

every second. I was scared, but not because I thought that I was going to die. I was scared because I was thinking about what might happen to my family when they heard that I got killed. My dad always told me, ‘Don’t go to school; your life is more important than your education,’ but I never listened, and I always argued with him because I believe that my education was important enough to take the risky chance.”

The gunman entered the room, looked around, and went away. They stole some cars, but left everyone alive. Ammar recalled: “Those seconds felt like years; they were the longest seconds in my life.”

Here is the great part of the story: It is not a story; it is real life. Ammar was granted political asylum, and in 2013, he graduated from Bard College and has since completed medical school, moving on to a career to help others and improve their healthy lives.

We should be proud of him and the thousands of other young men and young women every day who are fighting through adversity to achieve, who will go on to make this a greater country than it already is; and it is a reminder to all of us in what is, at times, a very divisive political environment that the reason that we do these jobs is to make sure that we are providing opportunity for the next generation, and it is they who will make our country an even greater place. It is their achievements that are the cornerstone of our country and a great reminder to all of us that we are a special country with special people doing great things every single day.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

**THE SPEAKER** pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the comments and remarks of the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) with regard to being mindful of the deaths from gun violence that plague our communities all across the country, and particularly as the summer has begun, these deaths will continue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about another kind of gun violence that makes our streets and homes unsafe, and that is the deadly encounters between civilians and police officers.

Mr. Speaker, I have wracked my brain trying to understand these deaths. I have grieved with the mothers who have lost their children. I have met with experts and attended roundtables on how to find a way to mitigate these fatal police encounters.

Let me tell you, I think I can propose a solution that we can all support, and that is H.R. 3060, the Preventing Tragedies Between Police and Communities Act, which would link law enforcement training on deescalation techniques to receipt of Federal Byrne JAG funds.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I certainly wish that I could take full credit for this concept because I think that this legislation would both save civilian lives and police lives; however, this idea is rooted in the Police Executive Research Forum report which both Republicans and Democrats have cited. It was written by police officer peers and by police officer experts.

Mr. Speaker, what they found is that police academies require 58 hours of training on how to use a firearm and another 49 hours on other defensive tactics. While they don’t require, they offer 8 voluntary—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8—8 voluntary hours on how to employ deescalation tactics in crisis intervention. We need to require this deescalation training.

This deescalation training curriculum would be to use verbal and physical tactics to avoid escalating the situation, use the lowest level of force as possible and a safe response to identified threats, and be aware of mental health and substance abuse issues and crisis intervention strategies in order to appropriately respond. This training would provide police with the tools they need to prevent violent interactions and save not only their lives, but the lives of civilians, too.

We know that kids are out of school and that the tensions in our streets are high. Police are on alert, and far too many of us are distrustful of the police due to the painful and frightful memories of how many deadly encounters have dominated headlines—close to 1,000 in 1 year.

How can this Congress recess for the summer and not take up this bill? Yes, the Affordable Care Act is a big issue here before us in Congress, but if you live in communities of color around the country, the immediate healthcare issue for you is being shot by a police officer who has been sworn to protect you.

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If you die at age 12, like Tamir Rice, who was shot by police for playing with his sister on a playground in Cleveland, how can you be concerned with Medicaid?

If you are killed at 31 years old, like Donte Hamilton, who was shot 14 times by police for resting on a park bench in Milwaukee, nursing home care is not your priority. You won’t have the good fortune of living that long.

I ask my colleagues to prioritize preserving lives by supporting this legislation.

#### RECOGNIZING RETIRED COLONEL ROBERT A. ATOR, II

**THE SPEAKER** pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of Arkansas’ finest, Colonel Robert A. Ator, II, of Little Rock.

A veteran of the United States Air Force, Colonel Ator retired on June 3,

2017, after proudly serving our country for 28 years. Before joining the Arkansas National Guard, Colonel Ator served 11 years on Active Duty with the United States Air Force. He is a veteran of several major combat operations, including Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Provide Promise, Operation Joint Forge, and Operation Noble Eagle.

Ator is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he married Michelle, his wife of 28 years, just 3 days after graduation. Today, his son, Cadet Third Class Robert A. Ator, III, is a sophomore.

Colonel Ator is the recipient of numerous awards and medals, including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Colonel Ator is an example that all Arkansans and Americans can admire. I wish him and his family the very best in their future endeavors.

#### SALINE COUNTY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER

**MR. HILL.** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the proposed plans for a career and technical education center in my district.

Lamont Cornwell of the Saline County Economic Development Corporation presented detailed plans to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission on June 8 for a center that is specifically aimed at training our State’s skilled workforce community.

The center would allow students to enroll in science and technology career preparatory classes, careers that will only become more invaluable as our Nation moves forward.

The center will impact parents and children of all socioeconomic statuses and positively change our technical career education environment in central Arkansas.

As co-chair of the Congressional Skilled American Workforce Caucus, I was encouraged to see the recent passage of H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act. I am encouraged to see leaders in Saline County step up and embrace a passion for our skilled workforce community.

#### HONORING FOSTER PARENTS

**MR. HILL.** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of foster families around Arkansas and the organizations dedicated to their recruitment.

According to recent Arkansas data, the number of foster youths has outpaced the number of spaces available in foster homes by 1,283. Many families have already stepped up to the plate to provide a loving home for children in the foster system.

One such family, Andrew and Amy Baker of Searcy, Arkansas, was recently named Foster Family of the Year by our State’s Division of Children and Family Services for their

dedicated efforts to reunify foster children with their biological parents.

In addition, there are organizations around our State that have been at the forefront of recruitment efforts for foster families, including 50 families in the month of April alone.

