

It has been inspiring to see the many tributes my colleagues have shared here with this body throughout the month. It underscores the immense and immeasurable contributions of Native Americans to this country. Yesterday I spoke about the Navaho code talkers and all the code talkers and the veterans who have come from Native American lands.

As a member of the congressional Native American Caucus, I am proud to work with Tribal leaders to strengthen the relationship between our country and their sovereign nations. There is a great deal to do to ensure rural, Tribal communities have access to 21st century infrastructure, education, and healthcare, but I am confident that the work we are doing will make these critical investments.

Mr. Speaker, one of the founding principles of this great country is the celebration of diversity of its people. When we recognize that as a strength, we truly are a more perfect union.

HONORING TROOPER DAMON ALLEN

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

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper Damon Allen of Mexia, Texas, who passed away on November 23, 2017.

Damon Allen was born in Morgantown, Kentucky, on October 4, 1976. His family moved to Mexia in 1984, where he lived until his passing.

In 1995, Damon graduated from Mexia High School, where he was a member of the varsity football team. Damon went on to marry his high school sweetheart, Kasey Pickett. Happily married for nearly 24 years, Kasey and Damon had three daughters and a son: Chelsea, Kaitlyn, Madison, and Cameron. Damon was also the proud grandfather to his grandson, Quest.

After graduating from Mexia High School, Damon worked for the Mexia State School, a rehabilitation school for students with learning impairments. He then worked for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for 5 years before pursuing his passion to become a Texas DPS State Trooper.

Damon was an exemplary DPS Trooper for 15 years and was known to those in his unit as a model gentleman. He was fair and polite to all he came in contact with, and he treated all around him as if they were his life-long friends. His calling to serve in law enforcement came from a desire to be the man who people turn to in their time of need. Tragically, he was murdered by a criminal while serving the people of Texas on Thanksgiving Day.

In his free time, Damon enjoyed hunting, fishing, and off-road driving in his Jeep, especially over the dunes at the beach. He had a strong faith in God, attending both the Cowboy Church in Freestone and the First Assembly of God Church in Mexia.

Mr. Speaker, Damon Allen worked tirelessly to serve our central Texas communities. He is loved, and he has certainly left an enduring impression on the people of Mexia. He will be forever remembered as a great State trooper, a public servant, a community member, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Allen family. We also lift up the family and friends of Damon Allen in our prayers. I have requested that the United States flag be flown over the Capitol to honor the life and legacy of DPS Trooper Damon Allen.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women who protect us from external threats, and for our first responders who protect us here at home.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise yet again because Americans are dying and this House is doing nothing. Correction, we aren't doing nothing. House Republicans are planning to make the situation worse.

Yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee considered the so-called Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which should be called the "Exporting Gun Violence Across State Line Act."

In addition to threatening the safety of our communities, this bill, H.R. 38, is not only a threat to innocent citizens, but a direct threat to the brave men and women who protect and serve our communities.

So far this year, 42 law enforcement officers have been shot and killed in the United States.

I come from a law enforcement family. I have police officers—uncles, cousins, and nephews—serving in New York City and Chicago. I know the fear that law enforcement families feel, the constant worry that they may not come home, that you might get that call in the middle of the night or a knock on the door from the police chaplain.

If this House passes this dangerous bill, more law enforcement families will get these calls and get these late-night visits that no family should ever get.

H.R. 38 is opposed by many law enforcement organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Foundation, the Police Executive Research Forum, Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Associations of Women Law Enforcement Executives, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, and many others.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter of opposition from the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence.

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE ON THE CONCEALED CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT OF 2017—S. 446 & H.R. 38

WASHINGTON, DC.—The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence urges members of Congress to oppose both the House and Senate versions of "Concealed Carry Reciprocity"—The Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 (H.R. 38), sponsored by Representative Richard Hudson (R-NC), and The Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 (S. 446), sponsored by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), respectively.

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (the Partnership) includes nine national law enforcement organizations dedicated to serving the Nation's more than 900,000 sworn and civilian law enforcement officers, executives, and professional staff.

The Partnership has opposed previous legislative attempts to mandate concealed carry reciprocity nationwide because such schemes severely undermine successful, well established state laws governing carrying concealed firearms.

