

we stood in front of the Mickey Leland Federal building with Christians alike. Arm in arm we prayed. But I just stood back and listened to one Muslim representative after another come and proclaim their patriotism and denouncing the violence and distortion of their faith.

A young imam who had just moved from New Jersey just moved me. He began to articulate the elements of the Koran: benevolence and love. As a 25-year-old, he stood up to denounce this violence. That is the kind of American partnership that we need.

When we concluded that meeting, we had a press conference and vigil. We said that we would form a task force. I encourage Members throughout this body to have task forces on this very issue: How can we help?

Then as the President spoke—I want to thank him, for maybe people were not listening—the President was very clear that he is going to take the hunt and hunt down terrorist plotters to any country where they are. The President also indicated he will continue to provide training and equipment to Iraqi and Syrian forces and work with friends and allies to stop ISIL's operations; and with American leadership, the international community has begun to establish a process and timeline to pursue cease-fires and a political resolution to the Syrian war. Our President is focused. The Congress needs to be focused.

Yes, we need to be able to put forward legislative ideas, not contentious. No terrorist should have the ability to get a gun. Therefore, we should pass this bill that indicates that any terrorist on the terrorist watch list should not be able to buy a gun in the United States of America. I have legislation in the Judiciary Committee that we are preparing to come to the floor: no-fly for foreign terrorists, stopping them in their tracks, from wherever they come from, from getting on any plane coming to the United States of America. That is not hostility. That is saying to the American people we care. As they say in the community: We have got your back.

Then we must go back to the alert system, Mr. Speaker. We did it after 9/11. We understand the Secretary is offering that thought, the red alert. It is interesting that I thought about that, to give the American people some sense.

But let me finish, Mr. Speaker, by simply saying that I love this country. What a wonderful set of principles in the Constitution. And I want to say to the American people that, with our God, with our faith vested in a higher power, and the knowledge of democracy, we are going to withstand, survive, fight, and have a better nation. I know that that is the better way, not demagoguery and condemnation of a faith. I would never do that.

MASS SHOOTINGS

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, last week's shooting in San Bernardino, California, happened to be the second shooting of the day and the 355th of the year, equating to more mass shootings than days in the year. The social media pages of some of the most influential leaders in Congress expressed sympathy, thoughts, and prayers to the victims and their families. But what many failed to express was a commitment to act on this issue to make mass shootings and horrendous gun violence a far less common instance in America.

While no grand solution exists to end all gun violence, we know from the experience of other countries that a combination of small but practical policy solutions can severely reduce it. But Congress continues to choose inaction.

Last week, immediately following the devastating news coming out of Paris and San Bernardino, a majority of Members blocked the House from even debating bipartisan legislation to close the outrageous loophole that allows suspects on the FBI's terrorist watch list to buy guns. It may be hard for some to believe, but in the U.S., individuals on the Federal terrorist watch list are shockingly still not prohibited from purchasing firearms.

Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, this means you can be on the terrorist watch list, considered by the Federal Government to be a potential risk to the national security of the United States and be prohibited from boarding a plane, but still have the ability to walk into any Walmart around the country and purchase a semiautomatic weapon.

Current Federal law prohibits nine categories of dangerous people from purchasing or owning firearms; suspected terrorists on FBI watch lists, however, are not one of them. I don't have to explain to Members of the House the growing terrorist threat that this country is facing from lone-wolf extremists which are often unpredictable and incredibly difficult to thwart. Even just one unsophisticated lone-wolf extremist with a gun can do a remarkable amount of damage.

This isn't some sort of theoretical threat either. A GAO investigation found that individuals on terrorist watch lists successfully purchased guns 1,321 times between February 2004 and December 2010. And that was before the rise of ISIS and their persistent social media campaign to recruit homegrown terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, I have worked with Congresswoman LOWEY in the Appropriations Committee on a commonsense amendment to allow the Attorney General to deny firearms sales to individuals known or suspected to be involved in terrorism. Unfortunately, our attempts to pass this amendment in committee have been rebuffed every time. But this week, we have an oppor-

tunity to change that. This week, we can show our enemies, intent on destroying Americans and our way of life, that Congress cares more about protecting the safety of its citizens than it does about the gun lobby by finally closing this terror gap in our gun laws.

