

House in the middle of the night. Now they are cloaking themselves in an NRA-approved bill already rejected by the United States Senate that won't keep weapons of war out of the hands of terrorists.

Everyone who owns a gun knows that sometimes you need to keep the safety on that gun. I think it is time to put the safety back in gun safety legislation. It is time to engage in meaningful, real reform.

ERSKINE FIRE

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, for nearly 2 weeks now, a wildfire has raged throughout my district. High heat, dry winds, and a long drought conspired together, enabling a fire that has burned tens of thousands of acres, hundreds of homes, and taken the lives of two people.

I did not know Byron and Gladys McKaig personally, but I have heard about them and learned a small part of their story. They were good and loving people. They met in a church. He was an Episcopal priest and she played the organ. Byron would preach; Gladys would play. They helped their friends and each other grow closer to God.

They died, it seems, from smoke. A neighbor said he spotted them, after the fire, lying out in front of their house near their fence. The trees were still burning. Byron looked as if he were shielding his wife from the coming flames. It was one last act of sacrifice for the woman he spent his life loving. Such people are a gift to everyone they meet.

As our community struggles now to return to a sense of normalcy, faced with the immense task of rebuilding after so much loss, we have our firefighters, police officers, and first responders to thank that this disaster was not worse. For days, with little sleep and near exhaustion, they kept the flames at bay. They remind us how willingly some face danger to protect others. We are forever thankful to them.

We continue to pray for those suffering from the loss of their businesses, their homes, their families, and their friends. Our community always has and always will stand strong in the face of disaster as we rebuild.

PASS GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION AND GIVE D.C. THE VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, anyone who thought the Democrats would go away after we were driven to a sit-in on the House floor for gun safety legislation learned differently very soon after we got home on Wednesday, June

29, when events were held all across the country on a National Day of Action for Gun Violence Prevention. We served notice.

Yes, there have been moments of outrage and sometimes we have not kept up the battle unceasingly. Watch us this time.

I am very pleased that our very effective police chief, Cathy Lanier, came with me to a roundtable where we heard not only from her, but from residents of the District of Columbia who have experienced the incredible heartache and throbbing agony of the loss of a loved one to gun violence.

This morning, unstimulated by me, parents organized themselves to come to the Capitol at 9 a.m. They call themselves D.C. Moms and Dads for Rational Gun Safety Legislation. They are a group of spontaneously formed District of Columbia parents who lack voting representation in the Congress, although they pay the highest taxes per capita of any Americans. They do not have the final vote on the House floor, and they have no Senators.

They wanted to come and show their support for national gun legislation to prevent gun violence in our city and our country. They came when, the week before, I had just fought off three amendments in the House Rules Committee to undermine D.C.'s gun laws with an attempt to erase some of those laws.

It is interesting that, in the Rules Committee, I was able to keep those Republican amendments to take away our gun laws from being made in order. I think it is because the Rules Committee took place only days after Orlando, and even Republicans didn't have the nerve to authorize gun legislation so close to the Orlando gun massacre. Is that what it is going to take? Or will it take the persistence that you saw when Democrats had no alternative but to sit on this hard floor just before recess?

Now, the Republicans have gotten the permission of the NRA to include a gun bill in a pending bill. No wonder, it makes things worse. Now you would have to go before a judge before you can get someone off the no-fly list, instead of depending on the slow administrative process, you would go through the much slower judicial process. Thank you for nothing. It certainly won't satisfy us or the American people.

We who live in your Nation's Capital, need national gun legislation to keep guns from flowing in from weak gun jurisdictions, and we need Congress to leave our gun safety laws alone.

Without fail, every single year, I have to drive back attempts to overturn our gun laws. I just described three that were in the Rules Committee before we left that I was able to drive back because of Orlando.

Yes, I am proud that the Nation's Capital has the strongest gun laws in the country, as well it might. Controversial world figures walk our

streets and visit our restaurants. Weak gun laws we do not need in this Capitol.

We have effective enforcement. We have good relations among Chief Lanier and her police force and our residents. But we are still at the mercy of a Congress, which will not do its job.

During our House sit-in, I left the floor to go to a press conference held by the Mayor and the police chief, displaying AK-47s and other guns illegal in the District of Columbia but that you can simply go to a gun show and buy, undermining our gun laws.

Our gun problem in cities like ours and many cities and jurisdictions across the country are not local problems. They are a national problem. That is why you see us demanding universal background checks. That is why we are demanding that Congress stop censuring the CDC from studying gun laws.

I thank the moms and dads and kids who marched to the Capitol today for overriding their denial of a vote to come here. You sent a dual message: pass gun safety legislation, and give D.C. the vote.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL BACK- GROUND CHECKS

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, years before coming to Congress, as many of my colleagues know, I cofounded and served as the executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Twenty years ago, we worked with a bipartisan Congress to pass the Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban. It became law in 1996. It was known as the Lautenberg amendment, after the late Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey.

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Since that time, we have made a lot of progress in preventing domestic violence, but, sadly, there are several Mack Truck-size loopholes that prevent the law from coming to its full effect. In fact, just last week, in a fight against the gun lobby, yet again, over these last 20 years, the Supreme Court upheld the domestic violence offender gun ban in a 6-2 decision.

As many know, leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for a domestic violence victim, and adding a firearm to that situation severely heightens the risk of injury or death. In fact, in America, the majority of fatal domestic violence homicides are committed with firearms. At least 52 percent of American women murdered with guns are killed by intimate partners or family members.

Despite impressions from media coverage, mass shootings in which at least four people are murdered with a gun

are also typically acts of domestic or family violence. An Everytown, USA, analysis of every mass shooting between 2009 and 2015 found that 57 percent were committed by intimate partners or the family of victims.

