

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and thank him for bringing his medical expertise to the tax reform discussion with his service on the Energy and Commerce Committee, from the 26th District of Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

1986 was the last time our Tax Code was refined. I had been practicing medicine for 5 years. Now, some 31 years later and after 15 years in Congress, the reformation of our Tax Code has made a profound difference in our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is not lost on me that the rhetoric prior to the vote on the conference report on the tax bill was pretty negative. The idea was to sow doubt in the minds of people who would be affected by the tax bill, to sow doubt in the minds of people who would otherwise be wanting to vote for tax relief for tax improvement.

And I will have to tell you something: after that vote—and Mr. MITCHELL referenced Southwest Airlines and American Airlines—I cannot remember having ever had the positive feedback for a vote that I have taken here in this Congress like there was for this tax vote.

In my own Walmart, the week after Christmas, people were coming up to me saying, “I work for American Airlines,” or “I work for Southwest Airlines.” I have a lot of families in the 26th District of Texas who work for American Airlines or Southwest Airlines, and they all got \$1,000 bonuses because of the tax relief that we had provided. Again, I cannot ever remember having that much positive reinforcement on a bill that, quite honestly, the rhetoric going into it was pretty negative.

The benefits have been immediate, as indicated by the increases in salaries and bonuses paid to employees. And Southwest Airlines, in addition to the bonuses to their employees, donated \$5 million to charity, as well as made some capital improvements.

FedEx, which, of course, employs people all over the country, but has a big hub in the district that I represent, is going to spend \$133 million increasing hourly wages, as well as \$67 million on programs for salaried employees, and, get this, \$3 billion on their pension plan and capital improvements. That is a pretty big turnaround.

The good folks at Peterbilt trucks, located in the 26th District of Texas, received over \$170 million in tax benefits in the fourth quarter of 2017, as a direct result of this tax bill. Peterbilt also estimates that its 2018 effective global tax rate will be reduced by up to 8 percent and that the lower corporate tax rate and accelerated depreciation will, indeed, stimulate capital investment.

The increased prosperity of these and other companies will subsequently improve the financial situation of their employees. Coupled with a nearly dou-

bled standard deduction, income for most individuals and families will, in fact, increase.

Chairman BRADY mentioned filing taxes on a postcard. Mr. Speaker, when I first came to Congress, I really wanted us to enact a flat tax. I still do. But I will take the improvement that we have gotten, the gift of time, back to, what, 85 to 90 percent of tax filers who no longer are going to have to keep up with that shoebox full of receipts and spend quality time with their accountants every March and April as they prepare their Federal tax return. We are going to allow people to pay for necessities, without having to worry about other discretionary items and services, often provided by small businesses.

Local improvements in economic condition will not only benefit Main Street business owners, but I like to say it is going to benefit Elm Street business owners. That is the small business off of Main Street. It is going to allow people to spend money across State lines. Increased financial mobility will inject capital into the market and continue the growth of our economy.

□ 2130

Look, we are right on the verge of some pretty significant and profound economic changes that are going to be beneficial, I predict, to all Americans. This is an important time in this country, time for us to get to work and deliver for the American people.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining me this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I did want to, at this point, wrap up this evening's version of the Tax Truth Squad.

Since the tax reform bill was passed and signed into law, let me state again that more than 400 companies have given a pay raise; bonuses; increased 401(k) contributions; or, in the case of utilities, lowered rates—lowered rates dramatically.

At least 4 million Americans are receiving special tax reform bonuses. Direct bonus announcements have already topped \$3 billion; \$3 billion into our economy, into people's pockets, decisions they can make about what they want to do with the money rather than turning it over to the government, rather than turning it over to the IRS, rather than having it spent on bureaucracy.

In my home district, we will talk about that more next week, but I want to reference that Fiat Chrysler is moving jobs here from Mexico, moving to Macomb County, investing \$1 billion—yes, you heard that right, investing \$1 billion—in expanding a plant and creating 2,500 new jobs in Michigan just in that one plant.

By the way, they also announced a bonus—a tax bonus separate from their bonus in their contract, which some people said: Oh, it was in their contract.

No, it wasn't. It was a bonus of \$2,000 per employee as a result of the tax bill.

These are major cuts that people overlook. Look at these companies, look at the list of them, and it grows every day.

Let me suggest real quickly: I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I know my district and I know my constituents, and \$1,000 is not crumbs.

