

Mr. Speaker, this is the time for New Jersey Transit to do the right thing for the sake of our commuters, to do the right thing for the sake of our workers, and to do the right thing for the State of New Jersey. People's livelihoods and the quality of their lives depend on the Atlantic City Rail Line.

ADDRESS THE ONGOING CRISIS

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to plead with my colleagues to address the ongoing crisis at our borders.

Just last week, Federal agents made the largest fentanyl bust in U.S. history at a checkpoint along our border with Mexico. These drugs were headed into our communities.

Some of our colleagues will say the fact that the bust occurred at a legal point of entry is proof that we are doing enough to keep our Nation secure and our neighborhoods safe.

I ask you, if these drug dealers are bold enough to try to sneak this much contraband through a known checkpoint, how much are they smuggling across our porous borders in the dark of night or through the open desert?

The answer is, more than we know. And it is far too much, Mr. Speaker.

Whether it is the promise of work and entitlements or the promise of an illegal drug market, we must demagnetize the attraction to our country for those who disregard our sovereignty and rule of law. We must secure our country and deal with the human trafficking and narcotics trafficking crisis that exists at our southern border.

STATE OF THE UNION REACTION

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the President gave a State of the Union Address that was short on details but long on hypocrisy. His remarks were long, self-absorbed, and divorced from reality.

Much like 1 year ago, his speech was noteworthy for the things he didn't say. He didn't mention that we live in a time of the greatest income inequality since the 1920s. He didn't mention the environment and our responsibilities to respond to climate change, to strengthen Social Security, or education for young people.

These are the real challenges facing working people today. They are also the things that the President has ignored during his time in office.

The people of this great country deserve better.

Democrats are committed to delivering for the people. That means:

Cracking down on corruption in Washington and reducing the influence of money in our political system;

Raising wages by rebuilding our infrastructure;

Lowering healthcare and prescription drug costs;

Ending the epidemic of gun violence; and

Taking on the challenge of climate change.

Let's get the job done and restore government of, by, and for the people of this great country.

THE REAL CRISIS AT THE BORDER

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

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Speaker, a couple days ago, the President gave a State of the Union Address that did nothing to promote unity but, rather, used fear to further a divisive agenda against immigrants by repeating lies about his manufactured emergency at our southern border.

However, there was no mention of the real crisis. The real crisis stems from the President's inhumane separation policies.

Mr. Speaker, 8 months since his cruel zero-tolerance policy first came to light, the number of children who were ripped away from families at the border continues to rise. At first, the administration said nearly 3,000 children were separated from their parents. Now, we are learning that it has been thousands more.

The administration also claims that they can't easily find the parents of the children they ripped away, and they don't even think it is worth the time to locate them. This inhumane policy and how they treat these children goes against everything this country stands for.

The President and this administration need to do everything that they can to ensure the reunification of these families. The prolonged separation of these children has caused irreparable damage to their mental health and well-being.

That, Mr. President, is the real crisis that you have created at the southern border.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss, briefly, some of the accomplishments of the Trump administration that were pointed out in the State of the Union Address the other day.

I think it is imperative that we recognize that over 5 million jobs have been created in the last 2 years, over 300,000 in the last month alone. The economists had predicted and projected 170,000 jobs, and yet almost twice as many jobs were created. There are now a record of 157 million Americans employed in this country.

The unemployment rate has remained at or below the 4 percent for 11

straight months. That hasn't happened in almost 50 years.

There has been half a million manufacturing jobs since President Trump became President, and there were more manufacturing jobs created in 2018 than any single year in the last 20 years.

We have seen the judiciary be restored to, in my opinion, normalcy, with the confirmation of Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, and more than 40 Federal judges confirmed just this week.

BORDER SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and introduce extraneous material into the RECORD on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of talk in the last few months on border security, what it takes to secure our border and what it takes to protect the safety and the security of the American people.

Today, we are taking a few minutes with different Members to share very powerful but very impactful stories from their districts. This is not hyperbole or set up for histrionics, but sometimes the message of actually what is going on in our country doesn't always cut through with our media outlets.

So today, the different Members, many of them have special relationships with these folks they will be referencing and talking about today in this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), our first speaker, who represents Indiana's Sixth District and serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure and Foreign Affairs Committees. But even more impressive to me is that Mr. GREG PENCE is a veteran of our Marine Corps, and he is a successful businessman.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge this body to act on the national crisis that currently exists along our southern border.