The American people, gun owning and not, overwhelmingly support responsible, commonsense gun reforms. If this isn't the definition of responsible and commonsense reform, I don't know what is. There is also widespread support specifically among gun owners for closing the gap. In 2013, a survey found that 80 percent of non-NRA gun owners support prohibiting people on the terrorist watch list from obtaining guns. Mr. Speaker, 71 percent of NRA gun owners support prohibiting people on this watch list from obtaining guns.

It is naive to think that al Qaeda and ISIS are not paying attention to what is happening here in Congress. Fixing this loophole is simple, responsible, and the right thing to do for public safety. Let's not pass on this critical opportunity to close a dangerous loophole that threatens our national security.

□ 1030

HOMEOWNERSHIP

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an issue that is incredibly important. It is probably the number one issue going on in my district today. And that is the whole issue of housing: housing, and the opportunity to own your own home, to provide a safe haven for your family, to build wealth.

You see, owning your own home for almost everybody in our country is the first rung of the ladder of wealth creation. Yet today, that dream—and it is a dream for many of our citizens, particularly those in the Latino and minority communities—is just that, a dream. Latinos, like all Americans, are committed to building a better and stronger future for their families and for their communities. It starts by becoming a homeowner, to own a piece of America, to have a real stake in America.

That is one of the reasons homeownership is so important. It is important because it creates wealth—as I said, the first rung on the ladder for people to have an investment. It creates social stability. It creates a haven for the family, for family get-togethers. A home is really one of the most important assets for a family to have. Owning a home has far-reaching consequences in our economy for communities.

This fall, I had the opportunity to be a keynote speaker at a bipartisan leadership forum on achieving the American Dream, hosted by First American

Financial Corporation, who is headquartered in my district. I was joined by many of my colleagues, including Representative LINDA SÁNCHEZ, Representative EMANUEL CLEAVER, former Governor Luis Fortuno, industry leaders, and community activists.

The decision to become a homeowner is one of the most important decisions, and it commits a person. It commits a family. It commits us towards getting to the middle class. For people in the bottom 40 percent of annual income level, wealth creation is almost exclusively in homeownership.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, “the primary residence represents the largest asset category” in our country, accounting for 30 percent of our Nation’s total assets. The importance of homeownership is even greater for the middle class: 62 percent of the median homeowner’s assets and 42 percent of their total wealth lies in their home.

Not to mention that access to home equity, being able to pull out some of that equity you have built up, provides families with financial stability when there are financial stresses going on in the family. It is an emergency fund in some cases, and it helps to start a business, it helps to fund college for our children. Homeownership is a key to creating stable, economically successful households and to provide security for existing and future generations.

Households with wealth are able to weather financial shocks and increase upward economic mobility for themselves and for future generations. In fact, analysis provided by First American’s Chief Economist, Mark Fleming, highlighted homeownership trends based on household formation rates among Latino and African American Communities. The research identified the importance of homeownership-based wealth formation as the key, the key to wealth creation for middle- and low-income Americans. Providing Americans with equal opportunity to pursue that homeownership is a challenge, and it is very challenging in the Latino, African American, and other minority communities.

This last recession of 5 or 6 years—this really terrible, difficult recession for so many people—saw in the Latino community two-thirds, 66 percent, of the wealth across our Nation within the Latino community went away.

I hope that my colleagues will help us in building back to homeownership for all of our communities in America.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

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

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in recognition and acknowledgement of Restoration Tuesday and to recognize the 60th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. There has been, Mr. Speaker, a renewed

and relentless assault on our sacred right to vote in the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

Since elections are held on Tuesdays, my colleagues in the Democratic House caucus and I have declared that every Tuesday that the House is in session shall be declared as Restoration Tuesday. So I stand before you and this august body today in hopes of giving a voice to those who have been excluded from our political process. My hope is that all the Members, Members from both sides of the aisle, will join me and over 140 Members of this august body in supporting the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

This Voting Rights Advancement Act not only restores the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but it advances it. It gives more protection to more people in more States and is, indeed, what our Founding Fathers would have wanted when they declared that our electoral process would be fair.

I think that the events of last week—we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in my district, in Montgomery, Alabama, last week. The Montgomery Bus Boycott—the 381 days when people refused to sit and use the buses in Montgomery, breaking desegregation of the bus systems in Montgomery—it stands forever as a powerful testimony of the will of disenfranchised people to work collectively to achieve extraordinary social change.

Sixty years ago, Mr. Speaker, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus, and her bold stand against racial discrimination sparked a city-wide boycott. I was in Montgomery to commemorate that occasion, along with several Members of this House. I want to thank Congressman BUTTERFIELD and Congresswoman CORRINE BROWN for joining me last week in that celebration, along with Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who forever stands as a beacon, a reminder of what it takes to show strength in the face of discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I say to all of my colleagues, what will we do to progress this wonderful legacy of social change and democracy? So many average, ordinary Americans have stood up for that proposition in the face of tremendous adversity.

So it is my hope that on this Restoration Tuesday, we will remember their legacy, the legacy of Americans who stand up for social change, and we will do what we know is right to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We can do that today, Mr. Speaker, by joining with all of the 140 or so Members of Congress who have already signed on to the Voting Rights Advancement Act; by remembering that on Tuesdays across this country, people go to vote, and they should do so without barriers, knowing that their polling stations will not be changed, knowing that if they are disabled, they will still be able to get into the ballot

box in order to vote. It is so important that we all recognize that modern day barriers still exists to voting, Mr. Speaker.

Mere words are not enough to restore the vote to millions of Americans who have wrongly been shut out of the Democratic process. The voice of those excluded cannot be unheard. The Voting Rights Advancement Act that I introduced alongside Representatives JUDY CHU and LINDA SÁNCHEZ contains a modern-day formula that will determine jurisdictions which should have Federal protections, Federal pre-clearance requirements.

I stand here before you to call on Congress to pass this bill to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We cannot return to the days where only some votes matter. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, all voices, all votes matter. Our vote is our voice, and our voices must be heard.

DENY GUN SALES TO SUSPECTED TERRORISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, Federal law prohibits nine categories of dangerous individuals from purchasing a firearm. This includes convicted felons, domestic abusers, and the seriously mentally ill. Yet, while we prevent those on the terrorist watch list from boarding planes, they are welcome in gun stores.

The Government Accountability Office found that between 2004 and 2014, individuals on terrorist watch lists tried to purchase guns or explosives 2,233 times. Of those attempts, 2,043, an astounding 91 percent, were approved.

Terrorists are knowingly exploiting this gap. In fact, in 2011, Adam Gadahn, an American-born member of al Qaeda, issued a video urging violent followers to exploit weaknesses in U.S. gun laws.

Adam Gadahn was not alone. In 2009, Daniel Patrick Boyd was arrested and charged with conspiring to murder U.S. military personnel at the Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia. Boyd, who was under investigation by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, had amassed an arsenal of assault rifles and had even traveled to the Middle East to meet with militants to plan future attacks.

It is impossible to hear these facts and not think of the recent horrific attacks in Paris. France has extremely strict gun laws, so it is likely that the terrorists in question turned to black market sources for the weapons they used. But here in the United States, suspects on the terrorist watch list can legally purchase firearms. It simply doesn’t make any sense at all.

That is why I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1076, the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act. This bill, along with an amendment that I have introduced in the Appropriations Committee, would give