

teams that travel internationally and administer help to those in dire need by building churches and centers of refuge.

Mr. Speaker, I offer our deepest appreciation for the World Harvest Church's pastor, Mirek Hufton, a faithful follower of God and a man of the highest compassion. Our Nation is made better by, and we are truly blessed by, World Harvest Church.

SEPARATION OF POWERS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4768, which the House will consider later this week. This bill will prevent Federal agencies from using creative interpretations of law to expand their own authority.

In an ideal world, agencies would implement the law as Congress writes it. You wouldn't have judicial deference to agency interpretations of the law.

Unfortunately, we do not live in that ideal world. And rather than respect congressional intent, Federal agencies, especially under the Obama administration, have time and time again interpreted the laws in ways never intended in order to increase their own power.

The waters of the United States proposal and the Clean Power Plan, both rejected with bipartisan opposition, are just two recent examples of agency overreach.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that Congress remind these agencies that the people's elected Representatives, not bureaucracies, write our Nation's laws, not unaccountable bureaucrats or courts willing to go along with it.

CELEBRATING THE PENNSYLVANIA MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

(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, I rise today in recognition of the Pennsylvania Marine Corps League. The organization will hold its 71st annual department convention later this week in State College, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, the Marine Corps League was founded by Major General John A. Lejeune in 1923 and chartered by an act of Congress on August 4, 1937. Today, the Marine Corps League has a membership of more than 50,000 men and women and is comprised of honorably discharged, Active Duty, and Reserve Marines, including both officers and enlisted men and women.

I have the deepest respect for the accomplishments of the U.S. Marine Corps over the course of our Nation's history. The Corps was founded on November 10, 1775, and since then, those

who have served as marines have shared the unyielding commitment to protecting the lives of American citizens and the interests of our Nation.

Marines have served our Nation bravely since before the start of the American Revolution, proving their courage from the shores of Tripoli to the island of Iwo Jima and, in recent actions, in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the men and women from Pennsylvania and across our Nation who have served as United States Marines.

TIME TO ACT ON GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about an issue that is very alarming to many people across the country, an issue that saddens everyone, and an issue that, sadly, isn't being addressed by this Congress.

Last week, we lost 49 innocent lives in the worst mass shooting that our country has ever seen. Sadly, it is not an insulated case. Let me give you some numbers:

In the 3 years since the terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School, there have been over 1,100 mass shootings. More than 34,000 lives have been cut short by someone using a gun. The House of Representatives has held 30 moments of silence for the victims of mass shootings since Sandy Hook, and yet we haven't taken a single vote on legislation that would help keep guns out of dangerous hands.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is shameful. The American people deserve more than silence. The American people deserve a Congress that is willing to stand up and do whatever it takes to keep our communities safe. That starts by making sure that terrorists, criminal domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill don't have easy access to purchase guns in our country.

Today, suspected terrorists can legally buy guns in our country. Individuals who are on the FBI's terrorist watch list can walk into a gun store, pass a background check, and walk out with a gun or the guns of their choosing—and they can do it legally.

Since 2004, more than 2,000 suspected terrorists were able to purchase guns. More than 90 percent of all suspected terrorists who tried to purchase guns in the last 11 years walked away with the weapon that they went in to buy.

Now, in the wake of the horrific attacks in Orlando, Congress must make it a priority to keep deadly weapons out of the hands of suspected terrorists. There is bipartisan legislation that would prohibit those on the terrorist watch list from being able to purchase firearms in our country. This

bill is common sense. If you are too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy a gun.

It is long past time for the Republican leadership to bring that bill up for a vote. We also need to pass my bipartisan bill to require background checks for all commercial gun sales.

Background checks are our first line of defense when it comes to stopping dangerous people from getting firearms. We know that background checks work. Every day, they stop more than 170 felons, some 50 domestic abusers, and nearly 20 fugitives from buying a gun.

Unfortunately, in 34 States, criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill can bypass a background check by purchasing guns online or at a gun show. This is a dangerous loophole that needs to be closed.

Yesterday, Senate Republicans blocked consideration of no fly, no buy legislation and a measure to strengthen and enhance background checks. Now the Republican House is going on with business as usual, without giving the American people a vote to help prevent gun violence in our country.

