

based on the false narrative that people don't want to work.

If my Republican friends were serious about getting people back to work and responsibly moving those who can work off of public assistance, their budgets would reflect that, but they don't. Republicans have offered no guarantees that vulnerable Americans will have access to job training programs that will get them back to work. Many job training programs are already stretched incredibly thin. If Republicans were serious, they would increase job training funding so that more Americans could get the help they need to get back on their feet. And, at every turn, they have resisted calls to increase the minimum wage. Work ought to pay in this country.

I sometimes wonder if my friends on the other side of the aisle have ever met working people who are living in poverty and who rely on SNAP for access to food. The truth is their neatly packaged rhetoric doesn't match the reality of those who are working to make ends meet.

We must reject harmful attempts to limit SNAP participation for our vulnerable neighbors and, instead, work on solutions to end hunger now.

SYRIA

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

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on May 1 of last year, I came to this floor to speak on behalf of the Syrian people. I called for stronger leadership from our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama, in the Syrian conflict. Specifically, I urged the President to establish no-fly zones to protect innocent lives. At that time, 200,000 Syrians had already died.

The administration has failed to act, and, today, Syria remains in crisis. The number of Syrians killed through the civil war has now doubled to 400,000. Many of these casualties are civilians: women, children, doctors, and teachers. So, Mr. Speaker, I come to this floor again to say that this slaughter of innocent human life must end, and it will not end unless the United States takes the lead fearlessly and immediately.

I meet regularly with Syrian Americans who live in my congressional district in Charleston, West Virginia. They have told me the stories of their friends and families in the city of Aleppo, which is a financial and cultural center in Syria. Aleppo is now on fire and under siege. Just last week, a civilian bus was the victim of an airstrike where 10 were killed, including three women and two children.

Sadly, this type of violence is a daily occurrence in Aleppo and elsewhere in Syria. Hospitals, markets, schools, bus stations, warehouses: none of these places are off limits for bombings and destruction. If America does not take immediate actions to end the current

humanitarian crisis, thousands more will die, and we will look back on this period of history knowing that America failed both the Syrian people and the cause of freedom.

We must move quickly to protect the innocent civilians who are under attack. This means America must use its influence to stop the current flurry of airstrikes on civilian areas, and Russia must be part of this solution. If America fails to lead in negotiating a cease-fire immediately, the catastrophic losses of life will continue.

We must accomplish a longer term cessation of hostilities, and we must allow the Syrian people free movement so that the innocent are able to escape harm's way. A no-fly zone must be established so that Syria is able to heal into a place that promotes justice and freedom for all citizens.

Does this photo of Syria look familiar? You may remember seeing similar destruction in Bosnia almost 20 years ago. This is Bosnia. The war in Bosnia in the mid-1990s provides a thought-provoking blueprint as we search for solutions in Syria. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1992, the region devolved into an ethnic civil war—first in Croatia, then in Bosnia. Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic began instituting a policy of ethnic cleansing by which whole populations were forced from their homes and were killed.

For 4 years, the United States remained passive in the conflict, but in the summer of 1995, under President Bill Clinton, America took decisive military action with a series of airstrikes that brought Milosevic to the bargaining table, that forced peace, and that, ultimately, removed Milosevic from power. Today, Bosnia and Croatia are flourishing countries and are top destinations for many international tourists. Here is Bosnia today.

We must apply these lessons of the war in Bosnia to the current conflict in Syria. The United States must take decisive leadership in returning long-term stability to Syria. Unless America and our allies are willing to use force, Russian and Syrian leaders will not respect us or have reason to negotiate peace.

To enable the citizens of Syria to live free from fear and to thrive, we must do at least three things: establish safe zones along Syria's border with Turkey; ramp up our efforts to train Syrian opposition forces who have proven they are not extremists; and help Syria institute a new coalition government. Peace in Syria is impossible while Assad remains in control. He has proven this point time and again by his reckless and evil use of chemical weapons and other cruel tools of war on his own people.

