

and denial, not acceptable; and refusing to pay people for their work is unfair, and it really needs to stop.

This is about fairness, and it is about honoring the law by enforcing the law. It is that simple.

□ 1045

DEBATE GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

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

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, we should not be here today.

We should not have to come to the floor of the House of Representatives to beg the majority party just to debate and vote on commonsense gun legislation that the vast majority of Americans demand. We should not be living in a society where debate and even scientific research about gun violence are stifled and silenced by the majority in Congress, and we should not live in a country where gun violence takes such a toll on our citizens.

But here we are, standing up for the millions of Americans who want Congress to do something and honoring the thousands of Americans who have lost their lives to gun violence. Here we are, standing up for our constituents who are tired of the excuses and want to hear a debate and want to see us take action on gun violence. And here we are today to represent the victims.

The list is so long: Orlando, San Bernardino, Newton, Fort Hood, Charleston. The list goes on. Nine in a church, 23 in a restaurant, 26 in an elementary school, and now 49 in a nightclub. The victims are men and women, Black and White, rich and poor, old and young.

At a McDonald's in California, an 8-month-old baby was killed, along with his mother who was trying to shelter him when a gunman came in and started shooting.

At a North Carolina nursing home, a 98-year-old grandmother was killed when a shooter came in and opened fire.

Here in the United States, you are 10 times more likely to be killed by a gun than in any other developed Nation in the world. Of the 23 richest and most developed countries in the world, we have, by far, the most gun violence. We have half the population of the other 22, but 90 percent of the women killed by a gun are killed by a gun in the United States. Ninety-one percent of the children under age 14, who are killed by a gun, are killed by a gun in the United States. And if you are a young person in this country, you are 50 times more likely to die of a gun death than in all of those other countries. We have the most guns and we have the most gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, we have the NRA. Through fear, intimidation, and misinformation, the NRA has taken control over the debate on guns to such an ex-

tent that we cannot even vote in this Chamber on whether we should keep guns out of the hands of terrorists.

Right now, someone can be on both the terrorist watch list and the no-fly list. In other words, the FBI thinks you are a terrorist and the TSA bans you from flying, but if you want to drive down to your local gun store and buy an assault rifle, there is nothing anyone can do to stop you.

Over the last 10 years, people on the terrorist watch list tried to buy explosives or firearms 2,233 times. Over 90 percent of the time, they were successful. This is wrong. The American people know it is wrong, public health officials know it is wrong, and nearly every single law enforcement association in America knows it is wrong, which is why they are all in favor of closing the terrorist gun loophole. In fact, a recent poll by a Republican pollster found 76 percent of gun owners and 71 percent of NRA members said suspected terrorists should not be allowed to buy guns.

If you were to walk outside the House of Representatives right now and stop someone walking down the street and ask the simple question: Should terrorists be allowed to buy guns, you would get a very simple answer. They would say: No, of course terrorists should not be allowed to buy guns.

But they can. Republicans here in the House won't even let us have a debate and a vote on it.

How did we get here, Mr. Speaker? How has the debate shifted so far away from commonsense gun regulation that a proposal to close the terrorist gun loophole is this controversial? Why is it that, here in the House, debate is silenced and we are not allowed to vote?

The closest we came to a debate on gun legislation recently came last week when a controversy erupted about the standard procedure to observe a moment of silence on the House floor after a mass shooting.

Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that we have allowed this country to get to a point where Congress has to even have a standard procedure to observe mass shootings, yet we aren't even allowed to have a debate about legislation to address this problem.

It is time for us to stand up to the NRA, to have a fair and open debate about gun violence, and it is time for all of us to do our job representing the American people.

EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE

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 heartbroken and angered once again by the rampant epidemic of gun violence plaguing our Nation. Gun violence is on the rise across the country. I am not just talking about the tragic mass shootings that grip our collective attention. I am talking

about the everyday shootings that go undetected by the national media.

Last year, gun deaths became the number one killer of youths aged 16-24. We are on track to break this record in 2016.