If the Republican leadership agrees that suspected terrorists, criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill shouldn't be able to buy guns, they should give us a vote.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), the Member who represents Sandy Hook, where the Newtown tragedy took place.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to call on the U.S. Congress to call on this body, the United States House of Representatives, to do its job: to vote this week to keep guns out of the hands of would-be terrorists and to ensure that all commercial sales of weapons go through a background check.

Since the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in my district in 2012, more than 100,000 Americans have lost their lives to gun violence.

Think about that. Think about a town in your district. Think about where your mother lives. I think about my hometown of Cheshire, with 30,000 people. Three Cheshires lost. Every single person—children, parents, teachers, grandparents—lost to gun violence. And this House does nothing.

In the 3½ years that I have been here, we have not been allowed one single, solitary vote to take commonsense, bipartisan steps to help prevent gun deaths in this country.

Congress' silence, our failure to act in this House, and the refusal of the leadership in this House time again to allow a vote is wrong, it is shameful, and it must stop.

Since my colleagues', Senator MURPHY and Senator BLUMENTHAL, historic, nearly 15-hour filibuster last week, Americans from all walks of life have risen up to say, "Enough."

□ 2000

Enough sons and daughters lost, enough families torn apart, enough of

absurd loopholes that make it easier for people on the FBI's terrorist watch list to buy guns than it is for your 16-year old to get a driver's license.

Reforms to stop terrorists from purchasing guns and extended background checks to all commercial sales are commonsense, bipartisan solutions to help prevent gun violence and to save lives. Outside of Washington, these ideas aren't the least bit controversial. In fact, they are simply common sense.

The American people get it. The overwhelming majority of Americans support the no fly, no buy rule that would allow us to close this absurd loophole that someone on the terrorist watch list can go in and legally purchase a gun anywhere in America, and to have background checks on each and every commercial sale.

Yesterday, on Monday, a majority of Senators decided to protect the interests of the gun lobby, rather than protecting the American people.

Now is the time for this House to lead. The House has remained silent for too long, for far too many acts of gun violence that have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Americans.

It is unthinkable, unconscionable that this House would look to recess to celebrate the 4th of July, the freedom day, our Independence Day in this country, when we have yet to hold a single, solitary vote since Sandy Hook, when 100,000 Americans have died from gunshot wounds in 3½ years.

We must take up action. We must act this week. It is time for Congress to vote. It is time for Congress to act.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. I thank the gentlewoman for the compassion that she brings to this debate, and it is understandable. Having met with and spoken with many of the parents who lost their children at Sandy Hook Elementary School, to talk to them, and to have to tell them that yet another year has passed and the leadership in this Congress has refused, has refused to hold one single vote on any measure relating to gun violence, is just despicable and very, very sad.

I know that the gentlewoman from Connecticut goes home every weekend and talks with those parents and those community members who were shaken to their core to get that call that there was a shooting at an elementary school, and that their child was involved, and had to come down to that school and learn that their child was taken from them. It is unacceptable that we allow this to continue.

When Sandy Hook took place, I was asked by the minority leadership to chair a task force on gun violence prevention, and I took that on. I took it on for a couple of reasons: One, I know it had to be done; and two, I bring a unique perspective to this debate.

I am a strong supporter of the Second Amendment. I am a gun owner. I am a hunter. I have vast experiences with firearms, including carrying a military-type assault weapon for the tour that I served in Vietnam. I consider

myself a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, and would do nothing to take an individual's Second Amendment right away from them. As I say, I support it strongly.

I also believe that, as a responsible gun owner, I, and all of my fellow responsible gun owners, have a responsibility to answer this call, to figure out how we can put on the books laws that—while protecting the Second Amendment, while protecting an individual's rights to own firearms and use firearms for target practicing, collecting, hunting, or self-defense, we have a responsibility to make sure we keep firearms out of the hands of people who shouldn't have firearms.

Criminals and the dangerously mentally ill should not be able to have firearms. They shouldn't be able to buy them, they shouldn't be able to own them, they shouldn't be able to use them. And surely this Congress can come together and figure out a way to make certain that this doesn't happen, to the best that we possibly can.

Now I will be the first to admit there is no bill in the world that we can pass that will solve every issue related to gun violence. But doggone it, we should try. We owe it to our constituents. We owe it to those who lost loved ones through gun violence, and we owe it to the responsible, law-abiding gun owners of this country to try.