This crisis plays itself out not only in the border towns of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, but in communities across the Nation, including my very own, Indiana's Sixth District. The statistics speak for themselves:

In my home of Bartholomew County, the sheriff's office booked 34 individuals with an immigration detainer 2

years ago. Last year, that number jumped to 132.

Hoosiers also feel the effects of the border crisis in the form of an opioid crisis that now kills more Americans than car accidents, gun violence, or breast cancer. This crisis is tearing families apart. The Department of Corrections says one in three Hoosiers residing in State prisons are battling addiction to opioids.

In the last year, Customs and Border officials have reported dramatic increases in meth, heroin, and fentanyl along our southern border. These are some of the very drugs that claimed the lives of more than 1,800 Hoosiers in 2017.

President Trump is right. We must create an immigration system that is safe, lawful, modern, and secure. It is not just the border States feeling the effects of illegal immigration; it is communities like ours in the Sixth District of Indiana that are being ravaged by the massive scourge of drugs coming across the southern border.

We must end this crisis. Mr. Speaker, it is time to secure the southern border and build the wall.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. PENCE's words today and the powerful expression of how it is impacting the State of Indiana.

One of our new Members, a very accomplished gentleman himself, an aerospace engineer representing the First District of Oklahoma, has also worked within the McDonald's system and owns multiple restaurants throughout the different portions of Oklahoma and is actually on the national leadership team.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. KEVIN HERN), to share a little bit about his State of Oklahoma.

Mr. KEVIN HERN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been calling the office in overwhelming numbers. They tell me to stand with our President to get the funding our Customs and Border agents have asked for.

I got a call from a police recruit in Tulsa just this week who has seen firsthand the impact that illegal immigration has on the safety of our citizens. It places a huge burden on our law enforcement agents who are already putting themselves in harm's way for our safety every day.

With unregulated borders, we open our country up to the tragedy of human trafficking. Undocumented women and children are especially vulnerable to traffickers. Ninety percent of the heroin in our country comes illegally from Mexico.

With dangerous drugs like cocaine, methamphetamines, and heroine come gun activity, violent crime, and the serious problem of addiction.

In December, Tulsa law enforcement officers found 2 pounds of heroin and 16 pounds of methamphetamines in connection in the Sinaloa drug cartel smuggled into the States from Mexico.

These dangerous and illegal drugs are finding their way into communities across the country.

There is a fix for all of this: Build the wall.

A physical barrier—which I might add, most of my friends from the other side of the aisle have historically supported—will stop illegal entry in its tracks. There is no replacement for a physical barrier.

Last month, the President told the American people that we need a wall, not because we hate the people on the outside, but because we love the people on the inside.

□ 1715

Mr. Speaker, I agree. How can we keep our people safe when we don't know who is coming into this country? Let's start prioritizing the American people and their safety.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to rise above partisanship for the sake of our citizens. We can stop the human trafficking crisis. We can catch the drug smugglers. We can keep our people safe. At the end of the day, the only thing that will truly help us is to pass bipartisan legislation to secure our borders and build a wall.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HERN for coming, and I appreciate his time.

Our next speaker today is Representative BRAD WENSTRUP. In some circles, he is called Colonel WENSTRUP. He is a great man and my classmate. He has been awarded the Bronze Star, as well as the Combat Action Badge, for his service.

In fact, it was on a baseball field a year and a half ago that that Combat Action Badge showed itself off again when he was the only one equipped to be able to put a tourniquet on STEVE SCALISE and save his life.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), my fellow classmate from Ohio's Second District.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WALKER for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the security and the safety of all our fellow Americans. The fact of the matter is that border security isn't or shouldn't be a partisan issue. That is why many of my colleagues from across the aisle have actually supported border security and fencing in the past.

The fact is, this is an American issue that affects every part of our Nation, sometimes in very visible ways, sometimes in ways less visible.

I represent southern and southwestern Ohio, not a border State, but it is deeply and tragically impacted by the lack of border security.

In the last couple years, there was a woman from my district area who was being deported. The archbishop called the Senator on her behalf, and he has every right to do that. This is someone who was being deported under the Obama administration. They set a date. When the date came, she didn't adhere, and she was deported.

The archbishop had every right to engage in that act, if he felt like he should reach out to the Representative. But I met with the archbishop and I asked him: Where were you in the case—such as I am about to tell you about—where were you when someone was in need because of the actions of someone who was here illegally?

Last year, I met a mother of a 15-year-old girl. The mother told me about their neighbor, the neighbor that they trusted, that they had picnics with. They told him: You have nothing to worry about. You are here legally.

It turns out, he was a 41-year-old illegal immigrant who had previously been deported from this country but reentered the U.S. illegally and gained employment by using the Social Security number of a 69-year-old woman from Arkansas.

One day, he knocked on their door, and since their daughter knew him, she opened the door, and he went in and beat and raped her.

Her innocence was taken forever. Her life changed forever. He got 8 years. She got a life sentence, and it didn't need to happen.

Tragically, one of my local prosecutors tells me there have been multiple cases like this in our area over the last few years. These are the families I think about when someone calls a border wall immoral.

As President Trump said in his address, we don't build walls because we hate the people on the outside. It is because we love the people on the inside. But, really, we also love the people on the outside who want to come here legally to be part of our American family.

This isn't about keeping people out of our country. This is about controlling access, so we know who and what is coming into our country.

Sitting idly by and making no effort to resolve these problems is wrong. It is a disservice to those who have suffered violence at the hands of criminals who have entered our Nation illegally. These victims are real, and so is their pain. We owe it to them to enforce our laws.

To my colleagues, I say: Come to the table. Let's negotiate a solution, smartly enhance our security, and drive on for the betterment of all Americans, so that, rather than being a borderless and lawless country, America will be the beacon of hope for those who desire to come to this great country of ours legally.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. It is my belief that that kind of common sense will prevail with the majority of the American people, knowing our job and continuing to work to keep the safety and security of the American people as a high priority.

Our next speaker tonight is a Member in his sophomore term but who already has many accomplishments in the political arena.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. JODEY ARRINGTON, who

served under President George W. Bush and as chief of staff to the FDIC Chairman, representing Texas' 19th Congressional District.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina, Representative WALKER, for his service and his leadership, not just to this body, but myself personally.

He is a spiritual leader and mentor for so many. We have a lot of ways to measure success in life and in this job, but I can tell you, one of them is to maintain a healthy relationship with our Lord and savior, and I want to thank him publicly.

This is a serious issue, and it is one that we in Texas have a lot of knowledge about and experience with, unfortunately, and that is border security. It is also a humanitarian crisis.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the front lines, and we see the drugs, gangs, and criminal activity pouring into the great State of Texas, not just along the impact zone immediately across from the southern border, but in communities in west Texas, in the 19th Congressional District, and not just my population center, but in rural communities as well.

Here is a statistic that is pretty startling. Since 2011, 180,000 illegal immigrants were charged in the great State of Texas with 290,000 crimes.

I talked to local law enforcement officers, sheriffs, police chiefs, and others in my communities over the last few weeks. They are telling me that the volume of drugs coming into our communities is off the charts and that the crime has increased exponentially—not just property crime, but violent crime.

They are telling me that gangs, not just the shoestring gangs, as they call them, but the very violent gangs and cartels, the Sinaloa cartel and the Los Zetas cartel, are in my district in west Texas. They are showing up in our backyards and our neighborhoods, and it is scary.

Here is the sad fact: This country has the resources and tools to do something about it. Our President has asked for those resources and tools. He has a comprehensive border security plan, and we have to have political will. We have to be able to put our country first, especially when it comes to the safety and security of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard people say that drugs are coming through only ports of entry. You can tell from this map, they are coming across the border at various places.

Just a month ago, there was 700 pounds of cocaine caught at the border, and we had our largest drug bust up in my district in a little town called Denver City, about 22 kilos of cocaine. So we have to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I beg of my colleagues to do the right thing and put their country before politics. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative ARRINGTON for coming, and I appreciate his kind remarks, and

sobering ones, at the same time. We do have a problem at the border with drugs. We do have a problem with violence of illegal aliens. That is why we continue to message through this.

Just 2 nights ago, sitting right about there was my sister-in-law whose brother was a United States Army veteran and a good friend of mine who one day messed up his knee. He had surgery, and the next thing you know, he was addicted to pain killers, opioids. Opioids led to heroin, and then, unable to come off heroin, it led to him committing suicide 3 years ago.

