

fate does not wait for the individuals and families the government is currently rounding up.

Along with other Members of Congress, I am seeking answers from Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson as to why this policy is needed, why it was launched to instill fear in immigrant households over the Christmas holidays, and why family detention centers I have been trying to close are now filling up with new families awaiting deportation.

This is not the Democratic Party's solution to immigration questions, nor should it be America's. We expect heated calls for raids and deportation from the other side. We hear their calls for walls, bigger jails, and further restrictions on legal immigration. We will fight their efforts to erect religious or economic barriers to who can qualify for a chance to come to America.

Our party has rejected those calls with good reason. Americans want order and legality in immigration, not deportations and families forcefully split apart or exiled. We do not need to repeat that scene multiplied by hundreds or thousands of times across our Nation.

What we need to do is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. We need to take steps to solve the problems of gangs, weak and corrupt governments in Central America, and people who have no hope for a brighter future right here on our continent.

Serious aid is more than giving more money to the police departments of those countries. It is more than putting U.S. personnel in those countries to tell moms and dads, no, you can't seek refuge in the U.S. It is more than working with Mexico at its southern border. We need to give mothers and fathers and children a way to live in their own countries.

I have gone to the detention centers in Texas and met with the moms and the kids who were detained there when they came to the United States. One woman summed up their plight concisely by saying: LUIS, in Honduras, my family and I could live in poverty, but we could not live in peace.

Raids will not bring her peace. Raids will not bring us order. Raids will only bring misery.

TEACH ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a growing problem in the United States: Employers across our country have millions of job openings but are unable to find workers with the skills needed to fill those jobs.

According to a recent study by CareerBuilder, nearly 50 percent of employers nationwide cannot find skilled workers to fill open positions. Many of these jobs are located in lucrative ca-

reer fields like welding, emergency medical response, electrical engineering, robotics, and carpentry.

This gap between employers and our workers is holding our economy back; it is exacerbating our unemployment problem; it is hurting our communities; and it is placing unneeded pressure on our families.

The American economy needs qualified workers with the skills and drive necessary to fill these open jobs. I believe part of the answer to how we address this problem is career and technical education. Career and technical education, or CTE, is simply education that specializes in the skilled trades, applied sciences, information technology, and similar disciplines.

Career and technical education occurs in schools across America. In my home State of West Virginia, about 65,000 students each year participate in CTE courses. Those who do are much more likely to succeed. Over 80 percent of West Virginia participants meet industry-driven performance requirements for the technical skills they receive, and 95 percent go on to additional postsecondary education, the workforce, or the military.

I hear about CTE all the time as I travel across my district in West Virginia and visit schools and community colleges. I have seen the classrooms and the students whose eyes light up when they show off their work. I have spoken to the faculty and administrators who have committed their careers to training up a next generation workforce, and I know that just a little more support will make a huge difference.

While there is no silver bullet to our Nation's unemployment problem, additional investment in CTE is one way to help put people back to work and grow our economy.

The skills provided by CTE are some of the most highly sought-after skills in our economy today. But ironically enough, these are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States because of the lack of adequately trained individuals. According to a recent study by the Manufacturing Institute, over 2 million manufacturing jobs will go unfilled in the next decade because of the skills gap.

I believe we can help. That is why I joined with seven of my colleagues to introduce H.R. 4263, the TEACH Act, also known as the Technical Education and Career Help Act.

My bipartisan bill will invest in our CTE programs by providing new resources for the technical education teachers without authorizing any new spending. My bill will authorize the Higher Education Act's teacher residency grant program to be used to help schools recruit and train high-quality CTE teachers. This is currently not allowed.

My bill will increase the quality of training that students receive by recruiting midcareer professionals in relevant technical fields. Having teachers

with real work experience in the fields that they teach will ensure students receive the best training.

I would like to thank Congresswoman KATHERINE CLARK for cosponsoring this bipartisan bill with me, along with Representatives ROD BLUM, BRUCE POLIQUIN, TOM MACARTHUR, JIM LANGEVIN, PETE AGUILAR, and AMI BERA.

Our bill has been endorsed by a broad group of experts, including the Alliance for Excellent Education, the American Federation of Teachers, the Association for Career and Technical Education, and the Future Farmers of America.

My bill is an example that Republicans and Democrats can work together. My bill will help provide new hope to our communities by equipping hardworking West Virginians and all Americans with skills they can actually use.

We need to invest in career and technical education now or we will miss out on this important opportunity. I encourage my colleagues in the House to support the TEACH Act and consider the important difference it would make across our great country.

GUN VIOLENCE AND THE PATH FORWARD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, traditionally we start the new year on a note of hope. Notwithstanding troubled headlines and difficulties home and abroad, the new year is an opportunity to consider the future afresh, to reflect on opportunities, past accomplishments, and new opportunities.

I appreciate President Obama beginning the new year with a continued focus on gun safety. His modest proposal was greeted with predictable opposition and scorn as some Republican politicians attempted to distort it all out of proportion and to change the subject to a nonissue: confiscation of the guns of law-abiding Americans when, in fact, virtually all responsible American gun owners support reasonable background checks to make it more difficult for people we all agree should not be armed to get guns.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have been the response in today's superheated, contentious political climate with the efforts of a generation ago to reduce the carnage on our highways from unnecessary auto deaths or the hundreds of thousands of people who became addicted to cigarettes and died of cancer and heart disease. There would have been screams of outrage about the nanny state and political correctness, that the government was going to take cigarettes away from people because it knew what was best for them. It was going to force people to pay unconscionable levels of tax that would fall on the poor, that a

more aggressive auto engineering program was the government telling the private sector and the consumer what was best for them, that it would drive up the cost of automobiles, and that it would have law enforcement interfere with people having an innocent drink on a night on the town.

