

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

synagogues that he found the real magic of this great country. He said that he came to the conclusion that, in spite of all of the difficulties and challenges we had as a country, that America was great because Americans are good.

And he went on to surmise that, if Americans ever cease to be good, America will cease to be great. It is kind of interesting that he came to that conclusion by visiting our places of worship. And tonight I want to remind the American people that that sacred institution has been violated time and time again.

And on this question of gun violence, we remember the Emanuel 9: nine soulful Bible study pupils in the basement of their church, once again reestablishing the goodness of Americans. They had that goodness violated by a young man with a gun who sat among them for a full hour before opening fire, killing nine of them.

Now, when we think about that incident and we ask ourselves how could such a thing happen, one of the things that we do know is that this young man was able to purchase a weapon, although under the law he was not eligible to make the purchase; but because of a loophole that we have in the law, a loophole that I have taken to call the "Charleston Loophole," which says simply that, if the background check is not completed within 3 days, the purchase can proceed to conclusion.

Now, the fact of the matter is, this gun was purchased in West Columbia. I don't know whether or not this young man had enough sophistication about the law to give the wrong information about his address, but what we do know is that the wrong address was keyed in; and because it was keyed in, there was difficulty trying to get the information that was needed.

□ 1945

By the time they found out the problem, the 3 days had expired, and the young man went back to get the gun, and, within days, traveled all the way from Columbia, South Carolina, down to Charleston.

He picked this church because, he said, it was historic. He wanted to go into a historic Black church.

Well, this month, the Nation has set aside time to honor the contributions of Black Americans. I can think of no way for us to better highlight what this month is all about than to, once and for all, close this Charleston loophole, to demonstrate to those nine African-American worshippers, who were going about the business of helping to make this country great, going about the business of demonstrating the goodness of Americans, to have their lives snuffed out; I can think of no better way for us to honor their lives than for us to close this loophole.

Tomorrow, I am going to come before this body with a discharge petition, because the legislation to close this loophole was filed in this body last July. It

has been hanging around now for 8 months. I am going to ask all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to sign this discharge petition before the end of this Black History month so that we can say to those souls: Rest in peace.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask the gentleman a question.

If the gentleman could just talk a little more about that magic he talked about and how do we get there. Does the gentleman have any sense of how we get there?

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his question.

I am sort of a history buff, and so I have spent a little time trying to find out what this country is all about. I also recall a great writer, George Santayana, once writing that if we fail to learn the lessons of our history, we are bound to repeat them.

I believe that history should be instructive, and I think that that is what de Tocqueville was talking about in his writings. He really came to this country, from France, to study our penal system on that particular occasion, but he was enamored with this country because of its people.

Now, the interesting thing about this, remember, the early 1800s when he came here, slavery was the law of the land, and he wrote about how contradictory that was to what he found in people's hearts, the goodness that he found in people.

So irrespective of what the challenges may be of the various institutions that we may have, the various legal issues that may come before us, the various legislative accomplishments we might make, irrespective of all that, there is a certain goodness in Americans that ought to be on demonstration at all times.

I really feel that it will demonstrate that goodness if we can say to these nine souls that, just as Alexis de Tocqueville found in our places of worship, what the basic goodness about America is all about, that is what they were in pursuit of as they sat in the basement of their church, Emanuel AME, on Calhoun Street, Charleston, South Carolina, they were there perpetuating that goodness, and it was violated.

I believe that this body can take a long step toward demonstrating how important that is by saying, in their memory, we are going to close this loophole so that their nine souls can rest in peace.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, you just heard the gentleman from South Carolina, in my view, lay out a very clear vision of what it should be like from an aspirational standpoint.

Speaking of the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus leading the conscience of this body, the gentleman from the great State of Louisiana, he knows a little bit about that—from my understanding, there is legislation that

he has—and that is Chairman CEDRIC RICHMOND from the Second District of Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND).

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for, once again, leading the Congressional Black Caucus's Special Order hour, where we get to address the American people and talk directly to the American people about what it is that is going on in Congress, what we would like to do.

Tonight is a very somber but important Special Order hour. We are talking about protecting American lives. It would not be Black History Month without a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, a Morehouse graduate. He says: "At some point, silence becomes betrayal."

