

struck at the heart of an LGBT community that, for generations, has been fighting for freedom, and it saw that freedom attacked.

Americans—all Americans—feel less safe now. Let's inject some radical common sense into this debate. We can ensure no fly, no buy while also ensuring due process and the Second Amendment. If we take the context of November—the narrative of a campaign—out of this, we can actually get this done. Let's listen to the 85 percent of Americans who disapprove of the job we are doing rather than go home and have a message of blaming each other. Let's go home and say we solved it together.

If H.R. 5544 is not something you can support, let's talk about how to improve it.

With regard to the proposal my friends on the left have had for 2 years, add due process, real due process. You will get the support. You will get the support on our side of the aisle if you add due process.

I say to my friends on my side of the aisle, let's lead on this issue. The American people are begging for leadership.

There is a community that is broken—a Nation that is broken—in the wake of Orlando. Let's honor the memories of those who are lost. Let's do right by the American people and do right by the surviving families. Let's do something.

NO MORE SILENCE ON GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, we have come to the floor today to demand action. We have come to the floor with JOHN LEWIS. When JOHN LEWIS speaks—the conscience of our Congress—America listens.

As the barbaric details of the massacre of people dancing at the Pulse nightclub were released, I grieved for those lost. I thought about their dancing and how the human species is the only species that dances. Maybe that is because dancing is a celebration of spirit. Whether you love the waltz, the dab, square dancing, disco, or raves, dancing connects us.

For the LGBT community, the dance floor is often the place at which acceptance and belonging come together. While the massacre of 49 people would have been horrifying and shocking wherever it had happened, it happened on the dance floor at a gay club. A place of refuge—where fear and intimidation give way to joy, acceptance, and belonging—was transformed by hate and cowardice into a grotesque barrow.

Many of our sanctuaries have been violated by gun violence. It is a grisly routine: first graders and their teachers shot in their elementary school; students and professors shot in their college classrooms; parishioners shot

after Bible study and fellowship in their church; social workers and disabled clients shot at a holiday party; our colleague shot while meeting with constituents; neighborhood sidewalks and parks transformed into blood soaked memorials.

Over the last 12 years, gun violence has claimed more American lives than war, AIDS, and illegal drug overdoses combined. Since Newtown, tens of thousands of lives have been lost to this deadly crisis. Yet the number of bills that have been debated and passed by this Congress to help prevent such deaths: zero.

Inaction is a choice. Inaction is costing lives. Today I am asking that this House have a vote, that we perform our basic responsibilities not only as Members of Congress, but as members of a community, and debate and vote on two commonsense measures to curb gun violence. I am asking for a vote on expanding background checks and on preventing suspected terrorists from being able to buy a gun.

The debate wages on on cable news, in our living rooms, on our Twitter feeds, and on Facebook.

Why can't the debate happen here?

There is no one solution to end gun violence or even to reduce it, but we have to try. This absolutist approach that we can't even vote on commonsense measures to help protect our families leaves us in a deadly arms race with ourselves.

Why is a vote so paralyzing? Is it special interests? Is it fear? Does the House leadership really believe that our Constitution and our liberties are so fragile that we have to tolerate carnage like we saw in Orlando or like we see on the streets of Chicago rather than risk a vote?

These two proposals have widespread support from the American people. Whatever your position on the substance of the bill, let's vote. Let's put it out there for people to judge. The American people get it. They understand that we can protect our constitutional rights and take reasoned steps to reduce gun violence. The American people understand that the two are, in fact, compatible under a robust democracy, not mutually exclusive.

Millions of Americans at home are worried and frustrated by this Congress' silence on this deadly epidemic. Without action, moments of silence cease to honor the thousands of victims, survivors, and families who have been devastated by gun violence. Moments of silence should be where action begins. Sadly, in this Congress, it is the only action that is taken. No more silence.

I urge the Speaker, before he sends Members home for the 4th of July, to have us vote on these two practical proposals. There is no holiday from gun violence for ordinary Americans. Our communities and our democracy deserve a vote so our children can dance again in freedom and safety.