Most telling would have been the argument that this really wouldn't make any difference, that none of these steps would stop people from smoking or reckless driving on the roadways. People would still die.

Those excuses for inaction are demonstrably false a generation later. We have cut the rates of adult smoking in half and saved millions of lives. The carnage on our highways has been dramatically reduced and American families are safer.

It is important to have perspective going forward. Yes, there is no single solution to gun violence. But the fact remains that the United States is unique among developed countries, being unable to protect our families from unacceptable levels of death at the hands of the deranged or the careless.

There are things we can do to make a difference, and the public is willing to accept them. I begin this new year hopeful that we don't have to accept Capitol Hill as an island of denial, whether it is the threat from climate change or the potential to do something about gun violence to make our families safer.

Last year, there were times when we in Congress came together and produced some constructive results. At the State and local level, people are not waiting for our Republican colleagues to come to their senses to deal with carbon pollution or gun violence. They are taking action.

I am hopeful that we will be able to broaden the conversation about what, in fact, we can do: tone down the rhetoric and find steps on issues that are both contentious and even those where there is basically no disagreement but we simply haven't gotten around to taking action.

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There are clear opportunities for us to broaden that agenda. We can avert a crisis in Gaza from a lack of water and adequate sanitation. We could pass Representative MURPHY's bipartisan mental health bill. We could link food and farm policy with new awareness and research.

Let's not in 2016 have the opportunities for cooperation and progress drowned with political vitriol. Let's cooperate where we can, focus on solutions even where we can't, and set the stage for giving Americans what they deserve: a government not in denial, a Congress willing to cooperate and to face problems, large and small, so as to make progress rather than to revel in discord and hyperbole in order to win votes in contentious primaries. Let's focus on what we can get done and do

it. We will feel better, and the American public will be better served.

RECOGNIZING HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize January as Human and Sex Trafficking Awareness Month.

Mr. Speaker, let's call sex trafficking what it is. It is modern-day slavery that exploits our society's most vulnerable. Unfortunately, sex trafficking is the fastest growing business of any organized crime in the world. This isn't a faraway problem. In the United States, it is an estimated \$9.8 billion industry and, sadly, children aged 12 to 14 are the largest at risk for sex trafficking. This is absolutely disgusting.

Last year we passed important legislation aimed at stopping sex trafficking, but the fight is far from over. It is our collective obligation to do everything that we can to put a definitive end to this modern-day slavery, which is why we must come together as a country, we must come together as a Congress, to do everything we can to stop this disgusting crime.

MENTAL WELLNESS MONTH

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mental Wellness Month.

To this point, our government's approach to mental health has consisted of ineffective and disjointed policies. Too often, those in need of care end up either in jail or on the streets because adequate services are simply not available.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which would help the Nation's broken mental health system and care for those who are most in need.

This bipartisan bill would improve effectiveness and efficiency in Federal programs that help people, with a focus on early intervention and prevention programs in addition to suicide prevention. I want to thank my friend TIM MURPHY for his leadership on this bill.

I am glad that the administration this week recognized the importance of mental health programs in reducing gun violence, but we need a long-term legislative fix if we are really going to make progress on solving the mental health crisis in our Nation.

That is why, in recognition of Mental Wellness Month, I call on my colleagues to pass this bipartisan bill and to stop playing partisan games with people's lives.

WAUKEGAN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Waukegan High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this week.

Waukegan's program is the oldest JROTC program in the Nation. It was created before the national JROTC pro-

gram was instated in late 1916. Its initial purpose was to prepare high school young men for military service during World War I. This organization has come a long way over the past century, as half of the cadets of this 777-member corps are young women.

The Waukegan High School JROTC offers a curriculum not only of military training, but also of good leadership and citizenship skills. Students receive an education of flag and military structure, self-discipline and guidance on personal, financial, college, and career planning. Of the 777 cadets, 75 percent go on to postsecondary education and 10 percent serve in our military.

Congratulations to the Waukegan High School JROTC for this program and for leading and being a strong and positive representative for our Waukegan community.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S GUN VIOLENCE EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud President Obama's executive actions taken this week to reduce gun violence in America. These policies will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and dangerous individuals and will prevent gun trafficking, while also protecting the Second Amendment rights of responsible, law-abiding citizens.

With over 30 Americans killed by guns every single day, inaction is not an option. In my nearly 3 years in Congress, House Republican leadership has refused to do anything on gun violence, not one hearing, not a single vote.

In facing Congress' inertia, President Obama did what was necessary to address a threat to our long-term national security and economic stability. While we can't stop every criminal from committing every crime, we can take actions that will save lives, and President Obama's executive actions will do just that.

Under these commonsense changes, everyone who profits from the sale of firearms will be required to obtain a license. It shouldn't matter if you sell a gun in a store, online, or at a gun show. It is the sale of a dangerous weapon, and the seller should make sure the buyer is safe, responsible, and law-abiding.

It is a sobering fact that the majority of gun deaths in the United States is from suicide. Expanding Federal funding for mental health services and streamlining States' abilities to report data to the background check system are essential to keeping guns out of the hands of the dangerously mentally ill.

President Obama's executive actions make essential strides in advancing smart gun technology. If you can use a thumbprint to get into your iPhone, there is no reason that the same technology can't be invented so that guns won't fire without the right fingerprint. If a gun would only fire when it