Just this past Father's Day weekend, 41 people were shot—13 of them fatally—in Chicago. The shootings in those 60 hours claimed the city's 300th recorded homicide this year. This is the list of the names of the people who have lost their lives to gun violence. I don't have enough time to name every name.

Amari Brown, 7 years old, was the youngest. He was shot in the back.

In 2016 alone, more than 1,800 people have been shot across Chicago.

Among this weekend's victims was 3-year-old Devon Quinn. On Sunday, Devon was riding with his father to pick up his mother from work when a hail of bullets hit their car. Devon is still hospitalized.

Devon's story is, unfortunately, all too common in communities like some of the ones that I represent, where a trip down the street to a convenience store or a gas station could end in tragedy.

I am tired of hearing stories like this. It saddens me and angers me each time I speak with constituents and hear their all too familiar story of losing a loved one to gun violence. I am frustrated not only because we are losing an entire generation to gun violence, but because so many of these deaths were preventable if Congress had just had the courage to take action.

Sadly, we don't even talk about gun deaths until it is forced into our lives with another tragic mass shooting. When this happens, we give our fiery speeches, hold our moments of silence, and then we wait for the national buzz to fade. It is a shameful and disrespectful ritual that proves that Congress has little to no plans to truly honor the lives of gun violence victims.

This weekend on "Meet the Press," the Speaker gave his fellow Republicans a pass to "vote their conscience" with respect to their Presidential support. I ask the Speaker to give his colleagues a pass when it comes to voting on backgrounds checks, which 90 percent of Americans support.

With each shooting, we are quick to say that it is a mental health problem, it is a family problem, it is a terror problem. But somehow it is never a gun problem.

It is time we look at the common denominator and accept that the root of the problem is about how guns get into the hands of those seeking to do harm.

Prayer and reflection brings comfort to those who mourn, but scripture of all faiths teaches that prayer must be met by good deeds. Silence without action is deafening.

The majority of the American people want greater action. They want to close the gun show and online loopholes that allow people to purchase

guns without a background check. They want medical experts and their government to research this plague of gun violence for what it is: a public health crisis. They want to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists on the no-fly list.

Why is it that when someone poses a credible national security threat, we ensure that they cannot fly on a plane, but they can still purchase a firearm?

With each second that passes without action, we are risking another Devon Quinn, another Hadiya Pendleton, another Blair Holt. We are risking another Orlando, another Sandy Hook, another Virginia Tech.

So I ask my colleagues: Just who exactly has to die and how many before we finally put an end to this? Just how many birthdays, Father's Days, Mother's Days must go uncelebrated? How many would-be graduations must pass? How many empty chairs at a kitchen table must there be before we show courage and say "enough" and take action to pass measures that keep us safe instead of going on with our violence?

It is deafening. Bring these bills to the floor.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in solidarity with my colleagues about the mass shootings that are going on in our country.

The Orlando mass shooting has been another demonstration for some Americans of an ongoing daily violence and daily nightmare: gun violence in our country.

Now, we all know that there is a systemic problem for many in our communities of lack in opportunities: lack of education, adequate after-school and summer programs, job training, expansion of economic opportunities. But we know measures that will help to increase funding for these programs will never reach this floor.

We know also that Republicans refuse to take up other measures as well. What they can address right now, right here, is expanded background checks, prevention of gun sales to those on a no-fly list, and a ban on assault weapons.

Now, I grew up fishing and hunting with my dad. I passed that on to my children. So owning a gun is not something that I believe should not happen, but I know that it is not an absolute right.

As the granddaughter of a police commissioner, the daughter of a New York City cop, a former Bronx prosecutor, and a Justice Department official, the war on crime, the war on these mass shootings and destruction would be well served by voting on expanded background checks, prevention of gun sales to those on the no-fly list, and a ban on assault weapons.

On the small islands that I represent, the U.S. Virgin Islands, there have been over 300 gun-related deaths over the last 5 years. For a place with a population of 100,000, to have 300 gun-related deaths in 3 years accounts for a murder rate and a death per capita that is several times the national average.