I referenced earlier the note I got over the weekend from Mark in my district who says his projected taxes next year save him \$2,700 in his pocket.

Now, I know where you live, I know where I live, that is real money. Maybe for some of my colleagues, it doesn't matter as much, but that is why we passed this bill. That is why we worked so hard on this bill. That is why we support it. And that is the truth about taxes.

That is what we want the American people to understand: we are putting money back in their pockets, money back in the economy, rather than taking money and putting it in government and hoping they do something productive with it.

I thank the Chair for the opportunity this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) until no later than 10 p.m.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for such great words of encouragement. I was hearing it all across east Texas as I was all over the district this past week. People are encouraged when it comes to the economy. People are feeling better about the economy. I am hearing it.

They are encouraged, but after yet another school shooting, another mass shooting, I am hearing more and more people who are asking: Why? Why is this?

Of course, some say, you know, the United States is the only place that mass shootings occur. Of course, that is just false. There are worse mass shootings in other parts of the world.

Some say if we get rid of all guns in the country, then we could end the senseless violence, but when you try to tell that to people who were in Rwanda during the period when 800,000 people or so were slaughtered with machetes for the most part, it goes beyond the question of the weapon.

We have seen airplanes used as bombs for the worst mass execution in our country's history. Of course, Pearl Harbor, bombs were used, bombs themselves. We know in Oklahoma City, apparently it was anhydrous ammonia, fertilizer. We have seen the Boston bombing utilizing pressure cookers.

So if the answer is to get rid of the weapons, we got to get rid of airplanes. We got to get rid of rental trucks. We

got to get rid of fertilizer. Pressure cookers have got to go. Machetes have got to go. Once you start listing the things by which people with evil intent have killed others, you realize this is an endless list. There are people who have exacted violence on others all kinds of ways.

There is nothing more senseless and ignorant. And I don't mean that mean-spirited. I mean that everybody is ignorant of something; some are just ignorant of a lot more things. But the statement that, "I just want Congress to do something even if it is wrong," well, that is how you lose civilizations, by doing something even if it is wrong. But there are plenty of indications, things that we can do, things we can agree on.

It seems absolutely senseless that a school would know about a student who is repeatedly involved in violence, threats upon other students, threats upon other people, but actually not just threats, actual violence. We want to look into this to see if this is really a national phenomenon that some of our schools, to avoid having students continue to be arrested, that they actually try some mediation process so they avoid giving a 17-, 18-year-old student an arrest record, which once they have an assault that is confirmed in court, then certainly that would affect their ability to get a gun at all of any kind.

So, actually, when you start analyzing all of the ways that the system broke down and didn't work, the things that should have protected those precious lives in Parkland, Florida, instead of saying, "Just do something even if it is wrong," how about if we do something that is right? How about if we do something that would actually prevent that kind of senseless violence from being exacted upon innocent people?

I mean, we got a sheriff that I don't know what kind of a department this guy is running. I know when there was a shooting involving a domestic case—and until terrorist activities and mass shootings started occurring, most often if there was violence at a courthouse, it was over a domestic affairs case.

I saw the video. I was already in Congress. I was no longer sitting on the bench in that courthouse, but I saw the video. And as soon as there were gunshots, those deputies—I knew them; I loved them—were running to the sound of the gun. They didn't hunker behind anything. They ran to the sound of the gun.

And that has been repeated around the country. Law officers hear a gun and they run to the sound of the gun. But, apparently, it appears from what we are reading, that the sheriff there had a department that is living in pre-Columbine days.

Just like before 9/11, it was thought that if your plane is highjacked, just don't create a problem; there will be negotiations when you land somewhere.

I still believe to this day there were American heroes on all four of those planes; and if the first three planes had known they were going to be used as a bomb to kill others, there were Americans that would have stepped up and stopped it just like those incredibly heroic Americans did who brought down the plane in Pennsylvania.

So I don't think it will ever happen again. There will always be people who love this country and love life so much that they would give theirs to save so many others. That is what Jesus said is the greatest love, and clearly the fourth flight had that.

But here is a story from the Florida Sun Sentinel. It is entitled "School shooter Nikolas Cruz: An unending saga of disturbed behavior and red flags," written by Brittany Wallman, Paula McMahon, Megan O'Matz, and Susannah Bryan. They document that he did things like—well, of course, we know apparently he didn't know his father. He knew his adopted father. Of course, his adopted father and mother had died. Apparently they had a wonderful home, swimming pool, lots of comforts; but he didn't have a moral compass at all. Apparently he threatened his mother, threatened his brother, violence on his brother. At least threatened violence on his own mother.