This is a real problem. If we were able to cut down only a small percentage of the drugs, and if we were able to reduce only a small percentage of the murders, the sexual assaults, and the human trafficking, my question is: Would a border structure still not be worth it?

To me, that is a very commonsense question. How much does it need to be reduced before it is relevant to all of us?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST), our next speaker this afternoon who is a solid new Member, a former district attorney from the State of Mississippi who is already serving on the Foreign Affairs Committee and Homeland Security Committee.

MR. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As a former district attorney, I have seen firsthand how damaging narcotics and synthetic drugs can be to individuals, families, and our communities.

In 2017, drug overdoses killed 72,000 Americans, more than car crashes and gun violence combined. The most dangerous of these drugs, fentanyl, is 50 times more potent than heroin and accounted for almost twice the number of fatal overdoses in 2017.

Last year, law enforcement officers in Mississippi seized more than 800,000 dosage units of fentanyl. The fentanyl seized was enough to kill nearly 14 percent of the population of Mississippi.

This lethal narcotic is smuggled into our country by transnational criminal organizations or drug cartels. Just last month, Federal law enforcement officials seized more than 250 pounds of fentanyl at the Nogales port of entry on the United States-Mexico border.

As we continue to aggressively police our points of entry, drug cartels will attempt to gain access through the areas of the border that are not secured, forcing us to devote manpower to police these unsecured sections of our border.

It is apparent that drug cartels want to profit from the addiction and the destruction that these drugs have on American lives. This Congress has not only the opportunity but also the duty to act, to help limit the flow of drugs into the country and to protect our citizens by securing our southwest border.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative GUEST for his com-

ments. I appreciate his passion in sharing some of the firsthand experiences that he is seeing in the great State of Mississippi.

Our next two speakers are from border States that certainly have a perspective on what is going on as we see even right now.

One is an accomplished medical doctor who served and practiced there in the State of Texas for nearly three decades. He is not one of the louder Members, but he is often considered one of our more effective Members.

It is my privilege to yield to the gentleman from Texas, Representative MICHAEL BURGESS.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for yielding.

Let me just say, I spent the last several hours in a hearing in the Energy and Commerce Committee, a hearing called by the Democrats on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. The hearing was evaluating the failures of the Trump administration on the child separation policy.

Let me just share with you some of the statements of the witnesses. These were pediatricians. These were ACLU lawyers. Statements like the Trump administration policy was intentionally hurtful, that it was an incredibly difficult position that people were in, that parents have a right to keep their children safe, and that this was nothing more than government-sanctioned child endangerment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share a story with you. Just like Mr. WALKER, I had a guest here at the State of the Union the other night when the President was here. My guest was Chris from Keller, Texas, and he sat up in the gallery right behind us here.

I met Chris probably a year and a half to 2 years ago. He came to see me one day, brought in, actually, by his mother. His mother was concerned because he had suffered an injustice in his life, and he was upset, and he couldn't get over it. He just needed to talk to someone, and a Member of Congress is the last person I can think of to talk to, but maybe it can help.

So Chris told me his story. I practiced medicine for 25 years, and I heard some sad stories. I have been in Congress for 15 years, and I have heard some sad stories. But I will tell you, this was the saddest story that I can recall ever having heard.

Chris was serving his country in Iraq. In fact, he was in Iraq in 2005 when they had the big election where everyone was going down the road with an ink-stained thumb, and he helped make that happen. He helped pull that off.

Chris continued his service in various forms and was in Iraq when he got word that his wife was ill. His wife was, as it turns out, very, very ill, and he had to come home. He cared for her for the last few months of her life before she succumbed to breast cancer.

□ 1730

He said he made her a promise right at the end of that illness that he would

always, always, always take care of their daughter. Now Chris is a single dad. He has got an only child. The child was 12, 13 years old, the light of his life. Everything in Chris's life was wrapped up in his daughter.

His daughter came home one day and said she wanted to go spend the night at a friend's house, and Chris said no.

She said: Please, Daddy, you never let me do anything. Please let me go.

After multiple entreaties, Chris agreed. She could go over to this friend's house and spend the night.

At some point during the evening, the girls went out to a convenience store that was across the street. She drops her cellphone, goes back to retrieve it, and she was hit by a car. There were a number of cars coming down the street at that point. One was going faster than the others. All of the other cars stopped, but the car that hit Christia inflicted substantial injury upon her.

