

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 acknowledgement 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. ROHRABACHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROHRABACHER. 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

parties to the conflict. This was a major contribution toward restoring peace to that region.

Furthermore, on October 22 of this year, Belarus released all of its very few political prisoners.

In response, the European Union and the United States have temporarily lifted economic sanctions. Hopefully, that temporary suspension of economic sanctions will become permanent as Belarus continues to improve its standing.

Exchanging ambassadors, as my resolution calls for, is a major step forward in the right direction. I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, which I will submit to the Congress right now.

COMMONSENSE GUN REFORM

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because passing commonsense gun legislation should really not be a partisan issue. What our country needs is commonsense gun reform, but many in this Chamber won't even take the first step: taking guns out of the hands of terrorists.

Time and time again, Republicans have voted to block debate. Let me say that again: a debate. They won't even let us discuss Congressman PETER KING's Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, otherwise known as H.R. 1076. That is simply outrageous. We should debate, yes, and we should vote up or down on this important bill.

This bill, which I am proud to co-sponsor, would close a dangerous loophole that allows individuals on the government's no-fly list to legally purchase guns. Let me emphasize this. These are people who are deemed too dangerous to fly on planes, but they can and do purchase guns. If they are too dangerous to fly on an airplane, why aren't they too dangerous to have a weapon that fires 800 rounds per minute?

My Democratic colleagues and I remain committed to blocking dangerous individuals from buying guns, and we remain committed to stopping the senseless violence that has already taken too many lives in this country. It is past time to listen to the American people and not to the NRA.

REFORMING AMERICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago I returned from the White House, where President Barack Obama signed historic reforms for elementary and secondary education into law.

I was proud to serve on the conference committee that was respons-

sible for settling the differences between the House and the Senate versions of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which has replaced No Child Left Behind.

This is legislation which has been years in the making and which will finally put the control of education back into the hands of our States, our schools, and, of course, our parents and teachers across the Nation.

It also calls for the U.S. Department of Education to study how title I funds are distributed. I have long been concerned that children are put at a disadvantage based on the populations of their school districts rather than on a concentration of poverty. I am hopeful that this study will make the argument for a more equitable method of distributing these funds to areas that are deeply affected by poverty.

This is a bill that I believe will make a real difference for students across the Nation. I was proud to see it gain overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

AMERICA'S GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, we were elected to protect and serve the American people against all enemies, foreign and domestic. One of the best ways that we can uphold this sacred duty is to deal with the gun violence epidemic that we have in America, which claims the lives of more than 11,000 people each year.

One of the things that we should be doing is passing legislation to prevent individuals who are on the FBI's terrorist watch list, because they are suspected terrorists, from being able to purchase guns. To me, this seems to be a no-brainer.

If you are not able to fly because you are a suspected terrorist, you should not be able to purchase an AK-47, an AR-15, or another weapon of mass destruction which is not used to hunt deer, but is used to hunt human beings.

It is time for House Republicans to stop functioning as wholly owned subsidiaries of the NRA. It is time to cut the puppet strings from the gun lobby. It is time to do the business of the American people and pass sensible gun violence prevention legislation.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT IS NOW LAW

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

This legislation passed the House and the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law today by the President. Education is

not a partisan issue. At a time of political gridlock, I am proud to see both bodies and both parties come together to improve our education system.

The Every Student Succeeds Act repeals No Child Left Behind, gets rid of 49 wasteful and ineffective programs, and eliminates the Secretary of Education's coercion of States into adopting Common Core standards.

Most importantly, this legislation gets Washington out of our local classrooms and it restores control back to the school districts, teachers, and parents. These are the folks who know what our children need to succeed, not bureaucrats who are thousands of miles away.

As the son of two educators, I know that the future of Georgia's 12th District education system belongs in Georgia, not in Washington. As a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I am proud to see the Every Student Succeeds Act as the law of the land.

UPHOLDING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, given the challenges we face today with the economy and the labor force, I have watched since December 2 so much dishonesty on this floor concerning the actions on December 2 and the ability for terrorists to purchase weapons automatically.

FBI Director James Comey told the Senate Judiciary Committee that every time someone buys a weapon it is run through the FBI and they are notified if someone is on the no-fly list.

I am a little concerned with the other side of the aisle as they keep talking about having to protect our public when, in turn, they are taking away the Constitution of our Nation.

If the FBI is sent this information, it is reviewed. If the terrorists are actually buying weapons and walking the streets, they should be arrested, but they are not.

You can get on the no-fly list. I personally have been on the no-fly list. It took me 6 months to get off of it. They didn't tell me who put me on it, why I was put on it, and what it was the result from. Six months.

Yes, I am an NRA board member. But to have people say that terrorists are running around buying guns is an outright lie. I will say that on the floor. It is not true. It is part of the Constitution. We should uphold the Constitution.

When coming into office, I swore to uphold the Constitution. What they are talking about doing is against the Constitution. I will fight until my dying breath to make sure that we have the ability to retain the Second Amendment.