Research shows that commonsense gun laws have a marked effect on improving women's safety from gun violence. In States that require background checks for all handgun sales, 46 percent fewer women are murdered with a gun by an intimate partner. And State laws ensuring that convicted abusers or those subject to domestic violence restraining orders are separated from their firearms are also associated with reductions in gun violence against women. But because of loopholes in these laws and failures to enforce them, they do little to curb the uniquely lethal American problem of guns and violence against women.

Four gaps in the law are particularly harmful. First, Federal law does nothing to keep guns out of the hands of abusive dating partners or convicted stalkers. The Federal law prohibits domestic abusers from buying or owning guns but doesn't apply to dangerous people convicted of misdemeanor stalking offenses or to dating partners, even though more women in the U.S. are killed by their dating partners than their spouses.

Second, in 35 States, State law does not prohibit all people convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes and all people subject to restraining orders from buying or using guns.

Third, and importantly, Federal law allows domestic abusers and stalkers to easily evade gun prohibitions by purchasing guns from unlicensed private sellers. That is the Mack Truck loophole. Federal law only requires background checks for gun sales at licensed dealers. Sixteen States require checks on all handgun sales, but in the remaining States, prohibited abusers seeking to avoid a background check have very little trouble purchasing a gun from an unlicensed dealer they meet online, at a gun show, or in a parking lot.

Prohibited domestic abusers know about this loophole and they have taken advantage of it to deadly effect. And, in fact, in a first-of-its-kind investigation of illegal gun sales, Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that one in four prohibited purchasers seeking guns online had a domestic violence arrest.

Finally, 41 States do not require prohibited abusers to relinquish the guns they already own, so I have joined in legislation to prohibit these guns from falling into the hands of domestic abusers. We know that a proven way to help with people who are not eligible to purchase guns, such as felons and domestic abusers, is to expand and strengthen universal background checks on all firearms sales no matter where that sale takes place. And, very tragically, our lax gun laws make it easier for abusers to acquire a firearm than it is, in fact, to purchase a box of Sudafed.

So you ask, Mr. Speaker, why do we protest? Why did we take the dramatic action of taking to the floor of this House?

It is because we have had enough, and we know that, working together, we can and must change the fact that women across this country lose their lives to gun violence by their domestic abusers.

Nine American women are shot and killed by their husbands and intimate partners every single week. We can do something about it. Let's close the gun show loophole.

BIPARTISAN GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEASURES

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

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, this House's silence on preventing gun violence and keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals is a betrayal of the American people.

Americans are 25 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than in any of our peer countries; and since the horrific shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in my district, in the last 3½ years, 100,000 Americans have lost their lives to gun violence. Think about that—100,000 Americans. That is the size of a good-sized American city, every single one of them dead because of a gun. And this House—this House—has done nothing.

We are elected to respond to the needs of the American people. We are elected to keep Americans safe; and right now, felons, domestic violence abusers, even suspected terrorists can buy a gun of their choice without a background check, no questions asked.

And the bad guys are well aware of this big, gaping loophole in our laws. Here is what an al Qaeda spokesman said in a propaganda video in 2011:

"America is absolutely awash in easily obtainable firearms. You can go down to a gun show at the local convention center and come away with a fully automatic assault weapon, without a background check, and most likely without having to show an identification card. So what are you waiting for?"

The real question is: What are we, what are we in this Chamber, waiting for?

We have the no fly, no buy bill, a bipartisan bill to close the terror loophole, and we have a bipartisan bill to strengthen background checks so that they apply to all commercial sales of guns.

Now, I know many Americans assume that the laws we have on the books are strong enough, it is just a question of enforcement; but, sadly, that is not true. That is not true. Somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of all gun sales right now do not go through background checks at all, not at all, so the bad guys just have to go to an unlicensed dealer or go online.

And let's be very clear. Twenty years ago, when Congress passed the background check bill, when they passed that bill, people didn't buy guns online. People didn't buy much of anything online, so Congress didn't even have it in its head to close a loophole it wasn't aware of. But it is now this Congress', it is now our job to respond to the needs of the 100,000 Americans who have died in the last 3½ years and to take action to save lives.

Now, no single law—no single law—can end gun violence, but we do know that laws work. They work, and improved background checks save lives.

For example, in Connecticut, our permit-to-purchase law has reduced gun homicides by 40 percent. That translates into 296 lives saved over a 10-year time period.

In States that have closed background check loopholes, 46 percent fewer women are killed by domestic partners, and 48 percent fewer on-duty police officers are shot to death. That is half of those lives saved. And each one of those lives saved is precious. Each one has a family. Each one has loved ones. Sometimes we forget that when we are talking about thousands of this and hundreds of that and millions of dollars and trillions of dollars. Each and every life is important and precious, and we are sworn to help the American people.

Here is the bottom line. Better laws work, and background checks work to save lives.

The bill that the majority is bringing up this week doesn't really help. In fact, it addresses the terror gap in ways that will hamper the FBI's efforts to keep us safer.

But let me be very, very clear. Without background checks on every single gun sale, no matter what we do on closing the terror gap, it won't matter, because the bad guys will continue avoiding the law, whether it is domestic violence abusers, felons, the dangerously mentally ill, or suspected terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, there are steps we can take to make our communities safer; there are steps we can take to save lives; and I call on this House to call up, this week, the bipartisan bill to expand background checks.

ADDRESSING THE EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we reflected on how fortunate we are to live in a country that gives each of us a voice in our government. Today, this Congress will, once again, ignore the voices of millions of Americans by refusing to address the epidemic of gun violence in our communities.

Yesterday, we honored the courage that millions of Americans have demonstrated throughout our history by standing up in defense of their fellow citizens. But today, this Congress will