Now I thought we had the makings of a good proposal when I sat down with my colleague and my friend from New York, Republican PETER KING, and we put together the legislation, commonly referred to as "the King-Thompson Bill," to require that anyone who purchases a firearm through a commercial sale would be required to go through a background check.

You wouldn't think it would be necessary. You wouldn't think that anybody would want to sell a firearm to someone who may possibly be a danger to their community or to our society. But the fact of the matter is that there are people who sell firearms willy-nilly to anybody with the cash to buy them. And we need to step in and make sure that we stop willy-nilly from selling these firearms to criminals and the dangerously mentally ill, and that is what the King-Thompson bill does. It says that if you buy a firearm through a commercial sale, you have to have a background check.

Now anybody who buys a firearm in any of our 50 States through a licensed commercial dealer has to go through a background check. That is the floor. That is the minimum Federal law. Some States, however, don't go any further than that, which leaves this big loophole. It exempts individual sales, and some of those individual sales are commercial.

When you set up a table at a gun show and sell firearm after firearm after firearm, or when you go online and you list your firearms for sale as an individual, people can call and say: I want to buy that gun.

No background check needed because you are buying it from an individual. You can meet down in the parking lot of your local whatever store and you can make that transaction.

That needs to be stopped. Thirty-four States don't do anything about that. The King-Thompson legislation would do something about that. It would say that you have to first get a background check.

Now it is a bipartisan bill. As a matter of fact, there are 186 Members of this Congress who are coauthors of that bill. Five of them are Republicans.

Ninety percent of the American people believe that you should have background checks for commercial sale of firearms. Eighty-five percent of NRA members believe you should have background checks for firearms. They know that this is the first line of defense.

Again, it won't stop everything, but it does work. 170 felons a day, through the existing background check system, are stopped from buying firearms. We know it works.

Sadly, about 40 percent of all firearm purchases are done outside of federally licensed commercial sites, so 40 percent of the people who are buying guns today are able to avoid a background check. That is wrong. We ought to close that.

When we started the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, we met with everybody. I conducted the meetings. I conducted the hearings. We met with gun owner groups, we met with gun dealers, people who sell firearms, we met with gun experts, we met with people who are opposed to guns and people who are for guns. We heard from police, sheriffs, the Federal agency that deals with gun laws. We heard ad nauseam. We heard from the NRA. We brought everybody in, all the outside gun groups, to tell us what we needed to do. And without question, we came away from that with the understanding that background checks is the number one thing that we can do if we want to make a dent in this gun violence problem that we have. And we should have a vote on that bill.

Now, we know that it works. I told you that, but don't take my word for it. Look at the facts.

When Connecticut passed what they call their Permit to Purchase, which is a background check legislation, their State saw a 40 percent drop in homicides by firearms; 40 percent drop.

Now, conversely, at the same time, Missouri repealed Permit to Purchase, which led to a 25 percent increase in homicide by firearms.

Those numbers alone tell us that we need to do something. We need to do everything we can to keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. And, again, if you are dangerously mentally ill, if you are a criminal, if you are a domestic abuser, or if you are a terrorist, you should not be able to have a firearm.

It is this Congress' responsibility to do what we can. Background checks

are our first line of defense to making sure these aforementioned groups don't get their hands on firearms.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY).

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to drill down a little bit on the remarks of my good friend and colleague, Mr. THOMPSON, about why these two bills, why the no fly, no buy bill, and the expanded background checks, are so important and why they are so critical for this House to take votes on them this week; because keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous people—and let's remember who these people are: convicted felons, domestic violence abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill, and the no fly, no buy would add would-be terrorists to that list—I think is something the overwhelming number of Americans and, frankly, people living anywhere in the world would agree would make sense.

Keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous people not only makes sense, but it works. Since background checks were instituted, over 2 million purchases of guns were stopped by would-be buyers who submitted to a background check and it came back with a rejection saying, You are not authorized; and the gun was not sold. So it does work. It doesn't work perfectly, but it works.

And why does it matter that we expand background checks?

Well, let me tell you a little bit of something that I learned when I was elected to this job and the horrible murders happened in Newtown. I learned about the details of our present system.

When the background check system was put in 20 years ago, nobody bought guns on the Internet. In fact, most of us didn't buy much of anything on the Internet, but now we do. Now nearly 40 percent of the sales go through the Internet, and almost none of those go through background checks. That was surely not the intent of our colleagues 20 years ago. It just wasn't the way anyone bought anything.