One such organization is entitled The CALL, locally directed by Lauri Currier, who notes that a stable, loving home can make a huge difference in a child's life, specifically with regard to escaping the grasp of neglect and abuse.

Today I want to emphasize Ms. Currier's statement that if one family from each of the 6,000 churches around Arkansas came forward to adopt, no more children would ever be waiting for a forever family.

#### FISHING WITH A HERO SUMMER PROGRAM

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a hands-on mentorship program in my district created through a partnership between the Bryant Police Department and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bryant.

The summer program entitled "Fishing with a Hero" pairs Boys and Girls Clubs students with local police heroes to bond over the longstanding, joyful pastime of fishing.

Through a 2-day fishing instruction program, local police officers are able to build quality mentoring relationships with students in traditionally underserved or impoverished communities.

Along with being one of the students favorite programs, the established relationships aid in creating long-term bonds between our law enforcement officers and local youth.

The stability and prosperity of our local communities hinges on mutual respect between our citizens and our law enforcement officers. The creation of genuine relationships at a young age ensures the longevity of that important respect.

#### HONORING ROBIN CREOLE AND DANNY REVIS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the recent selfless actions of two extraordinary individuals in the Second Congressional District of Arkansas, Robin Creole and Danny Revis. Both men work tirelessly in the Benton School District transportation program.

#### MEDICAID IS A LIFELINE

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, how many of us here have had an aging parent, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle who could no longer stay in their home alone? Seniors with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other special needs, someone to watch over them at home so they don't get lost or injure themselves or leave the stove on and injure others? Seniors with Parkinson's who need help to walk, to move, to get out of their chair, seniors too frail to care for

themselves, or need long-term rehabilitation after a fall and an injured hip or an injured femur?

How many of us have worried about where they would live and how they would get the care that they need? And oftentimes, the real question is: How are they going to pay for that care?

Most people work their entire lives, save for retirement, pay into the system, yet still find themselves struggling to afford the care that they need. Both parents in middle class families have to work to barely make ends meet; no money and nobody home to care for their parents or grandparents.

I understand the tough decision. You want to keep your loved one close, you want to care for them yourself, but you have to work and make ends meet to barely keep going. That is why most of the 1.4 million people across the country living in nursing homes rely on Medicaid.

For Americans in nursing homes, Medicaid is a lifeline. That is why TrumpCare's Medicaid cuts would devastate our Nation's seniors, leaving the 64 percent of nursing home residents who depend on Medicaid out in the cold. In fact, nursing homes account for 42 percent of Medicaid spending.

Under TrumpCare, many seniors will lose their nursing home care, grandmothers with disabilities would find it harder to be cared for, harder to walk, harder to eat, harder to bathe. Nursing homes give patients a safe and caring place to recuperate when they are weakened by disabilities but don't need to be in a hospital, and they provide families peace of mind knowing that their loved one has a safe and caring place to get around-the-clock care.

That is why we must stop TrumpCare. We cannot allow these deep cuts to Medicaid threaten the health of our seniors. We cannot rip these services away from the most vulnerable among us.

We must put seniors first. We must give voice to vulnerable seniors. Let's put people above partisanship, and solutions above ideology.

I oppose TrumpCare, and I will continue to fight to protect care for seniors and for all Americans.

#### RECOGNIZING RON AND DIANE WITHEM

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two lifelong servants from the State of Nebraska, former Speaker of Legislature Ron Withem and his wife, Diane.

Speaker Withem is retiring this month from 2 decades with the University of Nebraska, where he has served as the associate vice president for university affairs and the director of governmental relations.

As we see the end of one's historic career, we are reminded of the positive impact one person can have on so

many. Ron and Diane Withem have selflessly dedicated their lives to the State of Nebraska both in educating our youth as well as through the legislative process. The impact they have made on the entire State of Nebraska is evident all around us in Nebraska.

The story of the Withems is one full of many accomplishments. After moving to Papillion, Ron and Diane both became respected teachers in our local school district. Prior to entering politics, Ron was a teacher of history. Diane spent nearly 4 decades teaching in the Papillion-LaVista schools and prepared many students for college and success, including my own chief of staff, Mark Dreiling.

As leaders in our Democratic Party, Diane and Ron's political journey began in 1976, when they campaigned for Hess Dyas during the U.S. Senate primary. Later that year, they both worked for another former Second District Congressman, John Cavanagh, in the general election. Following Congressman Cavanagh's victory, Ron served as a congressional aide in his local office.

By the 1980s, Ron was a member of the Papillion-LaVista School Board and was a member of the Papillion Planning Commission. When the legislative seat in District 14 became vacant in 1983, Ron was tapped by Governor Bob Kerry to serve out the term. And serve he did.

Ron Withem dedicated 14 years of his life in our legislature, serving as the chairperson of the Urban Affairs Committee, the chairperson of the Education Committee, and the high mark being his election as the first Democratic speaker since 1970, which happened in a Republican-majority body of our officially nonpartisan legislature.

During that time, he rose to become one of the most well-respected voices in our unicameral, proudly working on issues that he was passionate about and that would have had a profound impact on our State.

Some of his accomplishments are easily visible, such as the Harrison Street Interstate Exchange. Working alongside local elected officials and business leaders, Ron's strong advocacy paved the way for what is now one of our most vibrant areas in the district.

A leader among leaders, Ron was instrumental in sponsoring and guiding many other important pieces of legislation into law. He negotiated the State's first major reform in K-12 educational funding, sponsored legislation granting tuition waivers for veterans' dependents, led efforts to improve accessibility and the transparency of our elections, and he worked to create Nebraska's first bone marrow drive system.

Through his years in public office, he was well-respected by both his colleagues as well as his constituents. Ron was known for his uncanny ability to remember bill numbers, the year a bill was discussed, and even the most