

that my daughter attends. He is the first person in his family to attend college, and his goal is to earn a Ph.D. in engineering and to address our Nation's affordable housing crisis. Today, Eliel encourages young students to pursue careers in science and math.

Eliel is a DACA student. Let me repeat. Eliel is a DACA student. He and his family left Mexico when he was 7 years old to pursue the American Dream through hard work and dedication.

We must ensure that Eliel and hundreds of other hardworking DACA students stay in America, the only home they have known, so that they can also contribute to the greatness of our great country. DACA students are our new Americans.

Let us help our great Nation stay great. Let us do the right thing. Let's give our DACA students and other hardworking taxpayers in our Nation a pathway to citizenship.

VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING DO NOT BELONG IN SHACKLES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in her formative years, Lena wore turtle-necks and baggy clothes to school every day.

Why did she do so?

To hide the bruises that covered her entire body.

Soon, Lena's abusive foster mother lost custody of her. And when her foster mother lost custody, Lena just ran away. She was 13.

After bolting from the front lawn at the Houston middle school, she ran into a friendly-looking stranger, and that is when she discovered a false sense of comfort in the hands of a dastardly human trafficker. He offered to look after her, protect her, and love her; that was if she made him a little money. And he offered her the one thing she was missing in her 13 years, someone who said they loved her.

Mr. Speaker, love doesn't come with black eyes and bruises, however. The trafficker even promised Lena drugs so she could focus on something else while she was having sex with the buyers of children.

For the next 3 months, Lena would have many different traffickers and many different buyers. She would spend a few months or weeks with them, moving from motel to motel, then she would get scared and try to go back to foster care, and then just disappear again.

Finally, she was arrested after police responded to an internet post advertising sex with children. They arrested her trafficker in the hotel next door. With her help, the police ultimately charged two individuals with forcing a child into prostitution, or human trafficking, as we call it.

Upon her arrest, it was revealed that not only did she have three sexually

transmitted diseases, she was also pregnant.

The problem then, Mr. Speaker, is that Lena had nowhere to go. Authorities found themselves with an abused, traumatized, demoralized trafficking victim, a child, on their hands. Remember, Lena was a victim of crime. She was not a criminal. Children cannot be willing prostitutes under the law.

But there were no resources to put her anywhere, no resources to get her help and the support that she needed. The very limited number of nearby trafficking shelters were all full and there was no place to send her, so she was locked up in the county jail.

Victims of trafficking, Mr. Speaker, do not belong in shackles and orange jumpsuits. They belong in safe, nurturing environments. They deserve to have access to resources and help to get their stolen lives back for them.

How can a victim begin to recover, while a child, languishing in jail?

The justice system failed Lena and many others just like her, but it doesn't have to be this way. Lena deserves justice.

Sitting here in Washington, D.C., there is a victims' fund totaling over \$12 billion. Money in this fund comes from fines and fees imposed on convicted felons, people like deviants who trafficked Lena. Unfortunately, year after year, only a small amount of this money is actually taken out of the fund to help victims. Most of it stays in the fund and is used by appropriators to offset the costs of their pet projects that have nothing to do with victims of crime.

This is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. The money, remember, is not taxpayer money. It is money that comes from criminals when they are convicted in Federal court, and we should give this money to victims of crime.

Money in the fund should be spent only on what victims like Lena desperately need so that they can get their lives back together and recover from the trafficking abuse they suffered.

Lena and other trafficking victims deserve justice. They deserve the money that is in the fund, and bureaucrats need to quit using that money as an offset for other projects. The victim fund is partially the answer.

Mr. Speaker, this should be spent on victims of crime because no trafficking victim belongs in the shackles of a county jail.

And that is just the way it is.

SENSELESS ACTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Jonah Min Hwang, another victim of a senseless act of gun violence. Jonah was only 8 years old when he was killed last

week in a drive-by shooting in my home city of Pomona.

Jonah, his parents, and his brother were enjoying dinner hosted by friends of his parents, two schoolteachers, when a bullet ripped through the house and hit Jonah. Crimes like this are heartbreaking.

A talented soccer player, an avid reader who loved superheroes, Jonah was an adopted child from a Taiwanese orphanage just 3 years ago. It eats at your soul to think that such a young child with his whole life ahead of him could be taken so ruthlessly. Perhaps most frustrating is that Jonah's killer is still at large.

When I first heard of Jonah's death, it brought me back to a similar tragedy when I served as mayor of my home city of Pomona. In 2006, little Ethan Esparza was shot and killed while he was playing in his front yard during his birthday party. He would have turned 4 years old.

Ethan's murder shocked our community and was a stark reminder of the violence that plagues our city. Sadly, over 10 years later, we are still fighting those same battles.

The murders of Jonah and Ethan were completely senseless, but they are not rare. In fact, Pomona was recently ranked California's eighth most dangerous city, which doesn't surprise those of us who have seen gangs take hold of our city.

Our local police department puts their lives on the line every single day to try to keep us safe, and our local officials have made significant investments in law enforcement. During my time as mayor, we implemented gang injunctions to try to get hold of the problem.

