed back into the city's Black neighborhood.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, 60 years later I stand along all Hoosiers to recognize these men for their trailblazing efforts in bringing our city together through high school sports. Their win was a major first step for African American athletes across our country, breaking the barriers of segregation and setting the stage for the diversity that we see today.

Mr. Speaker, today I am joining my colleague in the Senate, Senator JOE DONNELLY, to give these men the recognition they deserve. It is long overdue, but I hope it helps to bring some attention to their amazing accomplishments.

I ask that my colleagues join us today in recognizing the 1955 Crispus

Attucks men's basketball team and thank them for bringing tremendous pride to the citizens of Indianapolis and to people of all races across our great country.

ZADROGA ACT REAUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish I could count how many times Members of Congress have come to this floor about the need to "never forget" September 11, 9/11, its victims, and our first responders.

Members have offered resolutions, have given speeches, have come to the floor with shocking images that are already seared into our minds forever. Through it all, we hear this refrain of "never forget." I know I will never forget. I will never forget the friends and the family member I lost that day.

I have constituents who will never forget. They will never forget the phone call they may have received that day of a loved one lost or the neighbor they saw for the very last time. When I visit a firehouse in Woodside, in Maspeth, in Sunnyside in Queens, or in Throgs Neck in the Bronx, I know they will never forget.

I also know this is not just about my constituents, not just about my city of New York, not just about my State of New York, but this is about the United States of America. I know that Americans will never forget the days, the weeks, the months spent, by the men and women who worked on the pile, trying to rescue and save lives, the recovery, and the eventual cleanup efforts that took place in Lower Manhattan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only people I believe who seem in danger of forgetting are my colleagues right here in the House of Representatives. That is the only explanation I can give for why they let the James Zadroga 9/11 Health Act expire last week.

They are forgetting the promise that this Congress, that our country, made to these first responders, the survivors, and other volunteers in the days that followed September 11.

We all made a promise to them that they would not be left behind, they would not be ignored, left to fend for themselves. It took far too long for the Zadroga Act to become a law in the first place.

Those are difficult years to have to keep telling 9/11 heroes: Just wait a little longer. We will get there. But, eventually, we did get it done because it was the right thing to do.

It would be easy for my colleagues to shrug their shoulders and say they did their part, to think that we have wiped our hands of the entire issue. But the need is still there. The pain and the suffering are still there. So we must act and we must act now.

A few weeks ago hundreds of first responders came to Washington, D.C.,

from all over the country—not just New York—who were affected by 9/11 to look Members of Congress in the eye and ask them to renew this worthy program. They had meetings. They held press conferences. They even brought a celebrity spokesperson to draw attention to their cause.

Toward the end of the day, one gentleman said that he probably wouldn't be coming back to push Congress on this issue in the future. Now, I wish that none of them would have to come back because we would be able to tell them that we took action and permanently established this program.

But the reason he is not going to be coming back is because he has stage 4 cancer, stage 4 cancer as a result of his work on the pile, looking for his friends. He may not be coming back at all. That is what this is about. That is who we are talking about.

Every day first responders, cleanup workers, and volunteers are struggling with health conditions caused by the effects of the attack of 9/11. They have doctors' appointments, tests, treatments, chemotherapy.

And they can't do it alone. That is why we put this program in place in the first place, to help those who can't do it alone, to not just thank them for their service, but to give back to them what they have given to us.

These heroes should be thanked every day for what they have done. They deserve our thanks. They deserve to be honored and applauded and to have floor speech after floor speech given in their name.

But they deserve more than just words. They deserve action by this House, action that we must—not just should—but we must take to ensure that this program will continue to be there for those who need it.

Our heroes deserve better. We hear a lot about “never forget.” I want to suggest that we never use the term “never forget” here on the floor, “never forget 9/11,” until we pass a permanent extension of the James Zadroga Health Act.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I am sick to my stomach this morning because we have just witnessed the 45th school shooting this year. There have been more than 294 mass shootings this year, and we have only had 272 days this year.

I am not going to stand for another moment of silence on this floor unless it is joined with meaningful action. It is a hollow gesture to act like we care for these families when the truth is we don't care enough to act.

Twenty-six times since Sandy Hook we have paused on this floor, we have paused to give our prayers and our sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones. But what are we doing for the next set of families that are going to lose loved ones?

We are going to do nothing, absolutely nothing. In fact, we create more credibility in the fictionalized “death panels” than we do about the actual deaths of innocent schoolchildren, college students, and moviegoers.

This is the truth: In America, more preschoolers are shot dead each year than police officers killed in the line of duty. Ninety-two Americans are shot to death each and every day. Ninety-two will be shot to death today. Do we care enough to do anything?

If there were that many people dying each day due to terrorism, disease, faulty consumer products, you bet we would do something, but not when it comes to guns. When it comes to guns, we can only muster enough to stand up on this floor and be silent. What a tragedy.

Our inaction means we are willing to let thousands of our fellow citizens die so we can prop up the myth that gun violence measures, which the Supreme Court has ruled ironclad under the Constitution, will somehow undermine the Second Amendment.

By refusing to adopt the mental health and background check measures supported by 90 percent of the population and 74 percent of NRA members, we are doing the bidding of the NRA lobbyists and the gun manufacturers. We are not standing side by side with the victims of Umpqua and Charleston and Sandy Hook. We are shrugging and saying, “Eh, stuff happens.”

Stuff does not just happen. As you can see on this chart, gun violence is dramatically down in States that have passed strong gun violence prevention laws. You can see the trends in other industrialized countries that have reacted wisely to gun violence.

Australia had 13 mass shootings over 18 years. But then they put in strong laws to protect against gun violence, and they haven't had one mass shooting since then.

In Canada and Norway, also, they tightened their gun laws in the wake of mass shootings, and gun violence rates are a fraction today of what they were. These countries are our closest allies. They are not Fascist regimes. If they can do it, we can do it.

We need to make mental health reporting laws universal and enforce the ones already on the books. It is shameful that eight States have no mental health reporting laws and 13 States have submitted fewer than 100 mental health records each to the national background check system.

By the way, Senate Majority Whip JOHN CORNYN says that his measure is the solution. He has even introduced his own bill, but he and his Caucus have declined to advance it.

We have to make background checks universal by closing the gun show loophole and the loophole for online sales. These loopholes allow criminals, drug abusers, and mentally ill people who are already banned from having guns to get guns. Finally, we need to lift the ban on NIH and CDC research.

Mr. Speaker, I will not stand for another one of these hypocritical moments of silence, but I will stand up for any effort we make to pass sensible and genuine gun safety laws. Lipservice alone is a disservice to these families and the next families who don't want our prayers, but want the lives of their loved ones back.

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT CAUSING SUFFERING

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

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, today I had the opportunity and the honor to represent my district on the Senate side in a committee to talk about water, and it was to talk about the bill that we passed off this House floor just a few months ago back in June. Obviously, I was very excited to move that forward and excited to see the debate move forward. This is something that I think we need to talk about a little bit more here on the floor, not just in the Senate because I think people need to remember what we are talking about.

I had this picture taken just last week in my district. When people say a picture is worth a thousand words, you look at this picture, and you try to think of just a few different words that this brings to mind. You see houses here in the background, but you obviously see shacks here. You see a child's stroller, a child's toy, cans of food, a box from one of our local food banks.

These are people who are suffering today. This is in the United States of America. These are people who so many in this body claim to represent, so many in this body talk about, but when we see so many in this body sign letters, speak out in opposition to legislation that could help solve this problem, these people are suffering not because of a lack of the will to work but because we are facing a drought, and also because of legislation, because laws are in place that prevent us from delivering water to these communities.

These are people who want to make a difference. A lot of them might be immigrants. Some of them probably are people born in this country, but they are people that want to achieve the American Dream. A couple weeks ago when the Pope was here, he said so many things that both sides agreed with and some things that both sides disagreed with, but what he said was that every man has the right to work, to earn an honest day's wage. These people are being denied that opportunity.

Just beyond these shacks, you see homes. They look relatively new. You see a business here. You see trucks. Those are all people who have the ability to support themselves, but they are also people who right behind, in their own backyard, that don't have the ability to work that honest day's wage, to supply for their family, to buy new toys for their kids, to actually afford