I want us to just think about that: silence becomes betrayal. When it comes to our communities being inundated with guns, this Congress has been far too silent. In fact, what we do is just take moments of silence, one after another, whether it is Virginia Tech, moment of silence; Sandy Hook, moment of silence; Pulse nightclub, moment of silence; First Baptist Church, moment of silence; Las Vegas, moment of silence; Mother Emanuel, moment of silence.

So far in 2018, we have already seen 8,200 incidents of gun violence in America, including 34 mass shootings. These acts of violence have taken more than 2,200 lives. That is 2,200 families affected by gun violence.

I would just say that it is time for Congress to do something, at least have the debate, but we ought not become coconspirators with the crimes that are being committed across this country.

I know that many people will say: Hey, you all are in Congress, you all deal in theory. We deal in reality. Banning assault weapons wouldn't have kept this kid from being able to buy an AR-15.

Well, let me just tell you, that is not true.

An AR-15 from the store ranges about \$500 and \$600. A kid could probably get \$500 or \$600, but during the days of the assault weapons ban, those guns, the street value became three times as much. So that means that \$600 gun that he bought would have been \$1,800. The question is whether he would have had access to get to that \$1,800, whether good common sense would have prevailed before he got to \$1,800, whether somebody would have caught on to his plan while he tried to get \$1,800.

At some point, we can't not do anything because we say it wouldn't have made a difference.

The one thing I will say is it is amazing to see these young people rise up and speak out with one voice that they want something done.

It is a sad day in America when our seniors can't go to church without fear

of gun violence, when families can't go to the movies because of fear of gun violence, and when children can't go to school because of fear of gun violence.

We as a Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, have an obligation to this country to make sure that we protect people who are vulnerable. I don't think it is too much to ask for both sides to come together and ignore the will of the National Rifle Association, but to listen to the people in our country who are demanding that we do something.

When we start talking about background checks, assault rifles, high-capacity cartridges that go in these guns which allow people to shoot large amounts of people in a very short order of time, those guns—let's just be clear, and I want Congressman EVANS to understand what we are talking about: nobody is talking about ending the Second Amendment. The right to bear arms is as fundamental and as protected as anything else in this country. However, when we start talking about AR-15s and these assault weapons and these automatic things, we are talking about weapons of mass destruction.

We went to Afghanistan looking for weapons of mass destruction, when they are right here in this country. We don't have to go to Iraq, we don't have to go to Afghanistan. If you are looking for weapons of mass destruction, they are sold in our sporting goods shops all across this country, and they are being used to slaughter American citizens.

So I would just ask, in closing, that at some point, silence is betrayal. As for me, because of my conviction, because of my conscience, and because I don't lack any courage, I will not be silent.

I would just urge this body that we can't be silent anymore as weapons of mass destruction destroy our communities.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, before the gentleman leaves, being that this is the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, I would ask the gentleman, to the point that he raises about the moments of silence, if we look back and look where we are today, are we any closer to addressing these moments of silence, because I hear frustration in his voice?

Mr. RICHMOND. I am frustrated. I come from a funeral home family, and I know what it is like when people have to bury loved ones, and I know the natural order of things, because I have had to bury my father and my stepfather and my grandparents, who were—my grandfather specifically, who stepped in for my father when he died, but that is the natural order of things. Although my dad died when he was 32, it was of natural causes.

Parents shouldn't be burying children. Children shouldn't be victims and shot in school. So the frustration comes because I know the pain associated.

So when we start talking about the 2,200 people who were killed, that is

2,200 families that had to get up and hear the preacher say: Oh, pain may endureth through the night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Well, joy is not going to come in the morning if the same thing keeps happening and Congress will not do anything about it, because that means those lives were lost in vain, and that is just as big a sin, in my estimation. I just think that we have to do something about it.

It is one thing when the cameras are there and the family has the support at the funeral of all these people, the Congressperson comes, family comes, and says, "Oh, we are going to be with you, and we are going to support you and pray for you during this time," but at the end of the day, that mother and father goes back to that house, and that kid's room is empty.

There are no words of comfort that we can give to that family when they walk by that room every night and it is empty because we let somebody with mental issues get their hands on an AR-15 and slaughter a bunch of kids in school. So if it sounds like I am upset, then you are right, because those parents shouldn't have to pass an empty room.

Every empty room that happens, my fear is that we are complicit by omission of letting it happen over and over again, and I don't want that on my conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

□ 2000

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for laying out that eloquent statement.

