

Bernardino, Columbine, or Oregon, and many places beyond? Guns must be restrained. The President's mission is correct—more data for secure technology, more NCIS data in order to run through those background checks appropriately.

Remember Charleston, South Carolina? Remember the message? He got the guns because 3 days had passed. And he killed nine people worshipping in a church.

So it is important, Mr. Speaker, that Congress owns up to its own responsibility, not one that says the Second Amendment is being undermined. It is not. You can never undermine our Constitution. It is a procedural structure that we are not engaged in. We are only trying to provide a guidepost to save lives of children and families. I am looking forward to working with the Judiciary Committee in the House and the Senate to look at constructive legislation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am saddened that again we come on the floor with Planned Parenthood legislation that talks to the very heart of America, quality of health care, protecting women in terms of cervical cancer. This is a nonstarter. Vote against it. Protect American women. Protect families and children against gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, upon taking office, every Member of Congress makes a solemn pledge: to protect and defend the American people. This is the most important oath we take as elected officials—and, to honor this promise, we must do everything in our power to stem gun violence in our nation.

Yet, after another mass shooting and countless acts of gun violence in communities across our country every day, House Republicans are still unwilling to act to stop gun violence and save lives in American communities.

The Democrats have been calling for an immediate vote on the bipartisan King-Thompson Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act to strengthen the lifesaving background checks that keep guns out of the wrong hands.

This Congress has a moral obligation to do our part to end the gun violence epidemic. Now is the time for Republicans to join Democrats in protecting the lives of Americans by taking common sense steps to save lives.

The Administration is announcing two new executive actions that will help strengthen the federal background check system and keep guns out of the wrong hands. The Department of Justice (DOJ) is proposing a regulation to clarify who is prohibited from possessing a firearm under federal law for reasons related to mental health, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is issuing a proposed regulation to address barriers preventing states from submitting limited information on those persons to the federal background check system.

Too many Americans have been severely injured or lost their lives as a result of gun violence. While the vast majority of Americans who experience a mental illness are not violent, in some cases when persons with a mental illness do not receive the treatment they

need, the result can be tragedies such as homicide or suicide.

The Administration takes a comprehensive approach to mental health issues by expanding coverage of mental health services so care is affordable, launching a national conversation on mental health to reduce stigma associated with having a mental illness and getting help, directing funds we have now to improve mental health facilities, and proposing more funds be used for efforts such as training additional mental health professionals.

At the same time, the Administration is committed to making sure that anyone who may pose a danger to themselves or others does not have access to a gun. The federal background check system is the most effective way to assure that such individuals are not able to purchase a firearm from a licensed gun dealer. To date, background checks have prevented over two million guns from falling into the wrong hands.

The Administration's two new executive actions will help ensure that better and more reliable information makes its way into the background check system. The Administration also continues to call on Congress to pass common-sense gun safety legislation and to expand funding to increase access to mental health services.

#### PROGRESS TO STRENGTHEN THE FEDERAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

Over the past year, the Administration has taken several steps to strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which is used to run background checks on those who buy guns from federally licensed gun dealers to make sure they are not prohibited by law from owning a firearm. For example:

The President directed federal agencies to make all relevant records, including criminal history records and information related to persons prohibited from having guns for mental health reasons, available to the federal background check system. This effort is beginning to bear fruit. In the first nine months after the President's directive, federal agencies have made available to the NICS over 1.2 million additional records identifying persons prohibited from possessing firearms, nearly a 23 percent increase from the number of records federal agencies had made available by the end of January.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIONESTA DAM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Tionesta Dam, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, in Forest County.

This vital flood control project is estimated to have prevented more than \$570 million in flood damage over the past seven decades. The Tionesta Dam, located in Forest County, was officially dedicated on January 9, 1941, as a result of the Flood Control Act of 1936 and 1938. The dam itself is located on the Tionesta Creek just over one mile from the Allegheny River. It is key to

flood protection along the Allegheny and upper Ohio Rivers.

Mr. Speaker, this dam is so important that during the 1972 Tropical Storm Agnes, which caused damage all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is estimated to have prevented more than \$60 million in additional damages.

Today, the dam and the lake it created serves purposes beyond flood protection. Tionesta Lake and the area around it amount to more than 3,000 acres available for camping, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The lake itself is a hotspot for boating, water skiing, and other activities for families each summer.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Army Corps of Engineers for their years of work at the Tionesta Dam, and I wish the Park Rangers and staff the best for the future.

