

CONGRATULATING REMEDIOS DIAZ OLIVER

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Remedios Diaz Oliver, a prominent member of our south Florida community, on her retirement from All American Containers.

Remedios is a powerhouse. Along with her husband, Fausto, she established All American Containers, a multimillion-dollar business, a bottling company in Miami that serves corporations worldwide. Her son, Fausto, Jr.; her daughter, Rosie; and her grandchildren, Jackie and Fausto III, also work in the family business.

Like me, Remedios was forced to flee the Castro regime in communist Cuba, and she has been an unstoppable commitment of force for the island's freedom.

Remedios has been a trusted adviser to Presidents, to Senators, and to Members of Congress on the issue of her native homeland. And her advocacy in charitable events is second to none.

Remedios has been a leader in the American Cancer Society, raising funds and awareness to assist those stricken with this terrible disease.

While Remedios may be retiring from All American Containers, she is not retiring from our community, and I look forward to her next endeavor.

I love you so much, my friend. Te quiero mucho, amiga mia. Thank you. Felicidades to Remedios.

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GUN VIOLENCE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, although many in my constituency are still recovering from Hurricane Harvey—and I wear a “Houston Strong” pin—we are working on getting housing rebuilt and seniors back in their homes, I can tell you that, throughout my district, as I was there this past week, they spoke in quiet tones about Douglas, the high school, and the tragedy in Florida.

And none of them seemed to agree—and, in particular, young men, who I will talk about in the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order on guns. None of them seemed to agree to arming teachers. All of them had ideas about gun violence and handguns, as well as weapons of war. And I believe the young people should be listened to, and we should not leave until we do constructive, sensible gun safety legislation, and it should be done now.

I ask the American people to rise up and speak in tones of nonpartisanship, bipartisanship, to save and secure our children and our teachers.

RECOGNIZING MAJOR SANDRA STOQUERT

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major Sandra Stoquert of Camden, New York, an outstanding member of our community. Major Stoquert recently took command of the 109th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing, based out of Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, New York.

Major Stoquert joined the New York Air National Guard in 1996, after serving in both the Army and the Navy Reserves. In 2004, she was commissioned as an officer and since then has served in Iraq at Balad Air Base and was deployed to New Orleans in 2005, to assist in the response to Hurricane Katrina.

Since returning to upstate New York, Major Stoquert has remained active in the community. In 2013, she was named the public affairs officer for the 174th Attack Wing based out of Syracuse, New York. She served as a school counselor at Adirondack Central School District in Boonville, New York, as well as on the board for the Central New York Veteran's Outreach Center in Utica.

I would like to take this time to thank Major Stoquert for her years of service to our country and community. She is an inspiration to all and a wonderful community leader.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, America loses 7 billion gallons of clean drinking water every single day through broken pipes and leaking pipes. Flowing through those pipes, water, yes, but also dollars, tax dollars, to purify the water and treat it. Eighty-six percent of our households depend on public drinking water, and these systems are failing. I have seen my share of corroded pipes and broken pumps over the years. I have seen communities and businesses suffer from a water main break, which happens 700 times a day across America.

Last week, I visited systems in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Rensselaer, East Greenbush, and Castleton-on-Hudson in my district. I visited that legendary baby food maker, Beech-Nut, in Montgomery County, New York, which requires 275,000 gallons of water per day.

The message is clear: we must invest in our public water systems to protect our public health and to support our local businesses. We have a bipartisan bill, H.R. 3387, that has passed through committee and now awaits a vote by the full House. It would deliver critical

funding to State and local governments to get this big job started.

Whether you are a Republican, Democrat, or Independent, every life and every job depends on access to safe drinking water. This is the kind of infrastructure plan we need. Let's get this job done.

HONORING THE LIFE OF STACEE ETCHEBER

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the life of Stacey Etcheber. She attended the Route 91 festival in Las Vegas on October 1.

I would like to read a poem written for Stacey by a friend:

I am strong, and I am blessed because the strength of the animal beneath me multiplies my own strength, so I am able to stand and support my family and friends.

I am joyful, and I am blessed because the gentle wind that rushes by my face as I rid with abandon spreads my smile and my joy far and wide.

I am loyal, and I am blessed because the loyalty of a horse transcends words, embraces my soul, and flows out to encompass everything in my world.

I am filled with love, and I am blessed because the trusting love between human and horse is a love that radiates from my heart and settles protectively on those who join me in my journey.

I am a cowgirl, and the blessings of partnering with a horse are reflected in the strength, the joy, the loyalty, and the love that I am able to share with everyone whose path crosses mine.

I am blessed to be a cowgirl.

RECOGNIZING THE LEGACY OF GWEN YORK

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the legacy of Gwen York, who dedicated her life to advancing the goals of the Transport Workers Union and the Texas AFL-CIO.

Gwen was born December 27, 1956. Soon after her birthday, she located to Garland, which is just outside of Dallas, where she would spend much of her life. She graduated from South Garland High School and attended the University of Texas at Austin and later went on to join Southwest Airlines in 1980. It was a job that she loved dearly and put everything into.

She later returned to school and graduated from the National Labor College in 2006. And for the past 10 years, Gwen continued her passion for making sure that people could have a good life, particularly those at the Transport Workers Union. She was loyal and dedicated. She was everybody's advocate and friend.

I checked my last text to Gwen, and it was trying to get her to advocate for me and give me some advice on something. She was just that type of person.

