

area, large cities and small cities, young Black men and young Black women are targets, fair game, for some who are wearing a badge and a gun and hiding behind a uniform and a vow that they don't believe in and that doesn't govern their lives and their official and unofficial duty.

They don't believe in serving and protecting. They believe in: How can we commit murder and get away with it? How can we murder those who don't look like us, murder those who we stereotypically view as criminals and thugs? We have a right because we wear a badge. We have a gun and we have a uniform to hide behind. We have an unmitigated right to shoot them down at will.

There are laws in this Nation that protect even wild animals from being killed.

In Chicago, Illinois, my city, there are only about 30 officers who have in excess of 10 citizen complaints against them. This police officer who was just indicted for the first time in the history of our city—only one police officer indicted for the murder of an unarmed Black man in Chicago—had 18 citizen complaints against him—18—mostly for excessive use of force.

Why was he even on the street? Why was he wearing a uniform? Why were our tax dollars being used to pay for his livelihood when he had no appreciation for the lives and the rights of American citizens 18 times?

He shot Laquan McDonald while Laquan was walking away from him. That is what the video showed. Laquan McDonald wasn't even within 20 feet of this police officer, now ex-police officer.

But he shot him 16 times, 15 times when Laquan McDonald was on the ground. He couldn't have threatened him at all. He fired 16 rounds, 15 of them while Laquan McDonald was on the ground. He fired 16 rounds in 15 seconds.

Forty-six years later we have these kinds of police atrocities occurring throughout the Nation. It is up to this body, Mr. Speaker, this Congress, to finally stand up and protect all of the people of this great Nation from these rogue cops who are roaming to and fro in our communities mercilessly, wantonly murdering our citizens, mostly Black and Latino young men and young women.

Mr. Speaker, I will be introducing in a matter of days a resolution to establish a permanent select committee on the excessive use of force by America's police departments, a permanent and select committee on excessive use of force by America's—yours and mine, the Members of this body—police departments.

Mr. Speaker, if we can have a select committee on Planned Parenthood and women's health, we can have a select committee on excessive use of force by America's police departments.

This select committee will be authorized and directed to conduct a full and

complete investigation and study and to issue a report and recommendations of its findings to the House of Representatives regarding each of the following:

Number one, a uniform definition of excessive use of force;

Number two, create national guidelines on excessive use of force;

Number three, collect accurate and reliable data on police shootings and use of excessive force, both lethal and nonlethal;

Number four, implement and create a national database to make available public data of citizen complaints filed against police officers and departments;

Number five, include demographic data on police officers involved in shootings in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program;

Number six, require mandatory FBI reporting of police departments on the number of justifiable homicides committed by those departments;

Number seven, create effective training methods and mental counseling of police officers to increase their understanding of the word "threat" and weed out any indication of racial animus and hostility;

Number eight, create adequate training for police officers dealing with mentally ill persons.

Yes, we have mentally ill patients and police do not know how to deal with them. Under this resolution, this select committee will require training for our Nation's police to deal with mentally ill patients.

Number nine, require transparency of internal police discipline and police accountability;

Number ten, report to this Congress on the rising cost of lawsuits and settlements that are indicative of problematic policing and civil rights violations and civil rights abuses.

This is the resolution that I will be introducing over the next few days, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by repeating something that I said last year, and I intend to repeat this throughout the remaining days of my life.

□ 1430

The murders, the political assassinations, the cold-blooded murders of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark on December 4, 1969, will not be in vain.

The murders of American citizens, particularly young, unarmed African American boys and girls, Hispanic American boys and girls, other minorities, unarmed mentally ill Americans, unarmed White Americans, these murders by America's police agencies must come to a screeching halt. Justice demands it. This Congress ought to promote it.

This Congress, this esteemed body, ought to protect all of our citizens. We have to show and demonstrate, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that just because you have a badge, you wear a badge,

just because you are dressed in a uniform, just because you have a gun, with a license to arrest and detain, just because you have those assets, those powers, you do not have a right, the authority, the power to commit cold-blooded murder. And don't believe, not for 1 millisecond, that you will continue to get away with it.

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

JUST ANOTHER DAY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today, like so many Americans, we are in utter disbelief that our country is once again left reeling after yet another horrific massacre of innocent Americans. There is grave concern that this has become the norm.

In fact, this is how the BBC characterized the shootings in California yesterday:

Just another day in the United States of America—another day of gunfire, panic, and fear. This time in California.

But it could have been, as it was last week, in Colorado, or in Arizona, or Oregon, or South Carolina, or Nevada, or Wisconsin, or D.C., or in Georgia, where it also transpired.

In the capital city of Connecticut, in Hartford alone, there have been 28 deaths this year as a result of gun violence.

In 11 days, we will be passing and observing the third anniversary of the mass murder of schoolchildren and their teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

In the 3 years since that tragic day in 2012, when many thought, "Well now, finally now, this innocence, this slaughter of innocent children, surely there will be change. Surely the United States Congress will take a vote. Surely Congress will respond. They will take a vote. They will take action," but as we did then, we will do next week. We will stand in silence, a respectful and heartfelt silence, for victims of what happened in California and Georgia just yesterday. It is something this Congress repeats in such a way that the BBC characterizes it as just another day in America.

In the 3 years since that tragic day in December, in fact, there have been an additional—additional—1,000 mass shootings in the United States of America. One thousand mass shootings in the United States of America—that averages almost a mass shooting per day—and yet not a single vote, not a vote. Irrespective of where you stand on the issue, in the great Chamber

where the country looks to for leadership, not a single vote.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put up this chart that I think graphically displays what has been going on in this country to illustrate a point—a sad point, no matter how you view this chart.