We know from this article, at least, it says the adopted father, Mr. CRUZ, didn't own any guns. But Nikolas was diagnosed as having a string of disorders: depression, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, emotional behavior disability, and autism. His mom told the sheriff's deputies he also had obsessive-compulsive disorder and anger issues. He had counselors in school and at home, according to DCF records. He took medications. We don't know what all medications he took. Maybe there was some relationship there.

We ought to be able to discern how many of these people have taken different types of drugs and which ones they were. We know there seems to be a correlation between people committing suicide and many of the medications that are prescribed to kids who feel troubled.

This article says that Nikolas was a mama's boy, yet he threatened his mother. His mother called the police to say he got physical with his brother and with her. It sounds like a physical assault on his mother.

My late mother was close to 5-foot. I was a lot bigger than she was in high school, but, whew, I knew not to even think about raising a hand.

When he was 14, his mother reported he had hit her with a plastic hose from a vacuum cleaner. A few months later, she told deputies he had thrown her against the wall because she took away his Xbox gaming system. A year later, she told deputies Nikolas had punched the wall after she took away his Xbox. Foul language, insults, disobedience, disruption.

Cruz's behavior was exactly what schoolteachers frowned upon. He went

to a different school for a while which offered a program for emotionally and behaviorally disabled children, but, according to the article, Cruz could not control himself.

Now, it talked about in the article that he was 5-foot-7, 120 pounds. I know a lot about being bullied up through junior high, up through eighth grade, because I was very small. I didn't start growing of any size until high school. I may have been the smallest guy on our football team the first couple of years in high school. I know a lot about getting bullied. I know a lot about getting my nose bloodied. I never killed anybody.

□ 2145

I had parents that would make all four of us kids quite angry, but they taught us respect of authority. They disciplined us, and they made sure we were in Sunday school and church every week.

It looks like the school and the community and the sheriff's office all helped Ms. Cruz and Nikolas—and I use "helped" loosely—avoid having a criminal record that would have prevented him from having a gun and would have prevented him from killing 17 people. At least, it would be a whole lot more difficult without a gun like he had.

But they all worked together, unknowingly. Of course, it was not intentionally. They thought they were helping him. And what they were doing, what was coming down the road, was a disaster of massive proportions.

We do need to do something that prevents this in the future. Some say, well, it is time to end the personal transfer loophole, so a father can't give a son a weapon.

Well, perhaps if Nikolas' father had taught him—I have got a friend from Florida I was visiting with this weekend, and he said the worst whipping that he ever got was when he pointed a gun, his grandfather's gun, at his brother. He never did that again.

I am not advocating violence on kids. I know the Bible says:

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

But as a judge, a felony judge, I have seen kids be abused beyond propriety that justified criminal penalty. But we could take some action, it would seem, that would prevent entities, whether it is the Air Force, whether it is the Broward school system, the Broward County Sheriff's Office, from preventing someone from avoiding appropriately having a criminal record that would prohibit them getting a gun. That way, we are talking about something that would prevent this same thing from happening.

When it comes to the personal transfer of weapons, as John Locke was saying the other day, in over 100 years, there has not been a mass shooting that involved a gun received in a personal transfer, whether it is from father to son, friend to friend.

Of course, if there is somebody at a gun show who is not having a background check and they are selling more than one weapon there, there is a good chance they are committing a crime. It is not a loophole at a gun show. Anybody that is there selling guns needs to have the background check done, and they do. And you can't get the gun until it has gone through a proper background check, and you get it from someone who ensures that everything is followed.

I had won a gun at an auction some—I have heard some people say, yeah, we have got to stop that, too, getting a gun at an auction. I had to go through the background check. I had to pick it up at a store. I felt sorry for the store.

But there are stores that sell guns that are constantly having to clear somebody who bought it online, because you cannot pick up that gun until the background check is done, and you go to someone who has ensured the background check is done and then get the weapon. So that seems to be something we could do.

And then we were talking to some of our Freedom Caucus tonight, and unlike the no-fly list, where the Obama administration would not tell us how you got on it and would not give us any idea of how you appeal, how you get off—we would plead for some people who were law-abiding and shouldn't have been on there. Sometimes they get off; sometimes they don't.