H.R. 38 and S. 446 would require each state—even those with strong permitting standards and stringent training requirements—to allow anyone to carry a concealed firearm so long as the person's own home state allows it. These misguided bills would preempt local and state perspectives on what's best for communities by forcing states to accept weaker concealed carry standards of other states and eliminates every state's ability to determine who may exercise the enormous responsibility of carrying a firearm, concealed or otherwise.

Training is a vitally important aspect of carrying a concealed firearm. Law enforcement officers are extensively trained to understand responsible firearm use, including making split-second decisions about when deadly force is appropriate; they also attend periodic in-service training and regularly requalify with their service weapons, most at least semi-annually. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, states require an average 92 hours of firearms skills and judgment training before certifying someone to carry a gun as a police officer. While a majority of states require a minimum number of hours of training to be eligible for civilian concealed firearm permits, several states do not require any training at all to carry a firearm in public. No state should be forced to accept a person carrying a concealed firearm who has not received gun safety training.

In addition, during public contacts, police officers will face the daunting task of verifying the validity of different carry permits from the states that issue them. Twelve states require no permit whatsoever to carry a concealed gun, taking away an officer's ability to determine if a person is carrying legally. Reciprocity would leave law enforcement helpless to keep guns out of the wrong hands when a person claims "constitutional carry" authority. This obvious step in the wrong direction would sow chaos and uncertainty, making a cop's job harder and citizens less safe. Under the House bill (H.R. 38), attempting to verify a permit or identification card comes with potential legal liability for law enforcement, an outrageous outcome for an officer trying to protect his or her community.

The complete lack of consistent training standards, the different standards for identifying individuals that are too dangerous to carry, the uncertainty of a document's validity, and the exposure of agencies and police officers to civil liability create unacceptable risks to our nation's 900,000 police officers and the public at large. We reject the idea that one state's approach to carrying a concealed firearm will work across the country. States and localities should maintain their rights to legislate concealed carry laws that best meet the needs of their citizens.

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence urges you to respect and defend state laws while protecting and supporting our nation's police officers by opposing H.R. 38 and S. 446. Thank you for your support.

The Partnership Includes: Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), Police Foundation (PF).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the letter, in part, states that the bill will create unacceptable risk to our Nation's 900,000 police officers and the public at large.

The Fraternal Order of Police has come out in opposition to a similar bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, the police are telling us that it is dangerous to them and the public safety at large.

So why is the majority pushing it so hard?

Because, once again, the majority is putting the NRA's agenda above the lives of Americans and our law enforcement officers. This is simply unacceptable.

Why are we considering a bill that puts our officers at greater risk? Why should we take up legislation that we know will increase the number of gun deaths, including among law enforcement officers? Why would we make a dangerous job more dangerous just to satisfy the NRA?

Why is it cosponsored by one of my colleagues who demanded that a painting be taken down for disrespecting law enforcement, but he is willing to cosponsor a bill that puts their lives at greater risk?

I guess it is easier to complain about a picture than stand up to the NRA.

Mr. Speaker, once again, the NRA's checks are influencing this House. The victims of gun violence should matter more than their dollars.

Dollar 209, Deputy Sheriff Robert French, end of watch, August 30, 2017;

Dollar 210, Officer Miguel Moreno, end of watch, June 30, 2017;

Dollar 211, Trooper Joel Davis, end of watch, July 9, 2017;

Dollar 212, Agent Roberto Medina-Mariani, end of watch, September 11, 2017;

Dollar 213, Captain Bryon K. Dickson, II, end of watch, September 12, 2014;

Dollar 214, Special Agent Michael T. Walter, end of watch, May 27, 2017;

Dollar 215, Corporal Stephen J. Ballard, end of watch, April 26, 2017;

Dollar 216, Officer Miosotis Familia, end of watch, July 5, 2017;

Dollar 217, Lieutenant Kevin Mainhart, end of watch, May 11, 2017;

Dollar 218, Lieutenant Patrick Weatherford, end of watch, June 12, 2017;

Dollar 219, Sergeant Richard "Sam" Howard, end of watch, August 19, 2017.