Simply to keep up with the times, to reflect the way Americans purchase guns, ammunition, and everything else, we need to close the Internet loophole because it is not just gun shows, more importantly, it is the Internet.

But let's also understand what it means now to have this loophole. I am going to tell you the analogy that a former ATF official—Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms official—told me when I first started working on this issue, now 3½ years ago. He said this:

Elizabeth, imagine you arrive at the airport. People flew in today. Imagine you arrive at the airport, and there's somebody loaded up with a suicide vest and a gun standing next to you in line.

But there are two lines you can go to get on the plane. One of the lines is the one we're customarily used to. We put our things through, metal detectors, x-ray scanners, backscatter scanners.

But there's another line. The other line you can choose, and you could just walk

right onto the plane, take your gear with you. And if that gear happens to be bombs, if it happens to be a suicide vest, if it happens to be guns, you could just walk right onto the plane.

Now, I think we could all agree that that would be incredibly dangerous, incredibly irresponsible, senseless. And yet, that is the system we have right now for guns.

□ 2015

If you are a terrorist, if you are a domestic violence abuser, if you are dangerously mentally ill, and, most importantly, if you are a convicted felon, all you have to do is go online, or all you have to do is go to the gun show and go to the booth that doesn't list that it is a federally licensed firearms dealer.

Folks, that is just too easy. It is too easy for the bad guys to get their hands on guns. It is up to us to take action, the simple action of passing these two important pieces of legislation to close these loopholes.

Now, some will say it is too hard, this Congress is too gridlocked, and we can't get anything done, but I want to tell you what hard is. Hard is what Mark Barden does every day. Mark Barden's son, Daniel, was murdered in his classroom 3½ years ago, and Mark Barden gets up every morning. He tells me he can't even go and have breakfast with the rest of the family because that was his special time with his son. He can't do that now. It is too painful. So he gets up, he goes out of the house, he makes phone calls, and he does email because he can't be alone in his house with the rest of the family sleeping because his son is no longer there.

Mark Barden now is one of the growing number of American citizen activists, because this Congress has failed to act, these American heroes who fly around the country, pound the pavement, go to churches, synagogues, mosques, meet in schools, and go to chambers of commerce and plead with their fellow Americans to pressure this body, the House of Representatives, the people's House, to take action to defend the people.

What we do is not that hard, not compared to what Mark Barden does every day, not compared to the heartache of those in Chicago where you have dozens dying on a given weekend. Folks, it is not that hard. We can take the votes. We should take the heat, and we should act to save lives.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

She is absolutely correct. Our job is not that hard. Could you imagine that? On this floor, we are all parents; we have kids. Could you imagine losing your child? You send them to school, where they are supposed to be safe, and get the call that your son or your daughter has been murdered at school? That is hard. That is difficult.

What we are doing is not hard. It certainly shouldn't be hard for the Republican leadership to allow us to have a

vote on gun violence prevention legislation that would help prevent these things from happening. They just happen too often. Every day, 31 people are murdered by someone using a gun. Every day, 151 people are shot in an assault in our country. That is hard.

What is the Republican leadership afraid of? You are afraid to take a vote? Are you more afraid than the people that were in that nightclub in Orlando hiding in the restrooms hoping they wouldn't be the next one who was murdered? Are you more afraid than those children in the classroom in Newtown, Connecticut?

Give us a vote. Let's address this issue. It is shameful. There is nothing to be afraid of. We were elected to come here and do a job. Give us a vote.

Our Gun Violence Prevention Task Force I mentioned heard from every imaginable interest on this issue. We took what we heard, and we put it in this legislation.

The King-Thompson background check legislation addressed a whole list of issues other than just the background check provision. They were issues that were brought to us primarily by the NRA.

The NRA asked for specific things. They asked us to make sure that there was due process for veterans adjudicated as mentally defective before losing their firearms rights. We put that in the bill. There was a request to clarify that the submissions to the NICS system don't violate HIPAA, the medical protections for patients. We put that in the bill.

The NRA was concerned that the length of time that you have to wait in order to get your firearm after you passed a background check was too long, so we put in place a provision that reduces the purchase proceed timeline. Right now it is 3 days. Eventually, it would phase into being 24 hours, with the idea that the NICS system would have more complete records because the bill also allows the States to get grant funding to allow them to better get their information into the NICS, and our bill requires the Federal courts to put records into the NICS system.