The driver of that vehicle did stop, and the police were called. The driver of that vehicle was in the country without the benefit of citizenship. So the driver of that car was taken down to the police station. Drug and alcohol tests were administered. A search of the records revealed a previous infraction with Customs and Border Patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He had come into the country illegally before, so there was that. He had speeding tickets, and he had been arrested for driving without a license. In fact, this time the only citation that he received was driving without a license, and he was released after 35 minutes.

Chris came in to see me several months later, literally at the end of his rope. I will never forget as he told me this story and he looked at me with tears in his eyes.

He said: Congressman, I put on the uniform of my country. I served my country. I did my job. Mr. Congressman, if you had been doing your job, my daughter would be here today.

I have to tell you, as I was walking Chris back to where he could get a cab to his hotel after the State of the Union Address—we have actually corresponded on a fairly regular basis, and he is a very likeable individual—as we walked off the Hill to get to where he could catch a cab beyond the Capitol Police barrier, he said: I really have enjoyed meeting you, Congressman. You have been great to me.

I said: Chris, I would give anything if we had never met.

This is not a manufactured crisis. This is a real crisis affecting our citizens and our constituents. The people on the panel today were very concerned about the Trump administration's policy from last June. But this is not a new deal. There has been a problem on our Texas border, particularly in the lower Rio Grande sector for years. The previous administration had problems. The Clinton administration had problems. The Carter administration had

problems. It is a difficult problem, and it does need to be solved.

President Trump has outlined a reasonable approach that, yes, includes sensors; yes, includes increased personnel; yes, includes all-weather roads in areas; and, yes, it does include a barrier. Without that, there cannot be success in securing our southern border, and as a consequence, our citizens cannot be safe and secure in their homes.

I thank the gentleman for providing the time tonight and leading this hour.

I hope Chris does get some measure of peace eventually, but, clearly, this is a problem that has affected a great many lives of people in our districts. I think we each can find someone in our district who has suffered from a similar loss.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I will not soon forget those lines: I did my job putting on my uniform every day. Congressman, if you had been doing your job, my daughter would be here today.

I hope that message resonates in all 434 Members who are currently in the House.

Mr. Speaker, if Congressmen and Congresswomen would do their job, these children, these daughters, these sons, these mothers, and these wives and husbands would still be here today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS). ANDY BIGGS is one of the truth tellers in this House. He is from Arizona's Fifth District. He is a retired attorney who also served in the Arizona legislature for 14 years, and he is a bold voice in the United States House.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman WALKER for holding this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know I continue to be astonished that our Democratic Members—our colleagues—turned a blind eye to what is happening in this country because of what is going on on the border.

Unlike many in Congress, I have been down to the border multiple times. I grew up just a number of miles—60, 70 miles—from the border myself. I have been down there many times. A couple of weeks ago I took eight Congressmen with me. We toured the border. We met with multiple ranchers, and their story is very similar. We got to talk to one guy—four home invasions, more than 15 burglaries, endless vandalism, and trespassing daily. He was not unique.

Another family has set up their own cameras and sensors so they can see. We watched them. We watched the people coming across. This is hour after hour of footage. Do you know what? These were young men coming across with carpet slippers so you couldn't see their footprints. I didn't see the moms and children coming across. I saw the young men carrying bundles of drugs across.

On Monday the "Washington Examiner" published an article detailing the fear of border residents living in New Mexico. They, like those in Arizona, Texas, and California have been bur-

glarized. They find groups of illegal aliens squatting in their barns with bundles of drugs on their land. But they won't call the authorities because they fear retaliation from drug cartels.

Many of the people we met with said: we will meet with you on condition that you don't reveal us meeting to the press because every time the press reveals something, we are retaliated against by drug cartels.

Yesterday at the end of a Judiciary Committee hearing about gun violence, after going on a screed—a demagogic tirade—about the importance of protecting every life, this Member said that every life is valuable. I agree with that. But she is valuing some over others.

Why wouldn't she focus on policies that would help the lives of all Americans through border security?

In 2015, a young man from my Congressional District, Grant Ronnebeck, was shot and killed by an illegal alien. Not only should that murderer not have been in possession of a firearm, he shouldn't have even been in the country. He had been deported before, yet he comes back because the border is porous.

