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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 5, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE WOMACK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

WE ARE ASKING FOR A VOTE

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor early this afternoon knowing that later this day we have a meeting with the Speaker. It is our goal and our hope that the Speaker will provide an opportunity for the minority party to have its two votes taken up in this Congress.

We prevail on the good nature of the Speaker and know him to be an honest and forthright man and an institution-

alist who understands the House. We also know that he is not just Speaker for the Republican Conference, but he is indeed Speaker of the entire House.

We face an extraordinary calamity, a catastrophe unlike anyone has experienced in any other country in the world, and it is the ongoing slaughter that occurs. There have been more than 1,000 mass murders since the tragedy at Sandy Hook when they took, as Senator JOE MANCHIN said, our babies from us.

What we are asking for on this side of the aisle are very commonsense solutions; no fly, no buy. If you can't get on an airplane because you are a terrorist but you can buy a gun, doesn't it seem as though there should be regulations that would prevent that and keep guns out of the hands of terrorists, criminals, and the mentally challenged?

Also, there are background checks, which most law enforcement entities have talked about on the very bill that Senators PAT TOOMEY and JOE MANCHIN introduced in the United States Senate that received the majority of votes and that Representatives PETER KING and MIKE THOMPSON introduced in the House of Representatives.

We are asking for a simple vote. After all, that is what we are elected to do. We are elected to represent the people whom we are sworn to serve and cast votes.

It has been more than 3½ years we have not even been allowed to cast a vote in the House of Representatives. That is why so many took to this floor in an organic movement demonstrating that we have had enough and that we deserve a vote and that we demand a vote for the countless victims and families of these tragedies.

It is not enough, as respectful as it is, to stand for a moment of silence. Our caucus will not be silent anymore. We feel that silence means you are complicit with these ongoing tragedies.

So we have asked for two pieces of legislation, both commonsense and, oh, by the way, supported by—no matter what poll you read—between 85 and 95 percent of the American public. They are not controversial.

All we are asking for is the decency to perform our constitutional responsibility in representing our constituents and to have the ability to cast the vote that they are all asking for. We are prevailing upon the decency of the other side, their understanding of the Constitution, their understanding of the rules of this House. We are counting on their decency for the families and the victims to allow us those simple measures that we swear an oath to this office in order to perform.

We are asking you for a vote. It is nothing more than what is required of us when we raise our hand and take the oath here. To deny us of that is to deny us of our basic rights.

HOUSE RULES OR RULES FOR RADICALS?

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on the afternoon of June 22, a large number of Democrats brought the deliberations of the House of Representatives to a standstill in one of the most disgraceful and childish breaches of decorum in the history of this institution. In complete contempt of this House and the rule of law, they shouted down all with whom they disagreed. They blocked access to the microphones as Members sought to address the Chair, and they illegally occupied the Hall of the House, forcing an early adjournment and costing this House three full days of legislative deliberations.

Abraham Lincoln said it best: "There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law."

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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What we saw was the mob law of Occupy Wall Street brought to the House floor. They are seeking to use the recent terrorist attacks as justification for making it harder for law-abiding Americans to defend themselves. That is a strange logic, but so be it. They certainly have a right to their opinions. They have a right to express those opinions on the House floor, and they have a right to use all of the procedures of the House to act on their opinions. What they do not have is the right to prevent those with different views from exercising the same rights, and yet that is precisely what they did.

These Democratic Members have many procedures and opportunities to bring their bills to the House for a vote. They could have executed a discharge petition to bring their bill immediately to the floor. They could have moved to have their bill inserted into any bill pending on the House floor, a common motion that we routinely hear and vote upon several times a week.

The fact is their proposals were considered in the Senate and voted down. Their proposals were considered in the House committee and voted down. Their discharge petition is pending at this desk right now, awaiting enough signatures to execute it. Their only problem is they don't have enough votes. Well, sorry, that is called democracy. The majority of their colleagues simply disagree with them for some very good reasons.

Their rights were honored and protected by the Republican majority under the rule of law, yet they denied those same rights to others by replacing the rule of law with the rule of the mob; and they did so on the most sacred ground of our democratic Republic, the Hall of the House of Representatives.

Instead of working within the time-honored rules of the House to convince the majority of their way of thinking, they decided to tear down the rules. This was the lawless left on full display, and I hope the American people took a long, hard look at it and understand the threat to our democratic traditions and institutions that this conduct reveals.