The NRA said that hunting buddies shouldn't have to go through the background check. If you are at the duck club, your buddy wants to sell a shotgun, you want to buy it, you have been hunting buddies for a long time and you know one another, they said they shouldn't have to go through a background check, so we put a hunting buddies known person exemption into our bill.

There was great concern that this bill would lead to some sort of Big Brother list of any gun owners. Not only is that nonsense, but we took their concern and we raised them one. We added a 15-year felony for the improper storage of records by anyone in the government.

We also heard concerns that members of the armed services were conflicted.

They have a permanent home address and a permanent duty station request, and that complicated their effort to own and purchase firearms. We put a provision in the bill that said members of our armed services can count their home and their permanent duty station as their residences. We took care of all of these concerns. These are things that the NRA said they have been trying to fix for years. Well, we fixed it in the King-Thompson bill.

At the same time, we take a step to fix this terrible problem we have where people can buy guns without having a background check—the dangerously mentally ill, criminals, domestic abusers, or terrorists.

This is a good bill, as I said, with 186 bipartisan coauthors. This is a bill that should be passed. No one knows that more than the gentleman from New York, Congressman ISRAEL.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman and my friend. More than anything, I want to thank him for his leadership in being able to bring people on both sides of this aisle together on the commonsense notion that, if you can't buy a plane ticket, you shouldn't be able to buy a gun. If you are on the terrorist watch list, you shouldn't be able to avail yourself of a weapon.

Mr. Speaker, when 20 children were murdered in Sandy Hook, the district of the gentlewoman from Connecticut, I really believed that Congress was going to do something. What did we do? Nothing. When Americans were murdered in San Bernardino, I said, well, this time we are going to do something. What did we do then? Nothing. We do moments of silence, and we do not act. Enough silence.

We are here to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States and protect and defend the lives of the American people, and to allow lives to be mowed down, to allow our fellow citizens to be slaughtered and say that the solution to this is another moment of silence is unconscionable.

We came into session tonight, Mr. Speaker, and on Friday, the Speaker of the House will bang the gavel down and send Congress home for a week. In that week, so many more Americans will be killed by gun violence—so many more. To allow this Congress to take a week's vacation and do nothing on gun violence is unconscionable.

No bill, no break, Mr. Speaker. No bill, no break.

If the Speaker won't allow us to even vote on a bill, then we shouldn't be allowed to take a break and go home to our districts. For those who decide that they are going to leave here without even raising their voices in support of a vote, I don't know how you will defend that decision when you go home. I don't know how you will look your constituents in the eye and say: I have a week off, and I have done nothing to protect and defend my constituents.

I understand there are some real, fundamental, and profound differences on various potential solutions to gun violence. What this gentleman has done is brought us to common ground. No fly, no buy: 80 percent of the American people support no fly, no buy; 70 percent of NRA members support no fly, no buy; the vast majority of Republicans support no fly, no buy, along with Democrats and Independents.

The reason there is support for this bill is not only is it common sense, but as the gentleman just demonstrated, he and his bipartisan cosponsor, a Republican from New York, have worked out so many areas of disagreement to areas of agreement.

When the vast majority of the American people agree that terrorists should not be able to easily purchase guns, then the people's House should listen to the people. We should pass no fly, no buy, and we need to do it by the time we recess. No bill, no break, Mr. Speaker. I hope that our colleagues understand the importance of that.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for his spot-on comments, passionate comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the State of California (Mr. RUIZ). He is a colleague of mine from California. As an emergency room doctor, Dr. RAUL RUIZ not only understands that we need to pass this legislation, but he has seen the carnage that has come in for his care.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, Congressman THOMPSON, very much for his leadership and championing gun violence prevention in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in demanding that Speaker RYAN allow us to vote on measures to prevent gun violence before we adjourn at the end of this week.

Last week, we watched in horror as 49 of our LGBT brothers and sisters had their lives cut short at the hands of a firearm. This is not the first terrible slaughter we have witnessed as a nation. These mass shootings continue as Congress does nothing to act and nothing to keep our constituents safe.

As an emergency physician, I have taken care of too many patients injured by guns. I have had the gut-wrenching experience of telling parents, families, and friends that their loved one was killed by a gun. I have taken care of people who have been victims—innocent victims—of drive-by shootings. I have taken care of victims who have been shot by their spouse in a domestic dispute. I have taken care of victims who have been caught as bystanders in a violent crime at a store, and I have had the terrible experience of having to tell a mother that her child—her young, adolescent child—was killed in the streets. It is not something that we can ever be fully prepared for but we do way too often in our country.