#### SAVING TREES IN THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of efforts by the Allegheny National Forest, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, in addressing invasive insects which are threatening the forest's ash, beech, and hemlock trees.

Invasive species are a major concern for national forests across the United States, with the emerald ash borer decimating white ash, the woolly adelgid affecting Pennsylvania's State tree, which is the eastern hemlock, and the beech bark beetle killing American beech trees.

In some areas in the Allegheny National Forest, steps are being taken to proactively manage and treat trees. Over the summer, I met with the local forest service and helped apply a woolly adelgid treatment to eastern hemlock trees. In other areas of the forest, the best approach is to harvest these trees while they still have value.

That is what is proposed across 4,000 acres in the forest, which includes high percentages of these tree species. The harvesting project itself will spread across the forest's four counties, adding up to a total scope of more than 100,000 acres.

I appreciate the approach of the Allegheny National Forest's personnel, their hard work, their dedication, and their continuation to advocate for such proactive management practices.

Now, I will continue to do what I can in the House and as chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee for Conservation and Forestry to help our national forests address these invasive species, which threaten both the health of the forest and the timber resources which helped build this Nation.

#### REVEREND CHRIS HADGIGEORGE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional

American and extraordinary human being who led with quiet strength, the Reverend Chris Hadgigeorge of Toledo, Ohio, who was laid to rest this week.

Father Hadgigeorge served the Toledo community so wisely and so generously for over a half a century, anchoring his service at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, which he helped to elevate from a church to a cathedral during his service. He was 91. What an incredible life.

Surviving are his beautiful wife, Presvytera Ann Hadgigeorge, who he married in 1948; daughters Pattie Senerius and Angie Bohland; son, William; sister, Presvytera Zafera Bartz; six grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters. He worshipped them all.

He was born in Youngstown, Ohio, to immigrants from the Greek island of Samos. When he was growing up, he served as an altar boy. When the family went visiting with friends, children asked what he would like to play and he said: "I would like to play church." So Father Chris would be the priest. As he said in a Blade interview back in 1998, he would marry his brother to one of the girls, and he would have a bag of marbles that he would use as his censor.

Father Hadgigeorge attended Holy Cross, a school of Greek orthodox theology in New England, and was ordained in 1948. He served as pastor in a broad range of communities, including Indianapolis and Detroit, before arriving in Toledo. How lucky we have been.

He served as pastor starting in 1960 and pastor emeritus after 1991, and he has been a leader for more than half of the North Toledo landmark church's existence. As I mentioned, it is now a cathedral due to his efforts.

He had such an influence beyond the congregation he so dutifully served. The pastor recognized the changing needs, not only of the congregation, but of the community, as he saw his own congregation transition from U.S.-born members whose forebears arrived decades ago to more recent Greek and Cypriot immigrants. As his son said: "I always called him a peacemaker."

He served as a board member of the Toledo Council of Churches and was active in the International Institute, building goodwill with every step and every word he uttered. He raised his article of faith far beyond the congregants of his own cathedral.

He planted his congregations' commitment in the heart of Toledo and maintained it there at a time when it was really needed, before the community had transitioned to the new century when it was struggling. He led his community to oversee renovations to the church building as it was elevated to a cathedral, including the construction of a beautiful educational center and the purchase of surrounding property, while supporting the parish leaders' decisions to stay put and not move, not suburbanize. He felt that that congregation should control its own destiny and to grow where it was planted.

Father Chris was enthusiastic when the parishioners decided to throw a festival in 1971. The Holy Trinity's Greek festival has become an annual affair in our region, bringing people back to the city and being so much a part of the revitalization of Toledo long before it was popular. He was a true leader. He was such a leader for us.

"There are many generations who knew Father Chris," said the Reverend Larry Legakis, who became Holy Trinity's pastor in July 2014. Reverend Legakis said: "For some of the people in their eighties, they remember working side by side" with Father Hadgigeorge. "Some see him as a father and a grandfather. And he was with us for so long, others see him as a great-grandfather." Personally, this Congresswoman sees him as a friend.

Our community is forever indebted to him, and the Greek American community he shepherded is an essential building block of the city of Toledo. We would be so much less without having their faith-filled commitment.

May his family draw strength from his beautiful life and from the lessons that he taught us and from the city that he loved and the cathedral to which he gave his life. May his family be blessed and may he rest in peace.

I would like to place in the RECORD as well the obituary that was printed in the Toledo Blade this week.

[From The Blade, Jan. 3, 2016]

THE REV. CHRIS HADGIGEORGE (1924-2015): ORTHODOX PRIEST UNIFIED GREEK COMMUNITY, PARISH

(By Mark Zaborney, Blade Staff Writer)

The Rev. Chris Hadgigeorge, a leader of what is now Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, as pastor and pastor emeritus, for more than half the North Toledo landmark's existence, died Thursday in his Sylvania Township home. He was 91.

He died in his sleep, his son William said. The cause was not immediately known. He had surgery recently to replace a heart valve and put in a pacemaker, but he did not appear ill and took part in liturgies at Holy Trinity for much of December.

The Holy Trinity community was organized in June, 1915, and has worshiped at its distinctive home on Superior Street north of downtown since 1919. Father Chris arrived as pastor in 1960.

"There are many generations who knew Father Chris," said the Rev. Larry Legakis, who became Holy Trinity pastor in July, 2014. "For some of the people in their 80s, they remember working side by side. Some see him as a father and a grandfather, and he was with us for so long, others see him as a great-grandfather."

Holy Trinity was consecrated as a cathedral in 1966, "because of his leadership," said George Sarantou, a former parish council president.

Father Chris oversaw renovations to the building and the educational center and the purchase of surrounding property while supporting parish leaders' decision to stay put.

"He felt we should control our own destiny," said Mr. Sarantou, Toledo finance director and a former member of the city council. "He was a good solid leader who understood what our needs should be. He got the job done with his quiet but effective leadership. He knew how to motivate people."

Father Chris was enthusiastic when the parish threw a festival in 1971, and Holy

Trinity's Greek festival has become an annual affair.

"He loved the city and the community. It was home," his son said.

The pastor recognized the changing needs of the congregation, from the U.S.-born members whose forebears arrived decades ago to more recent Greek and Cypriot immigrants.

"He was a great unifier in the Greek community. He could work with all groups, young and old," Mr. Sarantou said.

His son said: "I always called him a peacemaker."

"I'm speaking as a son now," William Hadgigeorge said. "He would never lecture me about God's way. It was always the right way; do the right thing, even when others aren't looking."

Father Chris retired as Holy Trinity pastor in 1991. Afterward, he was interim pastor of a Springfield, Ohio, church for several months but stayed in Toledo.

He was named a protopresbyter in the church by Archbishop Iakovos in 1973, and received the patriarchal cross from Patriarch Bartholomew in 2006.

Father Chris was born Aug. 3, 1924, in Youngstown, to Paraskevi and William Hadgigeorge, immigrants from the Greek island of Samos. He was an altar boy growing up and sang in the choir. When the family went visiting and friends' children asked what he'd like to play, "I'd say, 'Let's play church,'" Father Chris told The Blade in 1998. "And I would be the priest. I would marry my brother to one of the girls. I would have a bag of marbles that I used as my censor."

He was a 1942 graduate of Youngstown's East High School. He went to Holy Cross, a school of Greek Orthodox theology in New England and was ordained in 1948. He was a pastor in Indianapolis and Detroit before arriving in Toledo.

He'd been a board member of the Toledo Council of Churches and was active in the International Institute.

Surviving are his wife, Presvytera Ann Hadgigeorge, whom he married March 7, 1948; daughters, Pattie Senerius and Angie Bohland; son, William; sister, Presvytera Zafera Bartz; six grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

Visitation will be from 1-9 p.m. Monday in Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral, with Trisagion prayers at 7 p.m. A vesperal liturgy at 9 a.m. Tuesday will be followed by funeral services at 11 a.m. in the cathedral. Arrangements are by the Ansberg-West Funeral Home.

The family suggests tributes to Holy Trinity's memorial fund.

## SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, with the recent announcement of new policies to restrict firearms, President Obama has yet again used executive overreach to force his agenda on the American people. Congress has already rejected these policies in a bipartisan fashion, and this action is another example of the President overstepping his constitutional authority to circumvent the people's voices in Congress. The administration's assault on Americans' constitutional rights must stop.

Time and time again, our courts have defended the Second Amendment, and