Next is someone who is from the great State of Illinois, who, since I have been here, has been relentless on this issue, particularly from an inner-city standpoint, an urban standpoint. I have watched her over and over again constantly stand up and make comments, and I wonder if she thinks anybody is listening, but I am going to give her that opportunity to say a few things here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the Second District of Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague, Mr. EVANS, for yielding and for his leadership. I associate myself with the words of my colleagues who have already spoken.

Mr. Speaker, I never tire in my call to end senseless gun violence. But I am emboldened this evening by the grassroots movement we have seen from the brave and bright students that survived the shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, which took the lives of 17 of their classmates and teachers. These brave students remind me of the determined young people I have come to know in the Chicago area who have been calling for change.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my Republican colleagues: Do you remember the ter-

ror you felt this past summer on the baseball diamond when you were senselessly attacked with a rifle? Do you remember the terror you felt as grown men?

Now imagine being a teenager, without the protection of trained Capitol Police officers at your side, being senselessly attacked with an AR-15.

Imagine being raised in a world where fear of being shot at school, on your block, or in a park was a daily reality.

Countless daily shootings that do not make the news certainly don't spur you to act. Losing 20 elementary school students didn't spur you to act. A colleague suffering a severe brain injury didn't spur you to act. You, yourselves, being the targets hasn't even spurred you to act.

In the aftermath of Parkland, our children have made one thing abundantly clear: If you do not act to end this senseless violence, America will replace you with bold leaders who will.

The solutions are simple: mandatory background checks on all gun sales, including purchases online and at gun shows, and tightening the background check system; closing the loopholes; removing weapons of war from our streets; implementing gun violence protective orders; allowing scientists to study this issue for what it is, a public health crisis; and investing in programs that provide young people with hope so they put down guns and pick up pens, pencils, books and job skills; when appropriate, access to mental health. You cut the budget to mental health, yet you blame mental health as the reason these things are happening.

None of these proposals are new. In my first term in Congress, I issued the Kelly Report, studying this issue, with each of these recommendations. I will gladly provide every Member of this House a copy.

The solutions and the choice are clear.

Will you stand up to the NRA? Will you even read my report?

Our children are demanding it.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask just one question to the gentlewoman from Illinois, who has been speaking to this issue a lot.

Does the gentlewoman have any sense of optimism of people hearing her in any way? Does she see any signs?

I mean, she just ticked off some information. What are her thoughts about change around here?

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be in this job if I wasn't an optimist, believe me. I think people hear me. It is whether they are willing to act.

There are bipartisan bills ready to go; bipartisan bills. Some bills are sponsored by Republicans, some by Democrats. They have a lot of cosponsors, but the leadership has to hear; the leadership has to want to do something. Actually, the leadership on both sides has been very, very silent, unfortunately. But I am hoping that the

pressure will continue to be put on by everybody across this United States.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I have someone who I have had the utmost respect for. He smiles. I told him he could get elected in Pennsylvania. He is from the great State of Mississippi. I don't want to shock the people of Mississippi. He is not leaving Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the Second Congressional District of Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Pennsylvania for yielding. I won't be coming and running, though; but, nonetheless, I appreciate the kind words.

I am going to talk in a little different direction than from most of the previous speakers.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am a country boy. I live in the country. Hunting is a rite of passage for most people who live in the country.

For the record, this past Friday, I hunted rabbit with three ministers, two deputy sheriffs, a county commissioner, and just a bunch of everyday people. But I don't need an assault weapon to hunt rabbit with.

So this notion that somehow an infringement on my Second Amendment right to bear arms is associated with a killing weapon, a weapon that was designed for war, a weapon that is designed to reap carnage in whatever environment that it is in—for those of us who hunt deer, who hunt ducks, who hunt pheasants, we look at this whole discussion and ask: Who are these people who want 30-, 40-, 50-shot clips in a gun? What are they hunting?

Those of us who are outdoorsmen, those of us who love the environment, we are not supportive of this notion that these kind of guns are made for outdoors. They are not. So it is a false premise, Mr. Speaker, that somehow my rights are being abridged.

Now, as important with this is this notion that somehow we are not safe unless I own a gun like this. Well, the people that I hunt with, they have absolutely no problem applying for whatever license they are required to have to own their guns. They don't have a problem with waiting so that they can clear up whatever question it is from the standpoint of owning a gun.

They really don't have a problem with saying gun shows should be outlawed because those are places where people sell guns, and sometimes there is a question about the legality of the guns they are selling.

