

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

strong, and their victory in the final minutes is a credit to the determination and commitment of the entire team and Coach Rod Sherman.

It is an honor to highlight the accomplishments of these young men, who finished the season 12-2 and established an impressive 30-1 playoff record.

I would also like to recognize the championship game MVP, junior quarterback Dylan McCaffrey, who led the team on two touchdown drives in the final minutes to win the comeback victory.

Again, congratulations to the Valor Christian High School football team on their impressive season.

GUN VIOLENCE

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stop the silence and to encourage and stress that my colleagues need to take action to expand background checks and to close the loopholes. I will continue to stand here and fight, and I will not be silent.

While many of my colleagues have spoken about the loophole that allows terrorist suspects to purchase guns, we have many other loopholes that present a danger to the safety of Americans and our homeland.

Since the enactment of the Brady Act in 1994, the law has stopped nearly 2.5 million guns from being transferred to individuals legally disqualified. However, despite the success of this law, it does not apply to 40 percent of all gun purchases.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of Americans favor universal background checks. It is well past time for us, as Congress, to reflect the will of the people that we represent, to pass legislation to expand background checks, and to close the loopholes.

Stop the silence. We must do what the people sent us here to do, and that is to take action.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Human Rights Day.

Sixty-seven years ago today, December 10, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration set out a common understanding of the fundamental human rights that were to be universally protected.

Today, we recall the inalienable rights intrinsic to every human being. In many regions of the world, people continue to struggle to attain the most basic rights and respect for their basic human dignity. In several regions of the world, defenseless civilians face at-

tacks by terrorist organizations and networks that seek to intimidate, maim, and kill in the name of a distorted theology.

I join my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) and people everywhere in reaffirming our commitment to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration, and urge all leaders to redouble their efforts to promote and guarantee them.

I also want to thank the human rights defenders everywhere, who so often carry out their work at great risk to themselves and their families.

NO GUNS FOR SUSPECTED TERRORISTS

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to speak about weapons of murder and terror.

Mr. Speaker, suspected terrorists should not be able to walk into a gun store and come out with weapons of murder and terror.

As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to keep American families safe. To not bring the bipartisan bill, H.R. 1076, to the floor for a vote is to deny us the opportunity to keep our families safer.

This bill, H.R. 1076, is sensible and straightforward. If you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to buy a gun. If you are a suspected terrorist, you should not, Mr. Speaker, be able to buy a gun. I will say it today and tomorrow and repeatedly: if you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to buy a gun. We should not have guns and weapons of murder and terror.

I will no longer be silent. Mr. Speaker, we should no longer be silent. Let's transcend partisan politics and uphold our promise to keep American families safe.

SAN BERNARDINO VICTIM, SHANNON JOHNSON

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Shannon Johnson.

On December 2, our country witnessed the worst terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11. On this horrific day in San Bernardino, California, 14 people were tragically killed.

Mr. Shannon Johnson was one of the people whose life was cut short that day. His friends and family say he enjoyed laughter, conversation, and music. He believed in the greatness of love, equality, and kindness, and treated others accordingly.

On December 2, Mr. Johnson, who was a native of Jesup, Georgia, in the First Congressional District, displayed the ultimate act of heroism and sacrifice by shielding fellow coworkers

from a hail of bullets. His last words were: "I got you."

Mr. Johnson died a hero. My thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family. I hope we may all recognize and never forget the acts of sacrifice that Mr. Johnson and others have made to protect the ones we love.

THANKS TO THE SPEAKER

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my profound appreciation to the Speaker for his recent acknowledgment that he expects the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act to be part of the omnibus bill.

I thank Leader PELOSI for her steadfast commitment and leadership in support of this important lifesaving legislation.

I am grateful to every single Democratic Member of this Congress, all of whom are cosponsors of this important legislation, and the many Republicans who are sponsors of this bill. All of them have helped us to live up to our commitment that: "We will never forget."

Heroic first responders and survivors of 9/11—men and women from all 50 States and nearly every Congressional District—will now be able to breathe a little easier, and will certainly have a much happier holiday season when this bill is finally across the finish line. This is how Congress can, and should, work in a bipartisan way, doing the right thing more often.

Happy holidays and Happy New Year. Now, when do we vote on this important lifesaving legislation.

□ 1230

REESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BELARUS

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution calling for reestablishing full diplomatic relations between the United States and the nation of Belarus with the focus of exchanging ambassadors between our countries. This resolution recognizes that the Government of Belarus has reached out to the West and has improved political conditions in their own country.

For example, the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe monitored the recent Presidential election in Belarus and noted the progress made in establishing a more democratic and open system.

Another example of Belarus' positive action is that it played a significant role in bringing about a cease-fire in Ukraine. It did this by hosting immense diplomatic talks between all