America cannot address the humanitarian crisis and restore long-term stability to Syria on our own. We must engage with our partners around the world who share a mutual interest in

the cause of freedom. But, no matter what, President Barack Obama must act now, or even more lives could be lost. I encourage my colleagues in this chamber to join me in this call to action.

ORLANDO SHOOTING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we should all be concerned with the killing of innocents. Let's start right here in America where we are under attack.

We are all still reeling from the horrific violence in Orlando—49 killed, more than 50 wounded. It is the worst mass shooting in American history. The killer was someone who, in his own words, identified with ISIS, a madman's fury directed at the GLBT community, who were slaughtered in a place of comfort, release, and joy. It was especially jarring because this has been an unprecedented period of progress for the GLBT issues on every front. New landmarks have been achieved.

While this outrage is tragic, horrifying, and frustrating, it is important that people understand that the advocates of GLBT equality and of a rational approach to gun safety are not going to stop in their efforts for reform. The unprecedented outpouring of support in the wake of Orlando ought to be a source of comfort and strength for the GLBT community as people everywhere reaffirm their support and stand in solidarity for full equality. Our Pride Parade in Portland this weekend is going to be larger and more enthusiastic than ever.

The equality tide is not going to turn, and the silly bathroom police in North Carolina is not where America is going or even where North Carolina will be in the future. While it seems gun violence continues unchecked by sensible gun safety laws, that tide, too, is poised to turn. We know what to do. No one needs an assault rifle to hunt; although it is very efficient to slaughter little children in school or people in a nightclub.

There are dozens of simple steps that can be taken to protect Americans, steps which are, in fact, supported broadly by the public, not just by the majority of Americans but by most gun owners themselves. We should start with universal background checks for all gun purchases. Someone on the terrorist watch list should not be able to purchase a gun; no fly, no buy. If we can personalize our cell phones so that others can't use them, we ought to be able to make smart guns so that others cannot use guns unauthorized.

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When somebody fails a background check, that ought to be reported to the authorities, who it was, and why.

We can repeal the inane prohibition on gun safety research that stops us

from treating the epidemic of gun violence like we would any other public health crisis. It is interesting that even the author of this misguided policy 20 years ago now realizes it was a mistake, and he has changed his mind and wants to overturn it.

Just like automobile safety, we can take dozens of small steps to reduce gun violence. Not eliminate it altogether, but we don't stop treating cancer just because some people die; so it is with our commitment to gun safety. If we can stop a few tragic acts, it is worth it to reduce the number of attacks and save lives.

We are poised for one of the most consequential elections in anybody's memory. Let's make it count. We have an opportunity to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the LGBT community. We can join with President Obama and Secretary Clinton for enlightened national leadership, stand with the LGBT community committed to making this tragedy a turning point. This is the year to deliver on full LGBT equality and commonsense gun safety.

ACADEMY APPOINTEES

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to recognize a group of remarkable young people from Pinellas County, Florida, who have excelled among their peers and answered the call to duty to serve their fellow Americans. These young men and women have tested and proven themselves academically, athletically, and physically, and have demonstrated the leadership skills necessary to now be offered appointments to one of our United States Service Academies.

It is an honor to recognize these young men and women from Florida's 13th Congressional District today.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point are:

Elizabeth Brown-Worthington of Gulfport, Florida, a graduate of Boca Ciega High School;

Andrew Buck of Tierra Verde, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg Catholic High School;

Sean McClair of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Osceola Fundamental High School and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School;

Tyler Mitchiner of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University and the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School;

William Moorhead of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Clearwater Central Catholic High School;

Patrick Prior of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Osceola Fundamental High School;

John Rusnak of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg Catholic High School.