Now, much of this is through a lack of opportunity, but also—and absolutely—the influx of illegal assaults weapons, such as high-caliber weapons of mass murder, that come into the market. Those, coupled, in our instance, with the drug trade, have left our community in fear and mourning for our young.

Last year alone, there were twice as many gun deaths per capita in the Virgin Islands than there were in most American cities that we could traditionally think of as having a high gun rate.

Who are the victims of the destruction just this year in the Virgin Islands?

I am going to name them because we never hear names like this. We have our moments of silence for the large groups, but these are the day-to-day individuals that died:

January 9, two unnamed males; January 20, Stephen Coleman and Heidi Mills; January 21, Tishawn Samuel, 24; February 2, Juan Encarnacion, 30; March 5, Evan Ezekiel Joseph, 38; March 8, Conrad Phipps, 30; March 22, Kishawn Fleming, 23; March 27, Hans Oliver, 38; March 28, Kayan Payne and Kanta Payne, 33 and 29; April 19, Joseph duCreay, 19; April 28, Javan Benjamin, 22; May 1, Shedale Gabriel, 25; May 22, Vershawn Monsanto, 21; June 4, Shaki Alexander, 21, and Kerven Joseph 19; June 12, Ojahnia Adkins, 22, and Jahfari Samuel, 34; June 20, Devon Freeman, 42.

The blood of these victims speak to me. I hope, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to you. Bring the bills to the floor. Vote it up or vote it down, but do your job.

□ 1100

LET'S DO SOMETHING TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN OF AMERICA

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, pretty much everything has been said, except I think, obviously, the leadership is still not hearing us. And it is not just us who are saying this; the American people are saying this.

Everyone has seen the polls. Everyone knows the reality that, in the last couple of weeks, 90 percent of the American people want us to do very simple things: no fly, no buy and closing gaping, not small, but gaping loopholes in the background check.

Now, like some of my colleagues, I personally would go further. My con-

stituents would support that. There are many things we could be doing, but we are not asking for those things because we know that is a difficult lift in the House of Representatives.

But I represent the same number of people as every other Member here, about 750,000 people. And when 90 percent of those constituents in every district wants us to take simple, direct action, I think it is a dereliction of duty and responsibility and our oath to ignore that unless there is some moral reason for us to disagree with some constituents. On this issue, I can't believe anyone has a moral disagreement with this.

Everyone's talking about Orlando, and that is obviously the most important, most compelling one. But since the Orlando shooting, in the last 10 days, the last 10 days in America, there have been 77 people, at least, killed with guns—at least.

And I say that because many of these things get minimal reporting. Why? Because all of us are used to turning on the local news in every corner of this country every single night and seeing another act of violence, almost always committed with a gun, across America. It is not an urban problem or a rural problem; it is across the country. And we have become a little desensitized to it because it happens all the time.

Once in a while, we will get an Orlando tragedy or a Sandy Hook tragedy, and we will all jump up and down and say how upset we are. But, as has been pointed out many times, we don't seem to get all that upset when two or three people get shot in the middle of some other place.

Sometimes, we think: well, it is probably just gang violence. It is just one gang member shooting another gang member. Maybe they deserve it. America is better off.

How do you say that when there is a 3-year-old who gets shot, or a 7-year-old? How dare you say that. Or a woman walking down the street, or people literally just sitting in their homes innocently.

People say that some of the proposals that have been made wouldn't have stopped Orlando or wouldn't have stopped Sandy Hook or wouldn't have stopped something else. You know what? Maybe they are right. I don't know. But I have never in my life, either politically or personally, used the excuse that because I can't do everything that, therefore, I should do nothing. That is nothing more than a lame excuse.

If we can save the life of one person by taking simple actions that everybody seems to agree with—if you can't fly, you can't buy a gun; close the loopholes in background checks—no one has a problem with background checks.

Most Americans don't know there are loopholes. And I don't mean little ones. I mean gaping ones. As you heard earlier, about 40 percent of the guns sold in this country are not subject to background checks. That is not a loophole. That is a gaping loophole.