Background checks. You know, if I have to have a background check for financing of anything. Then why shouldn't I have a background check to own a weapon?

A bump stock. Now, until what had occurred in Las Vegas, most of us had never heard of a bump stock. I mean, it was just some kind of exotic thing you put on a gun to make it an automatic weapon. But, again, all those things, to those of us who hunt, that is not who we are.

I marvel at some of my colleagues who probably couldn't hit anything with a gun, but they want to stand up and defend people who buy assault weapons. I challenge them to come, get up at 4:30, 5 in the morning, and let's go to the woods and let's do what real hunters do. Let's not just get on TV and brag about my Second Amendment rights, and then put on a \$500 suit and go on downtown and don't go to the woods.

What we saw in Florida, it was absolutely tragic. Errors occurred. We need to fix it. But I dare to say—and I absolutely hope I am wrong—when the comments subside, I doubt that we will have any legislation brought forward to address this assault weapon problem we have in this country. I doubt that we will have any legislation brought forward to look at the loopholes associated with purchasing guns. I doubt that we will have the age limit raised on individuals purchasing guns. The will is not here. I wish my colleagues could man up, or woman up, and do the right thing.

I am training my grandson, who is 12 years old, the right way to own a gun, to handle a gun, to do the things that are correct. He will have to go through gun safety classes before he gets his license. But more importantly is he understands that this weapon is either for sport or protection. But, you know, I don't need an AR-15. I have deer rifles. I have shotguns. That is what sportsmen use.

So all this killing that is going on is bad, and I really wish we would take the emotions out and say, let's just get rid of these high-powered weapons that are killing machines.

I could go on and on, but I won't. But I can just say that it is a problem, and I don't think the will is here in this body to address it. Every time a tragedy occurs, we take a moment of silence and we do nothing.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman, since I have never seen this thing called an AR-15, can he describe what this gun looks like?

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. This AR-15?

Mr. EVANS. Yes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Well, it is a weapon designed to kill. It is a weapon designed for war.

My friends who are in law enforcement, I want them to have weapons like that to defend themselves here; but we have made these guns street-legal, so there is the potential that our friends in law enforcement are going to run up on people who have guns as powerful, if not more powerful than they are.

That gun is not made for hunting. It is not made for anything other than to kill. I want my soldiers who are fighting wars to have weapons like that.

But, again, for us to try to stretch the margin, that that is a Second Amendment right to bear arms, it is not any arm. Again, it is a killing ma-

chine. And if anybody has ever had an opportunity to fire one, which I have, it is not accurate at all; but it will spray a lot of bullets out and will do some killing, like we just saw in Florida and a lot of other places.

It is not who we are as a nation. We are a better people than that. But adults are going to have to do the right thing. Otherwise, the young people of this country will do it for us.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thought the gentleman gave a really clear sense of what the challenge is and what we face today.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, coming behind the gentleman from Mississippi, we have someone who knows a little bit about weaponry. She herself has a background. She was the police chief in Orlando. And since she and I are in the same class, I have learned a lot from her.

□ 2015

And coming behind the gentleman from Mississippi, who laid some things out here, is someone who has run a police department, and she couldn't be a better person for us to have come. I yield to the gentlewoman from the State of Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS), from the 10th District.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an all-too-familiar topic, and that is gun violence in America, mass shootings in the United States of America.

A few days ago, I purchased a card of sympathy for the family of a young man who died way too soon. The card that I finally chose read: "I hardly know what to say."

When I think about yet another mass shooting in a country where, through ingenuity and determination, we have solved some of the world's toughest problems and challenges but yet we have chosen to do nothing about mass shootings, I hardly know what to say.

Mr. Speaker, you know last week a man used a semiautomatic rifle to brutally murder 17 children and educators in Parkland, Florida. Unlike past shootings, we have not just moved on. This is because of the survivors—not our generation doing something, but the children. It is because of them.

You see, this generation believes that they can change the world. I mean, isn't that exactly what we as parents taught them, that they can change the world? They believe in what President Obama called the audacity of hope. Not our generation, but the generation of our children and grandchildren.

And they have stood up to declare what should be obvious to all of us: that every American should have the right to go to school, to go to church,

to go to a mall, to go to a movie theater or a nightclub without being brutally murdered by someone with a gun, no less an assault rifle, which greatly diminishes their chances of survival.