Receiving appointments from Pinellas County to attend the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis are:

Connor Price of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University High School and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School;

Jared Price of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Palm Harbor University High School and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School;

Zack Quilty of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Jesuit High School; and

Ethan Singer of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Countryside High School.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy from Pinellas County, Florida are:

Brian Brown of Safety Harbor, Florida, a graduate of Countryside High School;

Dalton Collins of Largo, Florida, a graduate of Admiral Farragut Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School;

Joseph Gannaio of Clearwater, Florida, a graduate of Calvary Christian High School;

Thomas "Trey" Walker of Saint Petersburg, Florida, a graduate of Saint Petersburg High School.

Receiving appointments to attend the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy from Pinellas County, Florida, are:

Jackson Misner of Tampa, Florida, a graduate of H.B. Plant High School; and

Sofia Tucker of Navarre, Florida, a graduate of Navarre High School.

Finally, receiving an appointment to attend the U.S. Coast Guard Academy is Olivia Suski of Seminole, Florida, a graduate of Seminole High School and the Marion Military Institute.

These future cadets and midshipmen that we recognize today will be the future leaders of our military forces and our Merchant Marine. I wish them Godspeed in the challenges of their summer training and the academic years to follow.

These young people represent the best of America, and we each look forward to witnessing their future success and their service to country.

We, the House of Representatives, can have great confidence in our Nation's future as we entrust it to these appointees and those of my colleagues here in Congress.

ORLANDO MASSACRE

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, this is what our moments of silence have brought us:

A silent nightclub. The only sound is the frantic ringing of cell phones that would never be answered and silent bodies where there should be life, love, and pride. And, here, a silent Congress.

Mere words cannot express the depth of my rage and grief. Forty-nine lives lost in the middle of Pride Month when they should have been safe and celebrated. Forty-nine families devastated by the loss of their loved ones. Forty-

nine phones ringing and ringing and ringing.

There were also frantic texts, like Eddie Justice's final message to his mother: "Mommy, I love you. He's coming. I'm gonna die."

If you can hear these words without your heart breaking, if you can think of those little children gunned down in Newtown without breathing, if you can think of empty pews in Charleston without mourning, then truly you have lost your souls.

Hateful people like to compare LGBT equality to the sin-filled Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we here in Congress are the real Sodom and Gomorrah.

Are there not 218 Members here to stand against this bloody tide?

I ask you today: How many lives must be destroyed before Congress acts?

Nine lives? Charleston showed us nine is not enough.

Thirteen lives? Columbine showed us that 13 was not enough.

Certainly, 27 small children killed in their classrooms in Newtown? No, not enough.

The 32 lives lost at Virginia Tech, again, not enough lives. The more than 33,000 Americans killed each year by guns, not enough.

Now 49 people have been mowed down and murdered in Orlando, yet even this historic tragedy, the biggest mass murder since 9/11, hasn't been deemed big enough, horrific enough, or insidious enough to break the weak-kneed, spineless, silent Members of Congress.

Congress is happy to debate for hours about bathrooms, but bring up the gun violence killing of thousands? Absolutely not.

Radical Islam or homegrown American homophobia or a toxic stew of both may have inspired the Orlando shooter. No doubt we will learn about his disgusting motivations in the coming weeks.

But there are simple actions we can take right now, actions that would have reduced the deaths in Orlando as well as in Aurora, Newtown, San Bernardino, and at Umpqua Community College. All these killers use AR-15s. All of them used weapons of mass destruction.

First, let's make sure every gun purchase requires a background check rather than just 60 percent of gun purchases.

Why have we created a separate market for criminals, domestic abusers, and mentally ill?

Let's ban assault weapons that have time and time again caused mass bloodshed. The American people are too familiar with the AR-15, a weapon designed to hunt Americans in their most vulnerable places: the classroom, the movie theater, the nightclub.

Whether the would-be killers are Islamic extremists or American White supremacists or disgruntled coworkers, banning assault weapons would prevent mass bloodshed on the scale we saw