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Dollar 220, Deputy Sheriff Mason Moore, end of watch, May 16, 2017;

Dollar 221, Chief Steven Eric DiSario, end of watch, May 12, 2017;

Dollar 222, Master Sergeant Debra Clayton, end of watch, January 9, 2017;

Dollar 223, Deputy Sheriff William Durr, end of watch, May 27, 2017;

Dollar 224, Officer Eric G. Kelly, end of watch, April 4, 2009;

Dollar 225, Officer Gary Michael, end of watch, August 6, 2017;

Dollar 226, Corrections Officer Curtis Billue, end of watch, June 13, 2017;

Dollar 227, Agent Benjamin De los Santos-Barbosa, end of watch, April 21, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I will jump to dollar 234, Trooper Damon Allen, whom we just heard about, end of watch, November 23, 2017.

We cannot let this bill pass. If we pass H.R. 38, that number will, tragically, grow.

Dollar 228, Officer Sean Clark, end of watch, March 31, 2007;

Dollar 229, Deputy Sheriff David Wade, end of watch, April 18, 2017;

Dollar 230, Lieutenant Aaron Allan, end of watch, July 27, 2017;

Dollar 231, Assistant Chief Deputy Clinton Greenwood, end of watch, April 3, 2017;

Dollar 232, Deputy Sheriff Mark Burbridge, end of watch, May 1, 2017;

Dollar 233, Officer Justin Terney, end of watch, March 27, 2017;

Dollar 235, Officer Alyn Beck, end of watch, June 8, 2014;

Dollar 236, Detective Sean Suiter, end of watch, November 16, 2017;

Dollar 237, Officer Justice Leo, end of watch, October 21, 2017;

Dollar 238, Officer Marcus McNeil, end of watch, October 13, 2017;

Dollar 239, Officer Stephen Mayhle, end of watch, April 4, 2009;

Dollar 240, Officer Floyd East, Jr., end of watch, October 9, 2017;

Dollar 241, Corporal Michael Paul Middlebrook, end of watch, October 1, 2017;

Dollar 242, Detective Kristen Hearne, end of watch, September 29, 2017;

Dollar 243, Officer Igor Soldo, end of watch, June 8, 2014;

Dollar 244, Officer Matthew Baxter, end of watch, August 18, 2017;

Dollar 245, Officer Paul Scullo, end of watch, April 4, 2009;

Dollar 246, Officer Deriek W. Crouse, end of watch, December 8, 2011;

Dollar 247, Deputy Sheriff Dwight Darwin Maness, end of watch, September 14, 2015;

Dollar 248, Officer Jeff Shelton, end of watch, March 31, 2007;

Dollar 249, Officer Thor Odin Soderberg, end of watch, July 7, 2010;

Dollar 250, Officer Brian David Shaw, end of watch, November 17, 2017.

Every year, more and more officers die from guns in the line of duty.

RECOGNIZING MASTER SERGEANT GILBERT HOWLAND

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Master Sergeant Gilbert Howland of Langhorne, Pennsylvania, one of my constituents and a member of Merrill's Marauders.

Merrill's Marauders was a top-secret unit of commandos who served behind Japanese lines in Burma, China, and India during World War II. The men of this magnificent unit volunteered to serve and faced some of the most vicious and consistent fighting of the war. Their commitment to service stands as a profound example of sacrifice for our Nation.

Master Sergeant Howland was an NCO in charge of 16 men and two heavy weapons in this unit. After being discharged in 1945, Ranger Howland did not sit idly by. Instead, he reenlisted to serve in Korea and for two tours in Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, Master Sergeant Howland and the rest of the brave men in Merrill's Marauders should be recognized. I am proud to support H.R. 667, which seeks to award the Congressional Gold Medal to World War II's Merrill's Marauders.

WHAT MY CONSTITUENTS EXPECT OF ME

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I love my country.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, because I refuse to stand idly by as a billionaire bigot does irreparable harm to my country—a billionaire bigot who tolerates the KKK but won't tolerate Islam; a billionaire bigot who tolerates anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and homophobia.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the consequences will be, but I do know this: the people who sent me here sent me to this Congress to fight hate, not to tolerate, not to mitigate, but to eliminate hate. The people I represent have an expectation of me.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the vote will be, but I do know this: Next week, there will be a vote to impeach. Next week, there will be a resolution brought before the Congress, and there will be a vote to either table it, send it to committee, or vote it up or down.

That is what the people I represent expect me to do, and I will do no less.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.