In recent days, we have seen leftist mobs assembled under a foreign flag violently attacking American citizens who were merely trying to exercise their right to peaceably assemble to support their candidate for President. We have seen this administration attempt to criminalize political dissent and use our institutions of government to intimidate people out of participating in our political process. And now we have watched this lawless behavior imported onto the floor of the House of Representatives.

The House leadership decided not to confront this unprecedented spectacle as it unfolded, and I do not gainsay their decision here. It was obvious the Members involved were trying to provoke a physical confrontation, but serious damage was done that day to our

orderly process of government and it cannot go unchallenged. Doing so would establish a dangerous and corrosive precedent, antithetical to everything which this institution and our country stands for.

The Constitution provides that the House may sanction Members for disorderly behavior, and the Members responsible for the events of June 22 and 23 must be called to account for their actions. If we fail to do so, we will have replaced the House rules with rules for radicals.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, a little over a week and a half ago, my colleagues and I came to the House floor. We came to the floor to protest the inaction of this Republican Congress, the tyranny of the majority, to act on gun violence prevention measures—their deliberate inaction in the face of 33,000 deaths caused by gun violence every year. We came to demand substantive action to address our country's epidemic of gun violence.

Yet, today we will be presented with legislation promoted by the NRA that fails to address this serious problem. H.R. 4237 does not close or otherwise address the terror gap that allows known or suspected terrorists in the United States to legally buy guns.

Instead, this bill handicaps law enforcement, creating an impossibly burdensome process and allowing terrorists to take advantage of the Charleston loophole. In fact, H.R. 4237 doesn't just leave the loophole open, which led to the loss of nine lives at the Emanuel AME Church, it reinforces it and the terror gap.

Under this legislation, to prevent the transfer of a firearm, the government will be required to file an emergency petition, schedule a hearing, provide the suspect with notice and counsel, and win the hearing all within 72 hours of the attempted purchase. And even if the government is able to win the hearing, it can only prevent the transfer if the court finds that the suspected terrorist committed, attempted to, or will commit an act of terrorism. Put another way, the government can only prevent a gun sale to a suspected terrorist if they can arrest the person for terrorist activity within 3 days of an attempted purchase.

Ultimately, this legislation does not provide any meaningful safeguards to prevent terrorists from purchasing guns. Sadly, it is nothing more than a political tactic to avoid responsibility, a contrived effort to look busy and feign concern while thousands of Americans lose their lives to gun violence. The American people are smarter than this.

We have a moral responsibility to do something meaningful. The American

people demand that we do more, that we do something, that we do anything to help prevent another mass tragedy in this country. Make no mistake, this legislation falls short of a good-faith effort to save lives.

The GAO found that individuals on the terrorist watch list were able to pass a background check and legally purchase a firearm 2,043 times between February of 2004 and December of 2014. The FBI was only able to prevent 10 percent of these purchases.

As we all, unfortunately, learned on June 12, when we fail to prevent dangerous individuals from getting their hands on guns, we put the lives of Americans at risk. But there is legislation that the House can consider that will reduce gun violence.

First, H.R. 1076, the no fly, no buy bill, would effectively close the terror gap by providing the Department of Justice with the discretion to block gun sales to terrorist suspects. It will preserve due process for individuals who were mistakenly listed to appeal their denial.

Second, H.R. 1217 would implement universal background checks for all commercial gun sales. It is a measure supported by the overwhelming majority of the American people. And empirical research shows that universal background checks for all handgun sales have lowered levels of gun violence in those States where that occurs. Nationally, 34 percent of gun sales and 40 percent of all gun transfers occur without a background check.

□ 1215

This legislation would represent an important step toward closing this loophole and reducing gun violence.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring these two bills to the floor, to respond to the demands of the American people, to do something about the pandemic of gun violence, to do something meaningful that will actually reduce gun violence in this country and protect the American people, as we are sworn to do.

I know I speak for all of my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus. We will continue to fight in every way that we can until we can persuade our Republican colleagues to bring these bills to the floor, to do something about the carnage of mass gun violence in this country.

AMERICANS WANT CONGRESS TO PASS MEANINGFUL GUN LEGISLATION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, Americans want Congress to pass meaningful legislation that will actually keep guns out of dangerous hands.

So what is our majority doing?

They are bringing up a bill that was not only drafted by the gun lobby, but