□ 1015

But as the number of guns on the streets continues to rise and ruthless gang members get their hands on these deadly weapons, it often feels like a losing battle. We are alone fighting these battles.

As a matter of fact, today marks the 23rd anniversary of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, better known as the Brady bill, which has blocked more than 3 million people who had no business owning a gun from buying a gun from a federally licensed dealer.

As the new President makes his first address to Congress today, it is especially infuriating that, despite the countless gun-related tragedies occurring across our country, this Congress and this new administration have not taken one single step to reduce gun violence. I have come to this floor before demanding action, and I stand here before you yet again today, Mr. Speaker, to demand action on behalf of Jonah, of Ethan, and of the millions of innocent lives lost.

There are steps that we can take immediately to expand the Brady bill to save lives and make our communities safer:

First, we should close the loophole that allows guns to be sold online or at gun shows without background checks.

Second, we should make sure that there are resources available to research gun violence—research. We can't find effective solutions if we can't research and understand the problem.

Lastly, we should enhance the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, NICS, and make sure that States are inputting records in a way that allows Federal agencies to run complete background checks on individuals. Background checks are only as effective as the quality of the records in the background check system.

There is no excuse for making it easy for dangerous people to get their hands on a deadly weapon. It is my deepest hope that this Congress will take action on gun control so that none of us has to attend another vigil in Pomona—or anywhere else in America—to honor the memory of another child taken from us much too soon. We owe it to the victims and to their loved ones to act.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today not only to celebrate African American History Month, but to celebrate two stories lost to mainstream history. The first story is the original Underground Railroad, and the other story is of Josiah T. Walls.

Students across the country have heard stories about the Underground Railroad during the Antebellum Period; however, there was a Road to Freedom that existed before the United States was even established, and that road went south to the free territory of Spanish Florida. In fact, the National Park Service held its sixth annual Underground Railroad Conference in St. Augustine in 2012 to highlight this very story which started with eight recorded families seeking freedom in 1608 in Florida.

During this period, thousands of men, women, and children fled from the colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. These individuals headed to Florida to gain their freedom thanks to the Edict of 1693, which was issued by the then-Spanish Government that stated that any man, woman, or child who found their way to Spanish Florida would be granted freedom.

The people at the heart of this story are the Gullah Geechee who trace their lineage to West Africa. Once free in Florida, the Gullah Geechee people thrived, establishing communities, forts, and deep roots throughout Florida's Third Congressional District, roots that still can be felt today.

The second story is of Josiah T. Walls. He was a man who was born into slavery in 1842 in Virginia. He worked as a slave. The Civil War broke out,

and he was conscripted by the Confederate Army to serve as a cook in the Civil War. He got freed by the Union soldiers, served with the Union soldiers, and after the war, he moved to Florida to fight in the Seminole American wars. During that time period, the war ended, and he moved to Gainesville, Florida, where he became the first African-American mayor of our city where I come from.

During that time, he became a very successful businessperson. He was elected to the Florida Assembly, and then later he was elected to the U.S. Congress, serving in this very body here today. His elections got challenged, and he lost his role as a Representative in the House. He ran again the next year, won again, and served a full term. Then the third term he ran, he won again. His election got challenged by a Confederate soldier, and he lost his seat.

He went on to become a prominent businessman in north central Florida, owned a farm, and was very successful until the freeze of 1906, which put him out of business. He moved to Tallahassee and became a newspaper owner and printed a local newspaper.

He rose to prominence, but at his death, he was but a footnote in the histories not just of our State, but of our country. Here is a man that was born into slavery, rose to prominence, and was forgotten by history.

I tell these stories because these stories, like many stories in our early history, must never be forgotten and must be remembered by our history lest we repeat it. It must also be taught to our children so that they are inspired and they see themselves in the history books like these other folks.

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 10 o'clock and 21 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Harvey Klee, American Legion National Chaplain, Bluffton, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we thank You when heroic leadership has been undertaken in this House during times of crises, for their labor well into the night, for efforts to seek compromise where compromise is warranted, and for creative solutions proposed and acted upon in the best interests of the American people.

May unity prevail even when parties are in conflict. When progress is impeded and negotiations break down, grant them fresh ideas for discussion and ultimate resolution.

May all Members of this House remain faithful to the oath of office they have taken as Representatives of "We the people . . ." and may political ideologies be tempered by intellectual honesty.

Lord, bless this land we love so much and save us from our own self-inflicted wounds.

This we pray in the name of all that is holy.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ENGEL 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.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN HARVEY KLEE

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine who is here with us today. Chaplain Harvey H. Klee, a resident of Llano, Texas, joins us today as the national chaplain of the American Legion.

We just heard Chaplain Klee give a beautiful invocation, calling for us all to be unified in our actions, with the best interest of the American people at heart. Chaplain Klee has dedicated himself to living by those words, serving our Nation and its people in many ways.

Chaplain Klee served in the Navy during the Korean war and later worked as a missionary helping drug addicts and designing training programs for inmates at a prison in California.

Later, he founded the Texas Chaplains Association, and has been appointed Texas Department Chaplain nine times, which is more times than any other chaplain in the history of the department.

Chaplain Klee, thank you for joining us today and reminding us of the great power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.