Sure, high school is tough for some children, but the worst our children should have to fear is whether they can make a friend in a new school or whether they will make the track team or whether the boy or girl they like will notice them in the hallway or in class.

150,000 American children have experienced a school shooting. That is not something a great society tolerates. That is something we change.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the strength, the courage, and the passion of these young people in Florida. Not our generation, but the teenagers. And I am also proud of previous survivors and activists who laid the groundwork for the movement that is growing across America.

Survivors of the Pulse nightclub shooting have joined Parkland survivors to work for change. That shooting, which took place in my congressional district, was the second worst mass shooting in U.S. history, after Las Vegas.

That is not the only mass shooting to torment Florida. In 2017, a man shot and killed five people at the Ft. Lauderdale airport. In 2013, a man shot and killed six people at an apartment complex in Miami-Dade County. In 1990, a man shot and killed nine people in Jacksonville. According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been at least 113 mass shootings, defined as four or more persons injured or killed, in Florida since 2013.

Instead of simply waiting and responding to mass shootings, we should work to prevent them. We should work to prevent them. We should work to prevent them.

As Orlando, Florida's, former chief of police, my goal was to not merely save lives of those who experienced violence, but we tried to stop the violence from occurring in the first place. When we know better, we are supposed to do better.

Some proposals may need more debate, some less, but let us have that debate.

As a former law enforcement officer, our job was to enforce the laws and to protect the innocent. As a Member of Congress, our job is to create laws that protect the innocent. Well, Congress is failing at that job.

The best gift, Mr. Speaker, we can give to our teachers and our students and to every American is to pass legislation that keeps deadly guns out of the hands of bad people. Thoughts and prayers are good. God will order our steps, but we have to move our feet.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Florida a question, since she talked about her law enforcement background. And she is correct, Congress is to make laws.

This Presidential administration talks about being law and order. Is he

really law and order and on the side of the police if this is happening and running amok? I mean, if you were police chief and you had that responsibility of protecting people—and we in Congress, as was stated by the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the moments of silence. If you were on the front line again, you were out there, and you still know a lot of the people who are part of the police departments, how do you think the police departments feel when they are outgunned and the challenges that they have? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, one of my biggest fears as a 27-year law enforcement officer was that my officers, the officers who worked for me, the officers who swore that they would protect and serve, would find themselves in an active shooter situation where they would be outgunned.

As I indicated earlier, the AR-15 and other weapons like it, if you are shot with one, your chances of survival are greatly diminished. As my colleague from Mississippi indicated earlier, the weapon is designed to create mass devastation. It was designed for the battlefield.

And you are right; on the battlefield, we want our soldiers to take the enemy down as quickly as possible. But those weapons were not designed for our streets, for our neighborhoods where our children play, for our schools. If we are a great society, if we want to be the great Nation that we always talk about, then let's do what is within our power as one of the most powerful bodies in the world.

My 5-year-old granddaughter's kindergarten class had a moment of silence. I believe, as Members of Congress, we can do better than that.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, I have someone who, when I came here, I said I have to meet her. She is a very dynamic person. She is the Honorable BARBARA LEE from the 13th Congressional District of California, and I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman EVANS for his tremendous leadership and his friendship, and I thank him for hosting this very important Special Order hour. His leadership in our caucus to fight the epidemic of gun violence in America is bold, it is visionary, and I thank him for calling us together tonight.

Mr. Speaker, let me also just acknowledge my sister and colleague Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, who spoke earlier. Congresswoman KELLY chairs our Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust, and she continues to demand that gun violence be treated as the public health crisis that it is.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to say enough is enough. The epidemic of gun violence in America must be brought to an end.

Two weeks ago, the world stood in shock as yet another gunman mas-

sacred innocent students and teachers in an American school. The 19-year-old killer legally purchased an AR-15 assault rifle and killed 17 students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

My heart goes out to the victims, their classmates, families, and the entire Parkland community. We must take action so that this never happens again. Newtown, Aurora, Charleston, Orlando, Las Vegas, and now Parkland, this is not normal in a civilized society.

The United States of America is the only developed nation that experiences mass shootings with this level of frequency. This doesn't happen anywhere else in the world. Of course, we know it is because the National Rifle Association can't buy their votes in other countries, and the children's lives come first.

Speaker RYAN and the Republicans in Congress have been bought by the National Rifle Association, making it easier for mass shootings to occur.