These are needless deaths—needless deaths—because there is an oppor-

tunity right here and right now to curb the trend of violence in our country. This gun violence must end.

This week, we are calling on the Speaker to allow a vote so our constituents know where exactly we stand. There are several bills out there that would make a difference, including the bipartisan King-Thompson no fly, no buy that keeps guns out of the hands of terrorists and expands and strengthens background check systems.

If we can't agree on the fact that terrorists should not get their hands on guns in our country, then it is a political shame on the parts that are beholden to political interests.

Let's vote on the Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act, which would prohibit individuals convicted of stalking or domestic abuse from purchasing or owning a firearm; and let's vote on the bipartisan Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act, another bill of Congressman THOMPSON, which would improve the criminal history records systems, which would help our law enforcement and which would mandate that all commercial gun sales utilize this background check system.

□ 2030

It is not like we don't have ideas. It is not like we don't have a path forward to curb gun violence in America. There is no one cure-all.

If we take a public health approach, if we reduce the risk of the multifaceted aspects of gun violence, then we will reduce the risk of gun violence. By reducing the risk of gun violence, we reduce the incidence of gun violence in America.

Let us vote so that terrorists and violent criminals cannot access firearms, so we can prevent another Orlando. Let us vote to end gun violence to keep the American people safe.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in calling for no bill and no break.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his comments and for his service not only as a distinguished Member of this body, but his time as a medical professional. Sadly, he had to witness the carnage that comes about because of gun violence. I applaud his effort to help us reduce gun violence, to pass some commonsense laws that protect the Second Amendment.

As I said earlier, as a gun owner and as a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, I think that is absolutely necessary. I think it is absolutely irresponsible for any gun owner to not stand up and be counted when it comes to passing commonsense public safety measures, such as no fly, no buy and background checks for the commercial sale of firearms.

I thank my colleagues who joined with me this evening in this Special Order. You heard from everyone who spoke that moments of silence are not enough. We have had 30 moments of silence since the tragedy at Sandy Hook. It is not enough.

We need to stop being silent, we need to speak up, and we need to do our job. We need to show the courage that our constituents have placed in us. We need to do our job to make sure that when parents send their kids to school, they can be reasonably assured that their kids are going to be safe. We need to do our job so that when people go into a church to pray, they don't have to worry about some maniac coming in and shooting them during their prayer hour. We need to do our job to make sure that when people are relaxing and recreating in a club, or wherever it might be, they can feel reasonably assured that their Congress has taken steps to keep guns out of the hands of people who are criminals and people who are dangerously mentally ill, domestic abusers, or terrorists.

It is time to do our job. It is time to stop with the moments of silence. It is time to stand up, show some courage, and pass some commonsense, bipartisan gun violence prevention legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

TELLING SURVIVORS STORIES THROUGH THEIR OWN WORDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUSSELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about what occurred at Stanford University a couple of weeks ago and a follow-up to some of the events that occurred after that.

The victim in that case gave a powerful victim impact statement. It was 7,200 words long. Last week, 18 Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, led by JACKIE SPEIER from California, read the statement into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD: JACKIE SPEIER from California, KATHERINE CLARK from Massachusetts, DAVID CICILLINE from Rhode Island, NIKI TSONGAS from Massachusetts, MAXINE WATERS from California, BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN from New Jersey, JUDY CHU from California, ANNA ESHOO from California, MARK TAKANO from California, DEBBIE DINGELL from Michigan, MARCY KAPTUR from Ohio, TULSI GABBARD from Hawaii, TED POE from Texas, ERIC SWALWELL from California, LORETTA SANCHEZ from California, SUSAN DAVIS from California, PAUL GOSAR from Arizona, and ANN McLANE KUSTER from New Hampshire. It took almost an hour to read her compelling statement about what happened to her when the rapist, Brock Turner, committed this crime against her.

After the crime was committed, there was a trial. The case was not, as we say in the system, plea bargained. There was no plea agreement. It was an actual trial. After the trial, the judge assessed punishment for three felony crimes that he committed—that being Brock Turner. The judge assessed pun-

ishment as a misdemeanor of 6 months in jail, which means that Brock Turner will spend probably 90 days in jail, a half of a semester, for the crime that he committed against the victim.