COMMENDING DENNIS HEINDL FOR WORK IN COMBATING OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, thousands of Americans lose their lives every year across communities of all sizes to a terrible epidemic, and that is an epidemic of substance abuse that steals lives, that steals futures, and that tears apart families.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the efforts of a constituent of mine, Dennis Heindl, who lives in Elk County, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District. Mr. Heindl is the owner of Laurel Media, based in Ridgway. After seeing the effects of the opioid abuse and heroin epidemic affecting our Nation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and areas such as Elk County, Dennis was compelled to act.

He set up a telephone hotline in an effort to fight back against drug use in communities across the region. The hotline is anonymous, strictly confidential, and is being administered by the North Central Pennsylvania Municipal Drug Task Force. Mr. Heindl is offering a \$1,000 reward for any information that leads to the arrest or conviction of any individual who sells or distributes illegal or prescription drugs.

In addition to the hotline, Mr. Heindl is organizing a series of anti-drug meetings across the area. In fact, the latest meeting in the community of Ridgway drew a crowd of nearly 300 people all interested in taking their town back from this horrible epidemic.

Just like in so many other areas of our Nation, communities across Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District have suffered as a result of this drug epidemic. Elk County is ranked ninth in Pennsylvania in overdose deaths per population of 100,000 people while, further west, Crawford County has seen its overdose deaths double in the past 4 years.

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Now, I am so proud of the efforts of the people such as Dennis Heindl and all those across the Fifth Congressional District who are helping in the efforts to fight back against drugs.

I am also proud of the package passed recently in this House, which will make grant funding available to States and local governments for the creation of opioid reduction programs, creates a task force to review prescribing practices, and cares for babies who are born opioid addicted and dependent.

If we all work together, I know that we can win this battle.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the slaughter in Orlando struck me with special impact. The massacre of patrons of the gay night club focused deliberately on the LGBT community came at a time of unparalleled progress for equality, capped by marriage equality. It was jarring. Even though the struggle continues in places like North Carolina, these killings came at a time of amazing progress and hope.

But horrific episodes of gun violence are always personal for me, and not just because of the carnage of multiple shootings and murders. We have had shootings in Oregon in shopping centers and schools, mass shootings in a high school in Springfield and a community college in Roseburg. We have had many deaths and injuries and Presidential visits.

The gun violence issue started for me with the senseless freak death from a single shot of a high school friend from a passing car. It is personal. I saw this single, random shot devastate a family, friends, and classmates. My own brother took his life with a handgun. We know that, unlike other forms of suicide attempts, people with handguns almost always succeed.

After each horrific event, my hope—and those of millions of other Americans—are raised again. Maybe this time it will be different. You might ask how, if even the slaughter of 20 innocent first graders could not give spineless politicians the courage to stand up to the craven apologists for gun violence?

Well, in part, what is different was that, at Sandy Hook, those 20 little children and their six teachers struck a chord that remains. It laid the foundation to help focus the relentless outspoken efforts of President Obama and his entire administration in dealing with each little element of gun safety that was within their power to make us safer. We have Secretary Clinton running for President who has put a spotlight on gun safety throughout her campaign in a way unlike any we have seen in a Presidential campaign before.

One of the most encouraging signs for me is that there is a new approach to reducing gun violence, focused on gun safety. This is taking hold. A number of us have come up with our own plans.

A couple of years ago, I formulated my approach—looking at the concept we did with traffic safety—not a single magic solution, but a series of thoughtful, focused effects that, in traffic safety, ended up cutting deaths and injuries in half with education, research, enforcement, and policy changes, large and small, that had a cumulative effect of saving hundreds of thousands of lives. We can do this with gun violence.

An agenda of simple, commonsense approaches have been taken in other parts of the world, and it has made a difference. We see, in the United States, evidence in those States and communities that have taken action to reduce gun violence that people are, in fact, safer. It makes a difference.

Sometimes in politics, we can feel an issue crest, and I think we are watching it now. This week, we have a simple, single powerful little symbol. The no fly, no buy legislation would prevent people who we think are too dangerous to allow them to buy a ticket to fly on a plane, should not be allowed to buy an assault weapon.