Let me just say that mass shootings in public schools, unfortunately, are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to gun violence in America. Our communities, especially our urban communities, are war zones.

On an average day, 93 innocent lives in America are cut short due to gun violence. This year alone, there have been over 8,200 incidents of gun violence in America, including 24 mass shootings. These senseless acts of violence have taken more than 2,200 lives already.

I represent the 13th Congressional District of California in the bay area, which includes the city of Oakland, which has been brutalized by gun violence. Since 2014, 312 of my constituents have had their lives cut short by gun violence. Our community feels their loss every single day. Here are just a few of their names and tragic stories.

Davon Ellis: Davon was a star football player and an excellent student at Oakland Tech High School. He was shot and killed while walking home from school. My nephew was walking with him when he was gunned down.

Travon Godfrey: Travon was killed in 2016 while sitting in a car with his friends in front of his home. Every time I think about Travon, my heart breaks. Travon came to a town meeting that I held on gun violence in January of 2016.

He was worried about coming to that town meeting, and he shared the toll that gun violence had taken on his life and that of his friends' lives, yet he was determined to make a difference and finish school and go on to college. Less than a year later, on November 28 in 2016, Travon and his lifelong friend, Deante Miller, were shot and killed in broad daylight.

Anibal Andres Ramirez: Anibal was Oakland's youngest gun victim in 2017. He was only 13 years old and was shot outside of a community center.

Francisca Martinez Ramirez: She was one of Oakland's first homicide victims in 2018, killed by her husband during a domestic dispute.

Sadly, these heartbreaking stories are all too familiar in communities across the country. More than 30,000 Americans lose their lives to gun violence each year. Shootings now kill as many Americans as car accidents.

Last year, there were 77 gun violence homicides in my home city of Oakland.

□ 2030

Already this year there have been 12. This is only February, Mr. Speaker. How much bloodshed will we see this year?

We need action and we need it now. We need to pass, of course, the bipartisan King-Thompson legislation that strengthens background checks and keeps guns out of the wrong hands. And, yes, we need to reinstitute a ban on assault weapons to get these weapons of war out of our communities. We need to close the gun show loophole once and for all.

Passing our assistant leader Congressman CLYBURN's legislation to close the 3-day loophole to require background checks to be completed before you can buy a gun, that legislation is long overdue. That is common sense.

At some point we have to stand up and say enough is enough and stand up to this NRA. Ninety-seven percent of Americans support some kind of gun violence prevention legislation.

So that is why I am standing here tonight with my colleagues from the CBC demanding that the Speaker take action and bring commonsense gun legislation to the floor for a vote.

Give us a vote, Speaker RYAN, give us a vote.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I think showing those pictures, if anything, should get our point across. I hope that those pictures will send a message to all of us.

Closing out tonight—and I think all our colleagues really just summed up this gun violence issue—is someone who, again, I have known well and admired, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE from the 18th District of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the distinguished gentleman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for his leadership. I am delighted to join the Congressional Black Caucus this evening under the leadership of Chairman RICHMOND.

As my colleagues have said, we have been, sadly, a leader on commonsense gun safety legislation, sadly, because many of our districts, although we represent the huge numbers of diverse Americans—our districts represent Anglos, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, and all economic backgrounds, all wealth backgrounds, all backgrounds dealing with religion—we are able to speak because many of our districts have the reality of gun violence.

So I want to speak, Mr. Speaker, to a particular point that I have heard from the stander-uppers of the NRA, particularly the president and CEO when he spoke to the conservative organization just this past week. I was certainly shocked to hear accusations about Democrats are socialists, even to the extent of calling out Members' names, which I think patently rejects the comity and collegiality of recognizing democracy accepts two distinct parties and some other parties and respects differences of opinion.

But let me be very clear on the record. No one Member of this body, nor the distinguished gentleman, can eliminate the Second Amendment. No group of 20 Members of Congress, no Republicans of Congress and no Democrats of Congress, can eliminate the Second Amendment.

The Second Amendment is a constitutional amendment, and there is a decided practice of a percentage of Members of Congress and the percentage of Members of 50 States. With that in mind, let us clear the air. But if we want to know the truth, what is being fought is gun safety legislation, not gun eradication.

In my State, you cannot rent a car if you are not 21. The Federal law says that you cannot buy a gun if you are not 21. I will be introducing legislation to raise the age of 21. I already have legislation, a 7-day waiting period banning bump stocks, and, of course, dealing with automatic weapons. I know we are introducing one now.

There are a multitude of introductions of bills and a multitude of decisions being made by the Florida delegation which we should listen to. I hope they will come forward in a bipartisan way.

But let me talk about the children and parents. I was on the air today talking—or hearing that parents are hovering and scared of sending their children to school, and the children are scared. This last week I went into my schools where children were not only talking about not arming teachers, but the gunfire in their neighborhoods by handguns, or those who were in schools dealing with children who had steered in the wrong direction. Those children were talking about you got to pack. Gun culture doesn't realize what we are turning our children into that they have got to pack.

So from Las Vegas to Orlando, to Virginia, to Sandy Hook, to San Bernardino, to now Douglas High School, the question is: When are we going to act?

An average of 1,297 children die annually from a gun-related injury. A majority of Americans now support gun policy proposals, such as barring people with mental illness from buying guns. But let me make it very clear. I don't label people who suffer from mental health issues. What I say is: Let us provide the resources for those individuals and clearly between mistakes of reporting what this young man had indi-

cated, to mistakes on the local and Federal level, to mistakes on his mental health situation. We all can stand in blame. But they are adults.

What the response has been from our good friends who are the gun advocates, so they say, has been to close their eyes, close their ears, and not sit down at the table of reconciliation. The gun manufacturers cannot continue to dominate the discussion of sensible gun legislation, from Gabby Giffords to the tragedies that I have listed, to children who are saying: I hover in my room, my bedroom, listening to gunfire in my neighborhood because the proliferation of guns is so extensive.

So guns are being trafficked illegally because of the gun culture. There are many elements that will go into this. The Congressional Black Caucus has been at the forefront of changing that gun culture, as Congresswoman KELLY has preached about, because of what happened in Chicago. I join her because what happens in our neighborhood is that our children are cowering over gun violence, period.

No, arming our teachers is not the answer. Securing our school is; banning those weapons of war is; extending the timeframe is; lifting the age is; and getting the background checks to close the loopholes is.

So I am asking this floor and this leadership, as we are doing good legislation on human trafficking, of which I will participate in tomorrow, that we put on the floor legislation of gun safety.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership tonight.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are no words in the English language to fully capture the pain and suffering that a parent will endure in the face of losing a child. Imagine then the immense pain that the families of the 17 Americans who were murdered during a mass shooting at the Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida must be experiencing at this moment. Even worse, imagine how they must feel as our nation remains crippled by inaction in the wake of the senseless gun violence that continues to tear apart countless families and communities throughout our country. That is our reality today as Congress fails to act, once again, on commonsense legislation to reduce gun violence.

We cannot allow the violence that we have witnessed at the Stoneman Douglas High School to become our new norm. More importantly, we cannot allow our inaction in the face of such tragic violence to also define what we can and cannot accept as a society. We are all too familiar with gun violence in the United States. There have already been over 8,200 incidents of gun violence in 2018 alone. This violence has claimed the lives of 2,200 individuals, upending the lives of countless friends and families who are impacted by these deaths. I am here to join my colleagues and countless Americans across our nation by declaring in one voice, "Enough is enough."

Our children deserve the right to an education without a cloud of fear in their hearts

and the sound of gunshots ringing in their ears. The people of the United States deserve representation that works in the face of senseless violence to deliver real solutions that work for millions of Americans. We need solutions that include stronger background checks, while also providing the resources for states to contribute complete and timely records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). We need solutions that reduce the proliferation of assault weapons on our streets, including high-capacity magazines, flash suppressors, and other accessories that enhance the lethality of firearms. More importantly, we need everyone to come to the table in a meaningful way that is not driven by fear or emotion so that we can deliver on the promises that we made when we took the oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling for action. I am calling for action that is already long overdue, and I call for others to find the compassion in their hearts to also get this done. I call for the courage to make the difficult choices that we finally need to make. Our failure to act now is a failure of our leaders to do what is right, notwithstanding political affiliation or preference. I am calling for action and I am calling for action now. Enough is enough.

THE TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material germane to the topic of this Special Order.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I am here with Mrs. WALTERS from California, who is the co-chair of the Tax Truth Squad. This has been an exciting first 14 months for me serving Michigan's 10th Congressional District. I had the privilege of representing the freshman class in House leadership.

Tax cuts and tax reform are important to me, as I grew up the oldest of seven kids in a family in which dad built trucks in a line and my mom worked full time more often than not to support our family. I saw firsthand the difficulties experienced to make ends meet and support that family. That is why I am committed to ensuring policies that create jobs, economic growth, and wages in the pockets of people who go to work every day and get a paycheck.

Until last December, it seemed to be only a dream that we could achieve meaningful tax cuts and reform. It had been more than 30 years since that had been updated. Since that time, layers of rules and new additions to the Tax Code had grown that into a beast of 74,000 pages. You would have to be a wizard to know what was in it.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act addressed these problems and put more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans so they can make decisions about how to use their own money.

Up until now we have talked about the possibilities and the dream of tax cuts and reform. Now we can talk about the realities of what tax reform is bringing to America.

Representative WALTERS and I have organized a series of floor speeches that begin tonight a little later than originally planned. Each legislative week we have designated one or more States' delegations that will join us and talk about tax reform, tax cuts, and the impact it is having on their constituents and their districts.

Texas is kicking off that initiative tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS), who is the co-chair of the Tax Truth Squad.

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding and for his efforts to share the stories of Americans who are seeing the positive impacts of tax reform.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the record straight on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. From day one, misinformation about the benefits of this historic tax reform plan have circulated. The truth is that Americans across the country are receiving bonuses, pay increases, and other benefits that are helping them support their families and save for their futures.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Michigan and I started the Truth Tellers Initiative on Tax Reform to highlight the many ways this bill helps the American people.

Since December, we have witnessed the positive impacts of tax reform. Small businesses are expanding, jobs are being created, retirement and benefit packages are increasing in value, and the American people are keeping more of their hard-earned paychecks.

Over the coming months, Representatives from each State will have the opportunity to share how tax reform has helped their constituents.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, as we go through the evening, I will try to highlight some important components of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

I think one of the most important components is the larger standard deduction. We have doubled the standard deduction from \$12,000 to \$24,000 for married couples. We created a simpler filing process. What we created was, in essence, a filing process where 90 percent of Americans can file their taxes on a form about this size, significantly better than the current Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), who is a good friend, a colleague, and the gentleman who led us through the whole battle to achieve this epic change. Congressman KEVIN BRADY is the author of the legislation and a true champion for Amer-

ican taxpayers. He is the Representative of the Eighth District of Texas and the chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman MITCHELL and Congresswoman MIMI WALTERS for arranging this Special Order to highlight the benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I am excited to be joined by our Texas colleagues.

Texas is a big winner, like many States, because of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. They estimate it will create 81,000 new, good-paying jobs in our State alone. But that is not just our State. You see huge job gains in California, New York, throughout the Southern States, throughout our Midwest area, and throughout our manufacturing regions.

This historic tax reform is making a real difference for our families and our workers. We all know about tax relief for our small businesses, the first ever 20 percent small business deduction in history. The bill will be a write-off on day one in new investment in plants, equipment, software, and technology.

People know that we made our companies more competitive so they can compete and win all around the world, especially here at home.

I get excited about what we did for families, lowering the tax rates at every level. So whether you made \$20,000 or \$520,000, you keep more of what you earn. We doubled the standard deduction so few people have to itemize. We doubled the child credit and quadrupled how many Americans can actually use it. For the first time, all middle class Americans are going to get help raising children. We are doing away with the AMT except for households up to \$1 million. What that means next year is, instead of 5 million Americans getting caught up with that double tax, it is about 200,000, a fraction of what it is today.

What I really love are the stories. I was in Home Depot the other day, on Sunday. Apparently, we are redoing our bathroom. So my wife was looking at samples, and a woman came up and introduced herself. Her name is Pam. She is a small-business person. She redoes furniture, repaints, and all that, but she works at Home Depot to make ends meet. She introduced herself and said:

Thank you. I get \$184 more every paycheck. Maybe that couple thousand dollars doesn't mean much in Washington, but for my family, it really means a lot. Thank you for that.

Donald from Willis, Texas, saw the benefits of this law in his pay stub. He said:

My Federal tax deducted from my paycheck went from 12 to 9 percent. Yes, I am very happy.

Mr. Speaker, because of tax reform, Texans are excited for a strong and growing economy.

Larry from Spring, Texas, said:

As a 78-year-old retiree working part time, even a small difference in take-home pay is