

In just over the 3 years since Newtown, more than 111,300 people have been killed by someone using a gun in America. In my State of Maryland, in 2015 alone, more than 340 Marylanders have lost their lives to homicide by guns.

Yet, despite the national consensus for legislation to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists and convicted felons and domestic abusers, a vocal minority, led by the National Rifle Association, stands in the way of commonsense proposals to keep our Nation safer.

Those voices are forcing a false choice between constitutional rights and safe streets. We can do both. Congress can and must enact laws that improve the public safety while respecting the Constitution.

□ 1115

This Congress has no right to hold moments of silence anymore and then do nothing to prevent the next tragedy. This is a moment of truth for Congress. We cannot have another moment of silence without action. We can and should expand and strengthen our background checks and pass the bipartisan no fly, no buy bill to keep guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists.

So today what we know is that across this country there are people who go to unlicensed dealers at gun shows and do what they could not do if they went to Walmart to get a gun, and that is to get one without passing a background check. These unlicensed dealers are a significant source of crimes in my State and across the country, with an estimate of 40 percent of all purchases made through them without a background check.

Studies show that background checks actually do stop 170 felons, 50 domestic abusers, and 20 fugitives every single day from buying weapons. It works when you do it.

Recent polling shows that universal background checks are universally supported across the political spectrum. A CBS poll released just last week showed that 89 percent of the public supports legislation requiring background checks—the low-hanging fruit, the common denominator—and that includes 97 percent of Democrats, 92 percent of Republicans, and 82 percent of Independents. Who is left out? The vocal minority led by the National Rifle Association.

Let's talk about the National Rifle Association, Mr. Speaker, because they actually used to support universal background checks at gun shows.

On May 27, 1999, Wayne LaPierre, the current executive president and CEO of the National Rifle Association, testified before the House Judiciary Committee about 1 month before Columbine, in which 12 high school students and one teacher were murdered. He said this: "We think it's reasonable to provide mandatory instant background checks for every sale at every

gun show. No loopholes anywhere for anyone." That is a direct quote from Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association.

When did they change? When it became politically expedient to do the job of the gun industry. So, unfortunately, they have flipped their position. They no longer support expanded background checks, and they have worked to prohibit that action here in Congress.

So I will say, Mr. Speaker, to Speaker RYAN and to my Republican colleagues: Enough already. We are tired. We are done. It is past time for the Congress to listen to the American public instead of to the National Rifle Association, to listen to the overwhelming number of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, and to take guns out of the hands of terrorists, convicted felons, and those who would do harm to others.

No bill, no break. It is time to disarm hate.

COMMONSENSE GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all of my colleagues join me on the floor.

On occasion, Mr. Speaker, I have had what I call an executive session with myself. For months, even for years, through several sessions of Congress, I wondered what would bring this body to take action, what would finally make Congress do what is right, what is just, what the people of this country have been demanding, and what is long overdue.

We have lost hundreds and thousands of innocent people to gun violence: tiny little children, babies, students and teachers, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, friends and neighbors.

What has this body done? Mr. Speaker, nothing. Not one thing. We have turned deaf ears. We have turned deaf ears to the blood of the innocent and the concern of our Nation. We are blind to a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, where is the heart of this body? Where is our soul? Where is our moral leadership? Where is our courage? Those who work on bipartisan solutions are pushed aside. Those who pursue commonsense improvement are beaten down. Reason is criticized. Obstruction is praised.

Newtown, Aurora, Charleston, Orlando. What is the tipping point? Are we blind? Can we see? How many more mothers and how many more fathers need to shed tears of grief before we do something?

We were elected to lead, Mr. Speaker. We must be headlights and not tail-lights. We cannot continue to stick our heads in the sand and ignore the reality of mass gun violence in our Nation.

Deadly mass shootings are becoming more and more frequent. Mr. Speaker, this is a fact. It is not an opinion.

We must remove the blinders. The time for silence and patience is long gone. We are calling on the leadership of the House to bring commonsense gun control legislation to the House floor. Give us a vote. Let us vote. We came here to do our job. We came here to work.

The American people are demanding action. Do we have the courage? Do we have raw courage to make at least a down payment on ending gun violence in America?

We can no longer wait. We can no longer be patient. So today we come to the well of the House to dramatize the need for action—not next month, not next year, but now, today.

Sometimes you have to do something out of the ordinary. Sometimes you have to make a way out of no way. We have been too quiet for too long. There comes a time when you have to say something, when you have to make a little noise, and when you have to move your feet. This is the time.

Now is the time to get in the way. The time to act is now. We will be silent no more. The time for silence is over.

COMMONSENSE GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 2 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. For all of America that is listening, you just heard the soul of the United States Congress speak. The soul of this Nation cries out for a vote.

We are gathered here on this floor today to accomplish a single goal. We implore and we ask our colleagues—our colleague from Georgia stood on that side to appeal to the better angels on that side of the aisle—to provide us with the simple dignity that every American is calling for: a vote.

Mr. LEWIS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), my friend and brother, for yielding.

Now is the time for us to find a way to dramatize it, to make it real. We have to occupy the floor of the House until there is action.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, rise up, Democrats. Rise up, Americans. This cannot stand. We will occupy this floor. We will no longer be denied a right to vote.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland, our minority whip and leader.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we sit down so we can stand up for America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 25 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at noon.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The House will be in order.

The House will be in order.

The Chair wishes to call on the Chaplain for the prayer.

Will Members please be in order for the prayer by the Chaplain. The prayer will be offered by the Chaplain, Father Conroy.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Father of mercy, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless the Members of the people's House. May all their deliberations give rise to understanding. You have called us to serve this Nation by Your divine inspiration.

May we reach the destiny You have in mind for us, and may all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are asked to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 2 of rule I, the Chair is charged with preserving order and decorum in the proceedings of the House. The Chair finds that the House is currently not in a state of order due to the presence of Members in the well who are not under recognition.

The Chair would ask Members to please leave the well so that the House may proceed with business.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2204

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair wishes to make an announcement regarding decorum in the House Chamber.

The Chair appreciates that Members will differ on matters of policy and will seek to express those differences.

But the Chair would hope that the business of the House could be conducted in a fashion that reflects positively on the dignity and decorum of this institution to which we all belong and serve.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2577,
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-
TIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 114-640)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2577), making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the Senate recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the House amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017 and Zika Response and Preparedness Act".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

Sec. 3. References.

Sec. 4. Statement of appropriations.

Sec. 5. Availability of funds.

DIVISION A—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

Title I—Department of Defense

Title II—Department of Veterans Affairs

Title III—Related agencies

Title IV—Overseas contingency operations

Title V—General provisions

DIVISION B—ZIKA RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

DIVISION C—ZIKA VECTOR CONTROL

DIVISION D—RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Except as expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division of this Act shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The following sums in this Act are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017.

SEC. 5. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

Each amount designated in this Act by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall be available (or rescinded, if applicable) only if the President subsequently so designates all such amounts and transmits such designations to the Congress.

DIVISION A—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, \$513,459,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$98,159,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE
CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, \$1,021,580,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$88,230,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and