

Mr. Speaker, Mere is now reunited with her husband of 45 years, Dick, and two of her children, Penny and Christopher. Though Heaven has gained her, we have not lost her; and we will never lose her, for she is rooted in our hearts and in our memories now and forever.

Mere is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Patience and Charles Flick; her son, Richard; and her three loving grandchildren, Penny, Bonnie, and Willis Flick.

May God bless and keep Mary Caldwell Plumer in His bosom.

TERRORIST WATCH LIST LOOPOHOLE

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my Republican colleagues to approve the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, which would prevent individuals on the terrorist watch list from buying weapons here in the U.S. This legislation has been blocked from coming to the floor for a vote nearly a dozen times over the past 2 weeks.

Most Americans find it mind-boggling that we continue to allow individuals deemed too dangerous to fly to buy weapons in the U.S., guns designed to kill as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to fix this loophole and protect our citizens, to find some courage and put the safety of the American people before the politics of the gun lobby.

Mr. Speaker, if Republicans truly have concerns over how the terrorist watch list is constructed, then they should offer an amendment to fix it. But more than 2,000 suspects on the terrorist watch list have already bought guns in our country. We don't need to add to that list. We need to act right now.

WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

(Mr. MCKINLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of three West Virginia State football champions, all of which are from the First District of West Virginia: Head Coach Josh Nicewarner and the Indians of Bridgeport High School on their third straight Class AA championship title; and from Magnolia High School, Head Coach Josh Sims and the Blue Eagles on their single A championship title; and for the first time in school history, Chris Daugherty and the Wheeling Park Patriots on the Class AAA championship.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am told by my astute research staff that, except for States with one Representative, this is the first time in American history that

all three high school champions have come in a single year from one district. So I challenge my esteemed colleagues, Mr. JENKINS and Mr. MOONEY, from the other districts of West Virginia, to match that title next year.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America was founded upon freedom, democracy, and liberty, and America must perform its role as an advocate and as a defender of these values.

Today, more than 140 prisoners of conscience are currently imprisoned in Vietnam due to their political views and activities. These activists are victims of constant mental and physical harassment and oftentimes are forced to endure unsanitary prison conditions.

Activists, including Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, Dang Xuan Dieu, and Ho Duc Hoa, were falsely tried and imprisoned simply for practicing their right to assemble.

This year, in November, Burma, a country known for its horrendous human rights record, held its first free election, yet Vietnam continues to function as a single-party system. Today, on International Human Rights Day, I urge Vietnam to finally open up its society and to empower its people.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS GALLAGHER

(Mr. KATKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Thomas Gallagher, an honorable public servant who passed away earlier this week.

Following his service in the United States Air Force during the Korean war, Thomas earned an undergraduate and master's degree while simultaneously pursuing his career in law enforcement and raising a family.

Thomas joined the New York City Police Department in 1957 and went on to serve the city for 37 years, rising all the way to the rank of assistant chief.

Mr. Speaker, Thomas Gallagher was the son of Irish immigrants. From a very early age, he learned the importance of hard work and selfless dedication to his family and the community. Though he endured many tragedies in his life, including the loss of all three of his wives to various diseases, he never lost his zeal for life. He was often

buoyed by the great pride he held for all three of his children, who rose to become great successes in law, business, and the Secret Service.

Thomas personifies the great American spirit. Not only did he persevere through trying times, he prospered. His was a life well lived, and I feel truly blessed to have known him and his great family.

May God now hold Thomas in the palm of His hand.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR JOHN ARTHUR RASSIAS

(Ms. KUSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life of a truly extraordinary Granite Stater, Professor John Rassias, who passed away last week in New Hampshire at the age of 90.

Professor Rassias was a lifelong Granite Stater, a World War II veteran, and an internationally renowned language professor at my alma mater, Dartmouth College. He developed the Rassias method, a revolutionary way of teaching languages that includes rapid-fire drills and dramatic flair, allowing students to be immersed in the language and culture.

He was an extraordinary mentor. His teaching style has been widely adopted at universities and institutions around the world, including in the Peace Corps, where Dr. Rassias was the first director of language programs in 1964.

His legacy extends far beyond simply teaching language. Dr. Rassias' deep commitment to cultural dialogue and understanding shaped the perspective of countless students and inspired them to make the world a better place. He will be truly missed by the entire Granite State and members of the Dartmouth community throughout the world.

PINKY SWEAR FOUNDATION

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, the pinky swear promise is a universal symbol to keep one's promise and one's word. For the Pinky Swear Foundation, keeping that promise means helping children who are battling cancer and their families.

The foundation's work was actually started 12 years ago, after 9-year-old Mitch Chepokas of Chanhassen, Minnesota, had been diagnosed with terminal bone cancer and, while in his hospital room, overheard others discussing that there would not be enough money for Christmas that year.

Mitch decided that he would give away all of his money to those families so they could celebrate the holidays, and he made his father pinky swear to continue to make sure that they will

help children with cancer after he was gone.