She was always very busy with her work, but she always made time to mentor people, especially a lot of the young women who were also part of the labor movement.

Gwen left us far too soon, and it was very tragic in how she did, but I want all of her friends and family out there to know just what a big impact that she made on this world and for the State of Texas and for workers everywhere.

She is survived by her husband, Mark York; her daughter, Alyson Reed; and her sister, Wanda Goode.

URGING THE RELEASE OF IMPRISONED JOURNALISTS IN BURMA

(Ms. McCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the immediate release of two Reuters journalists, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who have been imprisoned in Burma for their fearless reporting on the atrocities being perpetrated against the Rohingya.

The ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya shocked the conscience of the world in part because of the important public testimony gathered by these two journalists. In December, these journalists were invited to meet with the police, they were handed documents by officers they had never met before, and then they were immediately arrested under an obscure colonial-era law. The arrest of these journalists and the Burmese Government's refusal to grant them bail is highly irregular. It seems obvious that the only purpose of their continued detention is to chill the independent media in Burma.

Mr. Speaker, a free press is essential to a democratic society. I join the State Department and governments around the world urging Burma to release these journalists immediately and to allow them to reunite with their families and to return to their important work.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the immediate release of two Reuters journalists—Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo—who have been imprisoned Burma for their fearless reporting on the atrocities being perpetrated against the Rohingya.

The ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya has shocked the conscience of the world, in part because of the important public testimony gathered by these two journalists.

In December, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were invited to meet with police officers in Yangon, were handed documents by two police officers they had never met before, and then were immediately arrested for allegedly breaching Burma's Official Secrets Act, a little-used colonial era law on government secrecy.

The arrest of these journalists and the Burmese government's refusal to grant them bail is highly irregular. It seems obvious that the only purpose of their continued detention is to chill the independent media in Burma.

I visited Burma and Bangladesh as part of a Congressional delegation in November, and

it was clear to me that the urgent humanitarian crisis in the region needs more attention from the media and the public—not less.

Despite their ongoing detention, the two journalists agreed to Reuters publication this month of their special report detailing the role of the military and Rakhine Buddhists in these atrocities. I salute these journalists for their willingness to bravely support the truth despite the personal risks to them.

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo are both ethnic Buddhists who grew up in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine state. Their work on the ethnic cleansing and humanitarian crisis has won a joint honorable mention from the Society of Publishers in Asia. Additionally, Wa Lone has written an acclaimed children's book and co-founded a charity that promotes tolerance between different ethnic groups.

Government officials, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley have called for the journalists' release. Top United Nations officials, as well as the leaders of many nations—including Canada and the United Kingdom—have also urged their release.

Mr. Speaker, a free press is essential to a democratic society. I join the State Department and governments around the world urging Burma to release Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo immediately and allow them to reunite with their families and resume their vital work.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to anchor the CBC Special Order. I would like to thank CBC Chairman CEDRIC RICHMOND for his leadership in this effort. Chairman RICHMOND has been leading this effort and raising the question about when the President said what do we have to lose. The chairman indicated that we have a lot to lose.

So for the next 60 minutes, we have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people about issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus and the millions of constituents we represent. Tonight's Special Order is about gun violence. I thank my colleagues for joining me here today to speak about the national epidemic of gun violence, an important topic to us all.

The Black community is at a critical time because we have a lot to lose because too many of our neighbors, unfortunately, have been subject to gun violence at a consistent rate, a crime

which often goes unpunished because of unreliable witnesses.

On February 14, this Nation once again witnessed a horrific tragedy that took place at a high school in Florida. Seventeen lives were taken at the hands of a gunman with way too much firepower. The horror and tragedy that shook the Florida high school should be an unimaginable event in our country. Yet, tragically, our Nation has lost too many loved ones at the hands of gun violence, to the point where we often see the same reaction: hand wringing, blaming going around, but nothing being done to stop the violence.

The city of Philadelphia knows all too well the lives we have lost at the hands of gun violence. In 2017, we saw the city experience its largest homicide epidemic since 2012. There were over 370 homicides in Philadelphia, according to the data from the Philadelphia Police Department.

And with the continuing scourge of gun violence in Philadelphia, last year I hand-delivered a letter to Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro outlining our Commonwealth's need to use all resources possible to advocate for commonsense gun reform. Since I handed that letter to the Commonwealth's attorney general, we have had more heartbreaks in America, including the unspeakable tragedy at a church, a place of worship and refuge, in Texas, and the mass shooting in Las Vegas.

Mr. Speaker, there is a gentleman who is our leader from our Caucus who will speak to this issue. He knows an awful lot about it. I have watched him in the short period of time I have been here: the Honorable JAMES CLYBURN from the Sixth District.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative EVANS for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly represent the Sixth Congressional District of South Carolina in this august body. This past week, I spent a significant amount of time throughout the district meeting with faith leaders as well as other community-based organizations. And one of the things I kept hearing came from people who are particularly interested in whether or not this Congress will do anything to respond to this horrific problem that we have with guns.

Of all the things that I find myself talking about, the one thing that bothers me most is the fact that we seem to be no longer safe in our most sacred institutions.

I often quote Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to this country way back in the early 1800s seeking what he called the magic of this great country. He said that he went throughout the country looking at our institutions—educational institutions, legislative bodies—trying to find the magic of this great country. Alexis de Tocqueville said that he could not find it in any of these places. He said that it was not until he went into our churches and