For some reason, no Democrat is willing to ensure that criminally violent aliens like Grant's killer aren't released back into our community. I introduced a bill called Grant's Law to ensure no criminal alien can be released from custody. I can't get a single cosponsor from the other side of the aisle.

Two weeks ago 250 pounds of fentanyl and 400 pounds of additional drugs were interdicted in Nogales. That is the number one sector for drug seizures in this country. Forty percent of all drugs that are interdicted are in the Tucson sector. Just today, in the Ajo region, 300 people crossed—today—2 hours ago.

I am told by experts that we only interdict 15 percent of dangerous drugs and fewer than 50 percent of the people who are crossing.

Mr. Speaker, I call out for my colleagues across the aisle: Help us. Help this country. I am telling you: Walls work. We have to stand with the President.

I stand with the President. I stand with the people of America. I stand with people in my district. I stand with the people who believe and understand that we have to get border security and the most foundational and fundamental thing we can do is build a wall.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge there are problems with ports of entry. We have no problem in increasing training or border agents. We are not opposed to that at all. What we don't understand is why there is not an all-of-the-above approach, a commonsense approach that would allow us to continue to reduce and sometimes eliminate some of the issues that we are seeing.

My next speaker is a classmate of mine serving faithfully on the Agriculture and the Education and Labor

Committees. He is a business owner who is responsible for creating thousands of jobs from the land that he comes from, Augusta, Georgia, representing Georgia's 12th District.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman WALKER for his work here today and telling the story.

We have heard so many stories about people who have been affected by this problem at our southern border.

My friends and colleagues continue to fight to resolve the crisis at our southern border, end illegal immigration, and save innocent American lives.

I would like to share the story of Eliud Montoya, a naturalized American citizen, a hard worker, and a Georgia resident. He was violently shot and killed in 2017 at the hands of three illegal immigrants living just south of Georgia's 12th District.

Mr. Montoya, who worked for a tree service company, reported some suspicious activity to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging that illegal workers were being employed as a part of a scheme to defraud that company. By doing his duty and reporting this illegal activity to the proper authorities, Mr. Montoya was senselessly murdered by illegal immigrants who reportedly collected more than \$3.5 million of illegal profits.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very real crisis we are facing at our southern border, and we simply cannot allow lawlessness to consume this nation.

In his State of the Union on Tuesday, President Trump said it best: "The lawless state of our southern border is a threat to the safety, security, and financial well-being of all Americans. We have a moral duty to create an immigration system that protects the lives and jobs of our citizens."

Think about this, if you put in the most advanced security system in your home, would you take down the front door?

I am 100 percent with the President. Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's sincere words.

Mr. Speaker, one of my friends is another Member from Georgia who serves on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, actually owns Carter's Pharmacy, a pharmacist by nature, and actually became a mayor and was a general assembly member. He is one of the hardest working guys in this House. It is my privilege to acknowledge Representative BUDDY CARTER from Georgia's First.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an important topic to our Nation's homeland security, the crisis at our southern border. And it is, indeed, a crisis.

In its most simple form, it is paramount that we know who is coming in and out of our country in order to keep

our families and our fellow citizens safe. However, it is impossible to do so when individuals are traversing across our border avoiding checkpoints and bypassing our immigration laws.

Mr. Speaker, I have been to our border. I served on the Homeland Security Committee my first session here. We took a trip to the border. We went to California. It was the first time I had ever been to California. We went to San Diego. In San Diego you need a barrier, you need a wall, and you need a fence. You have got 3 million people in San Diego County, 3 million people in Tijuana separated by a highway. It makes perfect sense to have a barrier there, a fence.

Then we went to Arizona, rugged terrain, mountainous terrain. There you need technology, you need boots on the ground, you need blimps, and you need drones, all of those things. When we were in Arizona, we visited a farmer, a rancher there, who showed us an area where they had a fence. In that area where they had that fence, they had cut it off. It was a 10-foot fence, and they cut it off at 5 foot, put ramps on it, and they had driven a truck over it.

You have to have a fence, and you have to have technology.

We went to McAllen, Texas. It was the first time I had ever been to that part of Texas. We went to the Rio Grande River. Now, I grew up in south Georgia; to me the Rio Grande River was this giant river that you saw in a John Wayne movie. It is anything but. It is a narrow, winding river that in some areas is knee deep. People walk across it. You are going to have to have barriers in some of those areas. You are going to have to have boots on the ground. You are going to have to have technology, blimps and drones, all of those things.