Between 2001 and 2013, guns killed more people in the United States of America than AIDS, illegal drug overdoses, wars, and terrorism combined. Gun violence has taken more individuals than all these other tragedies and calamities combined.

Far more Americans have faced and, as the families of victims, they hear the remorse, they hear the platitudes, they observe the moments of silence and the laying of wreaths, but there is no action that comes from the United States Congress. These statistics should stagger anyone who reads them and compel Congress to take action, any action, to address this epidemic of gun violence.

Now, I say “any action.” Whether you believe, as I do, that we should have commonsense, universal background checks so that we keep guns out of the hands of criminals, the mentally ill, and terrorists on a watch list, this is common sense. This is what I believe the Nation should be doing, and I believe, frankly, so do a majority of people in this Chamber and throughout this country, but we have yet to take a vote. We have yet, though there are bills on the floor, though they are bipartisan. At least the Senate, in a bill sponsored by Senator JOE MANCHIN, Senator PAT TOOMEY, put forward a reasonable proposition.

Whether you believe that it is a panacea or not or that it will somehow help, or maybe not, aren't the citizens of this country, aren't the families of the victims entitled to a vote? What do we owe our constituents if not a vote?

If the United States Congress continues to remain silent, as it has, I submit, we are complicit in these deaths every time we remain silent and every time we take no action.

It doesn't take a lot of courage, frankly, to vote. We are protected in this building by police. We are surrounded by armed guards. There is nothing that threatens any Member of Congress from doing his constitutional responsibility to vote.

What takes courage is what Officer Garrett Swasey did just last week, giving his life in the line of duty, defending and protecting people under siege.

□ 1445

Mr. Speaker, do you want to talk about terrorist threats? There is real terrorism happening in America every day: more than 1,000 mass shootings since Sandy Hook, deaths on our streets due to gun violence.

We could rush in a matter of days to this floor when an outrage occurred in Paris, rush to this floor in days with legislation to deal with refugees, and yet, in our own country, in our own cities across this Nation and throughout

our States, can we not have a vote in Congress?

I recognize and respect the fact that people will disagree and perhaps think that background checks are not necessary or won't solve the problem. Maybe that is true. I don't believe so. But aren't we entitled to a vote? Aren't those victims of those families entitled to a vote? Do their voices mean anything?

If the vote fails, the body will have spoken, and if the vote succeeds, this body will have spoken also and will have an opportunity to see its results and observe it.

Mr. Speaker, that is how this great body works. To be denied the opportunity to vote only, in my mind, makes us further complicit to the tragedies that are happening all across this country.

Another day in America, another day of gunfire, panic, and fear. How about a day where Congress actually votes, where Members actually stand up and are accountable for what they say they believe in so no matter how you feel on this issue—and I truly respect people who disagree with me.

But I would like to have the opportunity to vote the conscience of my constituency and the beliefs that I deeply hold. It would seem to me that, in this day and age, in this body, we ought to be able to do that.

I recognize that there are probably not many people listening to my remarks right now, and I realize that Americans are incredibly frustrated with the United States Congress in general because of its inaction on so many levels.

But I urge anyone who is listening across America, whether you are opposed to universal background checks or you are in favor of them, to call their Representatives and demand of them before they go home to enjoy the Christmas holidays, before we adjourn, that we take a vote on this issue. Demand that we show you where we stand on commonsense background checks.

If you really believe in your position, what is there to hide from? We need to take a vote. Americans need to know where we stand. This isn't a profile in courage; this is our responsibility.

This issue has been looked at, it has been studied, and it has supporters on both sides. There is a discharge petition on the floor, but, frankly, this bill ought to be brought to the floor and voted on.

It should be voted on in the Senate Chamber. It is my understanding that HARRY REID will include it as an amendment. The Senate then will have voted twice, and the House remains silent. We need to vote.

In this body, in this great Chamber, I would much rather be known by the votes I have taken than the speeches I have made, the press releases that have gone out, and the 30-second sound bites that will follow. I would like to be known, as I believe all Members of this body would, for the votes I have taken

standing up on behalf of my constituents.

Above the podium of the Speaker, there is a famous quote from Daniel Webster, and I paraphrase that quote. Webster asked aloud of all Members of this body whether, in our day and generation, we will perform something for which we will be remembered. I ask this body for a vote for which we will be remembered.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

SELF-DEFENSE ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it was 2 years ago this week that a precious life was cut short tragically. Kari Renee Hunt, a resident of Marshall, Texas, was murdered by her estranged husband in a hotel.

They were in the hotel room. While the estranged husband was assaulting Kari, her 9-year-old daughter, while witnessing the murder, did what most parents teach their kids to do in an emergency. She dialed 911—and got nothing.

Because what this precious 9-year-old—and the family hasn't used her name publicly, so I will not either—what the precious girl didn't know is what a lot of folks dialing 911 in that situation wouldn't know, that you have to dial 9 before you can dial 911. In order to dial the 911, you need to dial the 9 prefix in order to get an outside line.

Mr. Speaker, she didn't know that. She was desperately trying to get help to save her mother before the assault turned into murder. She never got help, not in time.

Kari's father, Hank Hunt, has worked tirelessly to try to get something done. The State legislature in Texas has enacted a law, but from the Federal Government end, we can make it universal across the country.

I do thank my friend Kevin Eltife for his work in the State legislature.

Mr. Speaker, our bill is a little different. I was surprised to find out that, actually, most of the time, there is no cost whatsoever to requiring that a phone be furnished to a business or a home or anywhere where there might be a need to punch 9 to get an outside line—there is no cost to having a default that you can dial 911 without the prefix, and it will go straight to the emergency help.

Once I learned that, it became clear there was no reason not to have a law that just tells providers, provide the phone so that the default when you dial 911 is to get emergency help, that