But we, as Congress, House and Senate, need to pass a bill that sets up a due process where, if you are on the no-fly list, you can appeal and get off. We ought to make it where, if you had been guilty of assaults, whether in school or in the home, as Nikolas Cruz was, or whether it is in public, that ought to prevent you from getting a gun.

Of course, domestic situations, things often get so heated. I have seen terrible charges alleged against a father or mother during the course of a divorce, and that is something the State legislature could deal with. If it involves some Federal entity, it is something that we can deal with and say this is how you could appeal and get an unjust decision blocking a gun purchase.

But we also know that those people who say, hey, there have been 3 million or so people who shouldn't buy guns who have been blocked from buying guns, well, they don't know the rest of the story. The rest of the story is there aren't but just a few dozen people who get prosecuted out of 3 million.

Someone told me yesterday it was only a few dozen of the 3 million who are ever prosecuted for improperly filing for a gun. There may have been 3 million people denied, but it turns out there were mistakes because of the ways in which the names are checked.

Do you really want to get to the bottom line, Mr. Speaker?

John Adams was President in 1798. Some of these very issues kept coming

up. The people who founded this country, they were better read than most students are today even after college. And even those who didn't believe the Bible, they quoted it.

In fact, in this very room and in the room right down the hall where the United States House of Representatives met for the majority of the 1800s, the Bible, during sessions, was the most quoted book in our history. In here, in that room, in the Senate down the hall, the Old Senate, the current Senate, the Bible is the most quoted book in our history, and there would seem to be good reason.

Within the Bible, itself, you find the words:

For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

But John Adams was President after two terms under President George Washington, under our current Constitution. He knew precisely what the Constitution said. He knew how it had come about. He was Vice President, President of the Senate when the Bill of Rights was created. He was part of that process.

Yet John Adams explained, President John Adams explained, in 1798, the bottom line, that people in this country have got to understand, if we are going to address the kind of violence that has sparked around this country. John Adams explained it. His words were more than prescient. They are perpetually true as long as we are operating under this Constitution.

As he said, knowing, having read many times every word of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, having helped generate this Bill of Rights, he knew what they were. But he said:

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

You want to know where the answer is? If people are going to be safe in America, we have a choice. We either start anew, teaching morality, teaching that there is a right or wrong, that not everything is relative, and even if those who don't believe there is a God don't want to hear about it, it is okay to talk about God. You don't have to believe it.

Look at Jefferson's words. He made clear—of course, it always amazed me how he could put the biggest grievance in the original declaration against King George was ever allowing slavery. So on the one hand, he could see the problems created for America by ever allowing the inhumanity of man to man, but he talked about the best hope being the teaching of Jesus, that we should be teaching, the best hope for America.

But if we are going to be safe, we have got to teach morality, encourage religion, not force secular humanism, hedonism on America. It is okay to talk about it. It is okay to teach about it.

In fact, the studies I saw as a felony judge repeatedly indicated the best hope of cutting recidivism of criminals is if they go through an intensive Christian Bible study in prison. So afraid of talking about the Bible, so afraid of talking about Christianity.

There is no official religion in this country, but, as the Supreme Court said at the end of the 19th century, this is a Christian nation. Not everybody was Christian, of course, but it was founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs. It was founded on the Bible. And that is the reason Moses' full face is up there in the middle, because he was felt to be the best lawgiver in the history of the world. Obviously, the Supreme Court doesn't think so much anymore.

We have a choice: teach morality, encourage religion, or, in order to be safe, we have got to give up the Second Amendment. We have already given up parts of the Second Amendment in a part of it. We have given up part of our freedom of assembly. We have given up part of our freedom of speech. We have given up a big hunk of freedom of religion, because this Constitution was only meant to govern a moral and religious people. And unless we are willing to start teaching morality again, we have no hope of being safe under the current Constitution.

I pray to God, and prayers can work. God will hear from Heaven. I pray to God that people will wake up and we won't have to discharge different parts of our constitutional rights in order to remain safe.

I look at the interior of this Bible that belonged to my uncle. It is a New Testament. On the front, engraved in the middle "May the Lord be with you." He had it in World War II.

But inside, at the top, it says: "The White House, Washington. As Commander-in-Chief, I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States. Throughout the centuries, men of many faiths and diverse origins have found in the Sacred Book words of wisdom, counsel, and inspiration. It is a fountain of strength and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul"—signed, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

That is not a mistake that President Roosevelt made. It needs to be one we don't make either.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows: