

We must address the senseless violence and injustice afflicting our Nation with “the fierce urgency of now,” to quote the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our call to action is made more painful and more real with each passing day.

Mr. Speaker, bring a vote to the floor on commonsense, universal background check legislation that will keep guns out of the hands of terrorists, criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill.

GUN BILL

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bipartisan legislation I have recently filed to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists.

H.R. 5576, the Terrorist Firearms Prevention Act of 2016, is similar to the bipartisan agreement championed by Senator SUSAN COLLINS, and would deny the sale of firearms to individuals on the no fly and selectee lists, while ensuring due process is protected for law-abiding gun owners.

It was recently announced the House is unlikely to consider any legislation this week pertaining to terrorist access to firearms, and for this, I am truly disappointed.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to do something, and this commonsense, bipartisan legislation is a step in the right direction. I will continue to work with Members on both sides of the aisle to strike a bipartisan compromise that will protect law-abiding citizens' constitutional rights, while denying the sale of guns to terrorists.

RECOGNIZING NORBERTO ORELLANA

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Norberto Orellana, an incredible young man who, despite facing health challenges and long-term homelessness, recently graduated from the School for Advanced Studies at the Miami-Dade College Homestead campus with a near perfect GPA, a full ride to college, and a dream to go to medical school.

Mr. Orellana has already confronted more hardships in his young life than many of us will encounter in our lifetimes, but he does so with a positive attitude that inspires all of us.

Mr. Orellana was born with cerebral palsy, a permanent movement disorder caused by abnormal development in the part of the brain that controls balance and posture.

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By the time he was 5, he had undergone three major surgeries to correct a club foot, lengthen his muscles, and reshape his bones.

He and his family also battled homelessness, moving from shelter to shelter. However, he never allowed his circumstances to dictate his attitude or detract from his belief in his own potential. He used his time spent in hos-

pitals to fuel his burning desire to become a pediatric orthopedic surgeon.

It is an honor for me to recognize Mr. Norberto Orellana on the occasion of his graduation. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for such a bright young mind.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO DESTROY ISIL

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the attacks in Orlando, San Bernardino, and across Europe are a horrific reminder that the war on terror continues, and that radical extremism from groups like ISIL remains a danger to all freedom-loving people. It is critical that a plan is in place to destroy this enemy before the United States and our allies face more senseless violence from cowardly terrorists.

For these reasons, I have cosponsored Representative KINZINGER's bill, H.R. 4869, the Comprehensive Strategy to Destroy ISIL Act of 2016. This legislation directs the Secretaries of State and Defense to submit a joint report to Congress on the strategy to destroy ISIL and its affiliates.

It is imperative the U.S. and our allies defeat these radical terrorists on their home turf, and this legislation will require a plan from the administration to do just that. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this critical bill.

CONGRATULATING TWO FLORIDA KEYS COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT-TEAMS

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two Florida Keys Community College student-teams who won five medals, two of them gold, at the annual NASA Engineering Challenges at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

This yearly competition is geared towards encouraging students to pursue STEM-related fields. The TechKeys and RocketTrees worked together to take home the gold in the high-altitude balloon experiment.

FKCC is one of only three colleges in Florida to receive a \$134,000 grant from the Florida Space Grant Consortium to support the program for 2 years. This grant also provides scholarships to each participating student. Each of these students is also now eligible for an internship at NASA as long as they remain enrolled in a Florida college.

Congratulations to the students and their professor, Dawn Ellis, on this prestigious accomplishment. I am proud that they are bringing awareness to the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math.

OUR NATION IS TIRED OF GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is grieving. We are tired. We are tired of the violence that too often unsettles our communities.

What a week we had last week. We were horrified by the deaths of Lorne Ahrens, Michael Smith, Michael Krol, Patrick Zamarripa, and Brent Thompson—five officers murdered by a sniper in Dallas while they were on duty.

We saw very troubling videos of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling being shot.

Today we also mark the 1-month anniversary of the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, a hateful act on the LGBT community that took the lives of 49 people. This shooting shook the country, as have the many mass shootings that have preceded it.

As we still process these deaths, daily violence continues in communities around the country. Over the weekend, the total number of shootings in Chicago, where I come from, this year exceeded 2,100. Over 300 people in Chicago have now died from gun violence in 2016.

I have received hundreds and hundreds of letters from constituents of all ages concerned about the effect of gun violence in our communities and in their communities.

Yesterday I received a letter from a young constituent, an 8-year-old named Kaline. She wrote: “I read the Sun-Times every day like my dad. I read and still think about the story of Tyshawn Lee. It's just hitting my mind all the time because it's not fair. It makes me cry.”

Tyshawn Lee was a 9-year-old boy in Chicago deliberately assassinated, shot multiple times in the head.

Kaline continues: “I hope people can make better decisions about what to do with guns. I hope people stop fighting about whether we should do gun control because I worry more people and kids like Tyshawn will be killed.”

We can't accept violence as normal. This is not the country Kaline should have to grow up in. And how do you explain to an 8-year old that in America, with 91 people dying from gun violence every single day, we have taken no meaningful action?

We take action all the time to protect our kids from threats to their safety. We have regulations in place on teddy bears and pacifiers, to protect children's health and safety, but nothing for guns.

Guns are specifically exempted from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the agency charged with protecting consumers from unreasonable risk or injury or death. Gun manufacturers are protected from liability for damage caused by their weapons. The Centers for Disease Control is actually prohibited, in law, from studying the public health risk of guns.

Robert, a 91-year-old and a veteran of World War II from my district wrote: “You know better than I do the vast array of efforts to protect the American people from the recklessness and avarice in the marketplace, yet Congress has failed the people in the matter of gun control . . . Today the

American public is crying for laws," he says.

Robert is right. I can think of no other product or industry that has so few measures in place to protect our safety, and we need to rethink our approach to guns. We can't put the interests of gun manufacturers and the gun lobby ahead of the safety of our communities. Those of us in Congress have the power to do something, and it is long past time for us to act.

We can start with measures that have broad support among the American people. Ninety percent of Americans support comprehensive background checks. Background checks would help reduce the flood of weapons that come into Chicago from gun shows and online sales.

Would it stop every shooting? Of course it wouldn't. But would it save some lives? Absolutely.

My heart goes out to the families in Dallas and Orlando and Chicago and so many other places that have had the lives of their loved ones stolen away by gun violence, and we need to grieve. But after that moment of silence, we must direct our sadness and our anger into action.

The problem of violence in communities may seem insurmountable, and no single policy will stop every death. But we should start by passing commonsense gun legislation supported by the vast majority of the American people.

We need a vote on legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Republicans and Democrats and gun owners and NRA members agree that background checks for every gun purchase and closing the gun show loopholes and all the other loopholes will help.

So give us a vote, Mr. Speaker. My constituents are crying for action. Let's act, not ignore their cries any longer. Give us a vote.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COMBATING TERRORIST, UNDERGROUND, AND OTHER ILLICIT FINANCING

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 5594, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorist, Underground, and Other Illicit Financing Act. I wish to commend my colleague from Pennsylvania, Congressman MIKE FITZPATRICK, for his leadership on this bill.

This bill would direct the President to work with the Secretaries of the Treasury, State, Defense, and Homeland Security Departments, as well as Federal banking agencies and the Director of National Intelligence to create a comprehensive national strategy to push back against terror financing.

This national strategy would call for an ability to adapt to technology de-

velopments used by terrorists and to use technology to fight terror financing; it would encourage working with private financial institutions; and it would emphasize coordination efforts between international, State, and local officials.

This is a very good bill, and I am proud to support it.

SIMPLIFYING THE APPLICATION FOR STUDENT AID

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 5528, the Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act.

This bill would make it easier for students to fill out the free application for Federal student aid, also known as the FAFSA form, in a number of ways. It would allow students to apply for financial aid earlier by using tax data from the 2 years prior before the FAFSA is dated. Under this legislation, some of the critical information FAFSA requires would be automatically entered, removing barriers that could hinder students in need from applying for aid.

We should do everything we can to assist students who want to attend college. And, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will help many students get more of a head start on responsible financial planning for their future.

SOLAR FUELS INNOVATION

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 5638, the Solar Fuels Innovation Act.

This legislation would enable the Federal Government to contribute to advancing energy technology at early stages through the Solar Fuels Basic Research Initiative at the Department of Energy.

The initiative would focus on the areas of science that are necessary to develop solar fuels, such as chemistry and materials science. It is important, indeed, and it is critical that we accelerate the research and deployment of next generation clean energy technologies.

In authorizing this research, which would be made available to companies, the Federal Government would help cutting-edge companies take the critical next steps in energy innovation. If we are thoughtful in how we advance American energy innovation, we can create jobs, preserve our resources, and improve the health of our communities.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH PARIS

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Joseph Paris, a teacher at the Stetson Middle School in the West Chester Area School District, who received the Bob Thompson Excellence in Energy Award from the National Energy Education Development Project.

Mr. Paris has been bringing technology into the classroom, while spurring interest and encouraging students to succeed. Great job, Mr. Paris.

RECOGNIZING THE HOME OF THE SPARROW AS NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the Home of the Sparrow as Nonprofit of the Year, as recognized by The Main Line Chamber of Commerce.

The Home of the Sparrow provides housing, education, and access to community resources to low-income women in Chester County. And the Home of the Sparrow has helped bring positive change to so many, and continues as a stellar, caring example of making a difference in Chester County.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, it has been 4 days since the mass shooting in Dallas. It has been a month since the mass shooting in Orlando. It has been 7 months since the mass shooting in San Bernardino, and at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs. It has been a year since the mass shooting in Charleston. It has been 2 years since the mass shooting in Umpqua Community College in Oregon. It has been 3½ years since the mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. It has been 4 years since the mass shooting at the theater in Aurora, Colorado. It has been 5½ years since the mass shooting in Tucson, Arizona, where our colleague, Gabby Giffords, was shot.

Mr. Speaker, please talk to Speaker RYAN. Not once, after any of those shootings, in all of these 5½ years, have we had one hearing or one vote on gun violence, not one.

Now, we have had 60 votes on repealing the Affordable Care Act, none of which went anywhere. The Republican majority has spent millions of dollars going after Benghazi or emails to no avail; but not one vote, not one hearing, nothing on gun violence.

□ 1100

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know I would much rather be here talking about the Broncos winning the 50th Super Bowl. I would much rather be talking about the unbelievable accuracy of NASA getting the Juno satellite to Jupiter after 5 years of space travel within 1 second of the planned time. I would much rather be talking about Jenny Simpson, who is a University of Colorado graduate who is going to Rio, and wish her much success and that the wind be at her back. Those would be a lot more fun. Those would be some things I would love to do. But we have got to grapple with this issue. It is not going away, and we are not going away.

We asked for two commonsense pieces of legislation. They certainly aren't going to handle all the ills of society, but one is no fly, no buy; meaning, if you are on the terrorist watch list, you don't get a gun. The second is so common sense, which is background