

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.

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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.

In the last 10 days, 239 Americans have been injured with guns. Now, some say, well, it is in home defense, it is accidental shootings. And that is true. Some of them are.

All this stuff is available to anybody who wants to take 5 minutes and do a simple Internet search like I did. There are dozens of reputable Web sites that have this information.

One of them, the Gun Violence Archive—simple statistics, not advocating, statistics—in 2015, the last calendar year, they list 13,433 deaths by gun. That is 36.8 per day. And, this year, we are on pace to exceed that. Of that, two children under the age of 11 per day were shot—two per day.

Yes, about 10 percent of the incidents were home invasions, defensive use, and accidental shooting, which is why none of us are trying to impede law-abiding American citizens from owning a gun. But that leaves 90 percent of the gun activity outside that. For us to not take action, in my opinion, is indefensible.

In 18 years, I have never participated in this Morning Hour discussion. I haven't done it because I find most of this, more often than not, somebody's reason to make a political statement. And I guess on some levels that is what I am doing right now.

But, on occasion, things get to the point where we, as a group, have to stand up, that we, individually, have to stand up and demand what is the simplest action imaginable—if you are too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy—the simplest action, put it on the floor.

I would respect someone for coming up and voting “no.” I would disagree, but at least they wouldn't be able to hide behind their own political rhetoric that somehow people like me are trying to pull guns away from them.

The truth is it is a simple action. And I will tell you, as a House Member, I am a bit embarrassed that the Senate was at least able to put it on the floor. At least they will have to answer to their constituents.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CAPUANO. I understand that, Mr. Speaker. This issue has not expired, and this issue will not go away. And this issue will not be the end of this debate today or tomorrow, until we get a vote on these simple issues and do something to protect the children of America.

GUN VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, over last Father's Day weekend, 13 people were killed with guns in Chicago, my hometown. Another 46 were injured.

One of those critically injured was 3-year-old Devon Quinn. Devon and his

father were sitting in their green van when someone pulled up and started firing shots into a crowd of people. Devon was hit in the right shoulder by a bullet as he sat in his car. He was not the target, and he was another innocent victim in a terrible year of gun violence.

A 17-year-old boy was walking down 46th Street, and he was mowed down by an assault weapon.

According to the Chicago Tribune, about 1,800 people have been shot in Chicago this year. Over 200 of them have died from guns. When shootings becomes so commonplace, we risk forgetting how traumatic each one is for the people involved.

I recently received a letter from Kiara, a high school senior in my district, and she wrote:

Talking on the phone with a good friend a few nights ago, I heard the disturbing noise of gunshots. Feelings of fear overwhelmed me as my friend was talking as he was walking home from the train station after a long day at work.

Almost immediately, communication broke. I called back over and over again with no response. I was on the verge of a meltdown, thinking of what could have happened to him.

After what seemed like the longest 10 minutes of my life, I received a text letting me know that he was okay but needed to call 911, as someone had been shot by a drive-by shooting.

I sat there, frozen. What could I do? Then, thoughts of hopelessness and sadness took hold over me, and I thought about the family of this poor, innocent person who was just shot and how terrible that phone call must have been from the hospital.

I understand the need for guns and the role they play in protection in times of war and so on. But what I don't understand is the internal debate and menace within the United States over the use and misuse of weapons.

Too often, we forget the names of victims and the pain of their loved ones, as Congress continues to do nothing to stop the violence. Most don't even get that empty gesture of a moment of silence, and, even so, we have done 27 moments of silence since Sandy Hook.

How numb have we become to everyday violence that we only stop for that lone minute to recognize the most horrific shootings? Forty-nine victims in Orlando, schoolchildren in Newtown, churchgoers murdered in Charleston.

Just during the Senate filibuster on gun violence last week, 48 people were shot. As the mass shootings get worse and worse, we can't let these daily shootings fade into the background of America.

I know that my constituents feel frustrated and ignored when Congress responds to each of these tragedies with inaction. Angela wrote to me from the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, where I grew up:

I am writing to you as a frustrated and saddened constituent who is tired of watching innocent people die because the NRA holds our Congresspeople hostage.

I am begging you, on behalf of our students, teachers, police, LGBT, and every innocent person who has been affected by

senseless gun violence, to please use this moment to enact meaningful gun control in our country.

We have had decades of complacency from our government on this issue. It is no longer excusable, particularly for someone representing Chicago. You know where these legally purchased guns end up and that hundreds of our children and families pay the price for what selfish maniacs claim is their personal freedom.

And I have many more letters like those calling on those of us in Congress to do our job and reduce gun violence in our country. Neighbors ask me for action at the grocery store and at the gym and as I boarded the plane yesterday.

We can start by enacting two gun safety proposals that are overwhelmingly supported among our constituents, all of our constituents.

Close the terrorist loophole. If you are too dangerous to fly on an airplane, you should not be able to buy a gun. People can't even believe that that isn't the law already.

We need universal background checks. Forty percent of those guns used in violence in Chicago are bought legally at Indiana gun shows, where there are no background checks.

These proposals won't stop every single gun death, but we know that they will stop some. And, yes, there are a lot of other things we could do too.

I call on Speaker RYAN, along with my colleagues, to bring these bills to the floor before we break. Americans are calling for action on gun violence. They are tired of being ignored. No bill, no break.

THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is still horrified and heartbroken over the brutal act of terror and hate that killed 49 and wounded many more in Orlando, Florida, just over a week ago.

We stand in solidarity with the loved ones of those who were lost, with the LGBT community that suffered this unimaginable act of violence, and the entire Orlando community as they work to move forward from this tragedy. We can work together to disarm hate.

Gun violence has become unacceptably commonplace in the country. The Orlando attack is only the latest and the most deadly mass shooting in the history of the United States. We have a responsibility to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not just mass shootings that should be our focus. Guns have taken more lives in this country since 1968 than were lost in all the wars this Nation has ever fought. On average, more than 89 people each day die due to gun violence, whether that is by homicide, suicide, or accident. That is more than 33,000 Americans being killed by guns each year.