Today the Chepokas family has been joined by others in the community and around the country who have agreed to help keep this promise and help in the fight against cancer. The Pinky Swear Foundation has raised millions of dollars for different events for this cause.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Pinky Swear Day and a great time to recognize the wonderful work of this foundation. Mitch's bravery, selflessness, and heart continue to live on to help others.

MAUI FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, for 35 years, Maui Family Support Services has been helping to build strong, healthy families on Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

Last year alone, the organization assisted over 5,000 people in need, which included: making 4,466 home visits; helping 136 people access mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence services; and providing developmental screenings for 953 children.

Additionally, thousands of people have gone through the organization's programs for early childhood development, teen substance abuse prevention, and fatherhood involvement, helping to build and strengthen local families and communities.

One in eight children in Hawaii lives in poverty, and it is organizations like Maui Family Support Services that play a critical role in making sure that our keiki and local families get the support and services they need.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to this great organization for the service that they have provided for over 35 years.

□ 1215

RECOGNIZING DANIEL LYONS

(Mr. REICHERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, you may know, and others may know, and may have heard about the wildfires that swept through central Washington this past summer, destroying many homes, lives, wildstock, and livestock across Washington State. Tragically, they also took the lives of three brave firefighters.

On August 19, 25-year-old Daniel Lyons, who is also a firefighter, was with his friends and partners, Richard Wheeler, Andrew Zajac, and Tom Zbyszewski, when their vehicle was overcome by flames. Daniel made it out of the fire truck alive but suffered burns over 60 percent of his body.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Daniel. After he

had spent 3 months undergoing treatment at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, he has a positive attitude about life, and is excited about his opportunity to continue to serve.

This young man still wants to be a police officer. He lost his fingertips in this fire. He still believes that he—and I know he can do this, and I want to be there for him—can accomplish his goal of continuing to serve as a police officer in the State of Washington.

As a former cop of 33 years, I could not be more proud of Daniel. He is a real-life hero. I will always remember his friends and partners.

LET'S HAVE A MOMENT OF ACTION

(Ms. SPEIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, Faisal Shahzad was already on the no-fly list when he attempted to bomb Times Square in May of 2010. If he had decided to walk into a gun store that day, he would have walked out with a gun in hand. Fortunately, Shahzad's bomb failed to go off. But had he, instead, purchased a military-style weapon that day, it could have been very different.

It is absolutely against common sense that suspected terrorists can walk into a gun store and purchase any firearm that they would like. They can't walk onto a plane, mind you, but they can purchase a military-style assault weapon and wreak havoc on a community.

Seventy-seven percent of the American people believe we should close this loophole. The Republicans have an option. A bill by their Republican colleague from New York (Mr. KING) would close that loophole.

I ask my colleagues on the Republican side to listen to Mr. KING and the American people and not to the NRA and the gun manufacturers. We have had enough moments of silence. For once, let's have a moment of action.

STUDENT VISA SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss important legislation that will help keep our country safe.

In light of recent tragedies across the globe, our national security has been at the forefront of our minds. As elected officials, we have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect our Nation. That is why I reintroduced H.R. 4089, the Student Visa Security Improvement Act, to further address potential threats to our national security.

It is clear there are significant gaps of vulnerabilities that must be addressed in our student visa program.

This bill would provide additional scrutiny for foreign students and exchange applicants, and put mechanisms into place to ensure students are in this country for their intended purpose, rather than to do us harm.

My legislation will safeguard our universities, communities, and our Nation. I urge my colleagues to support this very important piece of legislation.

CLOSE THE TERRORIST GUN LOOPHOLE

(Mr. HUFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed bipartisan legislation to better protect our Nation by making our Visa Waiver Program more rigorous. That is because we recognized, on a bipartisan basis, that legal loopholes that make Americans less safe must be closed.

Why can't we bring that same spirit to commonsense gun violence legislation? That is a rhetorical question because I think we all know that the gun manufacturing and sales industry and their puppet, the NRA, have a stranglehold on the Republican majority in this Congress that has kept Congress silent for years on this issue, but that silence will no longer be tolerated.

More than 2,000 suspects on the FBI terrorist watch list have legally purchased guns in the United States in recent years. Thankfully, one brave Republican has dared to confront the gun lobby by introducing a bill to close this loophole. I demand a vote on that bill.

Americans are tired of hearing thoughts and prayers in response to mass shootings. They are sick of our regularly scheduled moments of silence. Our silence has become the problem.

Americans want action to address the gun violence epidemic in this country. There is no better way to start than the bipartisan bill prohibiting suspected terrorists on the terrorist watch list from stockpiling assault weapons.

Let's have a vote on H.R. 1076. It is time to end Congress' shameful silence on this critical national security issue.

RECOGNIZING VALOR CHRISTIAN'S STATE CHAMPION FOOTBALL TEAM

(Mr. COFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Valor Christian High School football team.

On Saturday night, the Eagles rallied to a 29–26 victory over Pomona to capture the State title for the sixth time in seven seasons.

The comeback victory achieved by the team is a testament to their character and tenacity. The players stood