Today, my colleagues and I are here supporting the notion that, if there is no bill to vote on, there should be no congressional break, demanding at least to allow us a vote on the floor of the House the same way there was some action in the Senate that gave people hope.

Let's do our part this morning to raise public awareness, to build momentum to make America safer. We shouldn't go home for the Fourth of July break without at least another small step forward. We owe it to the memory of tens of thousands who have died needlessly from gun violence, and we owe it to the tens of thousands of lives that we can save.

VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Venezuela is deteriorating very quickly. In Venezuela, the people are running out of medicine, running out of food, experiencing electricity shortages, and the regime cannot even provide basic goods for the people.

Time is ticking, Mr. Speaker. It is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when Venezuela implodes due to the destructive policies of Nicolas Maduro. And the United States cannot sit idly by and watch this train wreck occur before our very eyes.

Responsible countries in Latin America must also stand up and be a voice for those suffering in Venezuela. Last week, 15 countries from the region signed a joint statement that expressed respect for the Venezuelan Constitution and called on responsible nations to guarantee due process and human rights. This is a good first step, Mr. Speaker, and I applaud those countries, but more needs to be done.

Tomorrow, the Organization of American States, the OAS, will have a meeting to discuss this crisis. I know that there are some who are advocating for dialogue, but we have tried dialogue before, and it was unsuccessful as Maduro kept coming up with new delays and obstacles in order to prevent a solution. We cannot allow Maduro to continue the charade of a dialogue as a stalling tactic.

A referendum, Mr. Speaker, must occur this year. The people demand it. Because if it doesn't, then next year, Maduro can step aside, hand over power to his Vice President, and the same abusive regime continues while not addressing any of the underlying problems.

If a dialogue does occur, all sectors of the Venezuelan opposition must be at the table. That is only fair. But it cannot happen if some of them are in jail, and a precondition to any dialogue must include the release of all political prisoners.

The regime could show a good-faith effort by doing this, but instead, it continues to go the other direction. It continues to go backwards, postponing the appeal of a political prisoner, Leopoldo Lopez, indefinitely after it was scheduled to occur just 2 days ago.

With its repression, its corruption, and its disastrous economic policies, the Maduro regime is running Venezuela into the ground, and it is no wonder that Venezuelans feel like they are under siege. Riots are occurring on a daily basis, and according to one recent study, 87 percent of Venezuelans say they don't have enough money to buy enough food. This travesty is simply unsustainable, and the regime must be held accountable to the people.

Tomorrow at the OAS, I hope to see the hemisphere finally stand up for itself, stop allowing itself to be mollified by the regime's lies and stall tactics, and hold Maduro's feet to the fire.

Humanitarian aid must be allowed to get through to the people, and the referendum must be held this year. Let the Venezuelan people have their say and finally put an end to this suffering.

In September of last year, Mr. Speaker, I joined 19 of my colleagues in sending a bipartisan letter to Secretary Kerry and Secretary Lew urging the administration to enforce a bill that I passed with Senator MARCO RUBIO, the Venezuelan Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act, and to apply sanctions to regime officials in the Venezuelan court system in response to the unjust sentencing of Venezuelan activist Leopoldo Lopez.

I asked Obama administration officials: What justification do you have for not carrying out and implementing these sanctions for this miscarriage of justice, and what is the dollar amount of the assets seized of the seven individuals whom you have sanctioned?

The State Department has pulled some visas due to human rights violations, but I asked the State Department: Can you tell us how many visas the State Department has pulled, and who are these individuals?

Last week, at the OAS meeting in the Dominican Republic, Secretary Kerry stated that Venezuela should follow its own constitution and hold a free, fair, and timely recall referendum. Does he believe or expect that it will happen this year?

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, Maduro has stated that he is ready to exchange ambassadors. I think this would be a big mistake because it will look as though we are legitimizing the illegitimate Maduro regime. I hope that the State Department will not nominate someone this year to be Ambassador of Venezuela, and I hope that we, in the U.S., do more to help the long-suffering people of Venezuela.