As a former prosecutor for 8 years trying these type of cases and a judge in Houston for 22 years hearing only criminal felony cases, I have seen historically how devastating the crime of sexual assault is. We, as a community, need to understand how victims are impacted by this crime.

Obviously, the judge in the Stanford case didn't get it. You can read what he said. It is obvious that he was more concerned about the feelings of the criminal and his future than he was about the victim. He was almost dismissive of her statement that she read into the record.

There is a movement that is being started by a Stanford law professor, Michele Landis Dauber, whom I got to meet last week—very impressive, Mr. Speaker. She gets it. She understands about sexual assault, this crime especially at Stanford, and the impact on the victim.

She is using a recall system that is in California that a public official can be recalled if there are enough signatures on a petition to get the recall on the ballot. She is feisty, and she is going to get it done.

I admire the State of California for having recall of public officials. This is a perfect example of why other States ought to have recall of public officials, especially judges who don't get it right. In my opinion, the judge should be removed from office.

After I spoke on the House floor, and then 19 Members spoke a couple of days later on the House floor about this crime, I have received hundreds—hundreds—of contacts from sexual assault victims throughout the country, primarily by email. Some of these sexual assault survivors have never told anybody, according to them, what happened to them years ago or of recent years. Many of them just didn't get the justice that they deserved.

They didn't tell for a lot of reasons, mainly because they were ashamed. Rape survivors—God bless them—think sometimes the crime is their fault. And it is not, Mr. Speaker. It is never the fault of the victim. When a sexual assault occurs, it is the fault of the criminal every time—not most of the time, every time. Judges need to understand that.

The justice system needs to work for victims of crime just like it works for the accused citizen. The same Constitution that protects defendants protects victims of crime as well.

We have come a long way since the days I was prosecuting. Once again, California has led the national movement for victims' rights. My friend JIM COSTA from California and I head up the Victims' Rights Caucus. He was the sponsor of the Three Strikes sentencing law that passed in California.

California has a history of looking out for victims. I commend California

for that. I know that may shock you, Mr. Speaker, but I commend them for getting it right when it comes to victims.

In this particular case, it all went wrong. The victim articulated it quite well in her statement. I hope every Member of Congress reads the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD because the statement of that woman is in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Just read it. And, more importantly, if you are a dad, read it to your sons as well. I will come back to that in a minute.

I have four kids—three girls and a boy. I have 11 grandkids; 7 of them are girls. I sure don't want my kids and my grandkids to continue to grow up in a society that doesn't really take care of crime victims and is dismissive to them.

Of the many survivors that wrote me, several bravely offered to share their stories with me. I am here to read some of those stories. Not all of them, just a few. Some have asked me not to give their names. Some are anonymous. Some said it is okay for me to say what their name is. I am not going to tell their whole name. I am just not going to do that. I think they deserve that privacy. I hope, by sharing these words, the world will see what outstanding resilience these few sexual assault victims have had over the years. Jennifer writes:

It was January 2004. I was 24 years of age. I am a divorced mother of three elementary school children studying to become a preschool teacher. The man I loved came home drunk after wrecking my car. My children were upstairs asleep. He beat me, beat my head against the cement floor, and then he raped me as I tried to stay quiet, so quiet, so still, so he would leave and no one upstairs would wake up. He did finally leave.

My mother said that since I loved him, it wasn't rape. Because I got involved with a man who would do that, it was my fault, and I couldn't very well make him lose his job because of my poor judgment. I was young. I didn't know. To this day, I blame myself for letting it happen, even though now I know that none of it was my fault.

Because of that night, I have post-traumatic stress disorder. My body remembers, even if my mind doesn't know all of the details.

After reading the speech you made, I told my new husband about what happened to me. This was the first time I have ever told him. We have been together for 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, in all due respect to Jennifer's mother, Jennifer's mother was wrong. It was not Jennifer's fault that she fell in love with a worthless guy. And the sexual assault was certainly not her fault. It was his fault. He should have been held accountable for what he did. Jennifer still suffers to this day for what that individual did.

The rape—and we use the word “rape,” and we use “sexual assault.” “Sexual assault” is a relatively new term. It used to be called “rape” because that is a specific type of sexual assault. Sexual assault is broader. But rape is never the fault of the victim, and neither is sexual assault.

The defendant always has an excuse to blame the victim: “Well, she came