What we are talking about is securing our borders. Everybody wants to say: oh, he wants to build a wall.

Yes, you need a wall in certain areas, and you need a barrier. But you need technology. But most importantly you need security.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to deny the President the ability to deliver on a campaign promise. That is not what this is about. This is about securing our borders. We need to focus. We need to focus about what we are talking about here. This is real. This is serious.

Let me tell you how serious it is. I have seen examples of it. I have seen examples that it creates in my own district, my own congressional district in coastal Georgia.

□ 1745

Just over a month ago, three illegal immigrants were charged with conspiracy to murder a legal, naturalized citizen who threatened to turn them in.

Now, folks, if you want to know how people feel about illegal immigration, ask someone who has become a citizen, who has gone through the process.

Don't ask me; ask them. Ask them what they think.

I guarantee you, they are going to be opposed to it. They did it the right way. And we invite them here. We need them here. We want them here. But they did it the right way. They are as much opposed to it, they are as much offended by it as anyone.

It is stories like these that inspired me to introduce H.R. 6333, the Tax Identity Protection Act, in the 115th Congress. The Treasury Department's inspector general noted that up to 1.4 million illegal immigrants could be fraudulently using legal citizens' Social Security numbers, but the IRS refuses to do anything about this, stating that they can't accurately determine which numbers are mistakes and which are fraud.

So I introduced the Tax Identity Protection Act. It would require the IRS to find ways to better determine illegal immigrants using stolen Social Security numbers. I will be reintroducing that bill shortly in the 116th Congress, and I hope that my colleagues will support this legislation that strengthens our national security and protects our personal identities.

Immigration is important. It is important to the history, the culture, and the progress of our country, but it is past time for us to fix our broken immigration system and ensure that people seeking a better life in America are coming through the lawful channels.

I want to thank my colleagues for holding this important and timely Special Order today.

Folks, this is serious. This is important. We need to focus, keep our eye on the ball here.

Mr. WALKER. I appreciate Representative CARTER's passion on this issue and laying out, really, a heartfelt case why border security is so important.

So many times we hear the argument that there are as many and, in some places, even a higher percentage of assaults or crimes, murders, et cetera, in communities with American citizens as there are with some of the illegal immigrants.

My question is: Does that make it okay? See, that is the thing that we have to take a look at from a common-sense perspective is that, when we do begin to reduce this, it allows us to have the resources to be able to concentrate on some of the areas as well.

A class member from Arkansas has quite a distinguished history. Prior to his congressional service, Mr. HILL was a commercial banker and an investment manager for two decades. But, not only that, President George H.W. Bush appointed Mr. HILL to be Executive Secretary to the President's Economic Policy Council, where he coordinated all White House economic policy. He does a great job and works hard on our Financial Services Committee as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), my friend from Arkansas' Second District.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from North Carolina and appreciate his distinguished service on behalf of the citizens of North Carolina, his leadership of our Republican Study Committee in the last Congress, and his leadership as our Conference leader for this Congress. And I greatly appreciate his personal engagement to help continue this conversation with the American people about the need for enhanced security along our southwest border.

Like my colleagues you have heard from, I have been to the southwest border four times as a Member of Congress. I worked in Texas for nearly a decade, so I am very familiar with the southwest border in Texas. But, as a Congressman, I have gone four times to get at the root of what is the balance that we want between border fencing, barrier, the use of technology, screening technology, enhancements at our ports of entry, and the manpower issue.

Mr. Speaker, we need all of that, and that is, in fact, what we have produced time and time again on the floor. Just in the last year, Mr. Speaker, we have proposed these kinds of commonsense border security issues, and we have not gotten sufficient votes to pass them.

So this is why we find ourselves hearing from the Border Patrol and our officials at Homeland Security that we need additional barrier construction, additional boots on the ground, new judges, additional screening technology—all of the things I hear about from county judges, county sheriffs, Federal law enforcement—to make our border, in fact, safe.

But tonight I want to reflect on the impact in my home State of Arkansas. I see it every day. I have two young adults now, Mr. Speaker, a 19-year-old and a 22-year-old.

When I was in high school, I didn't know anybody who had died of a drug overdose. I didn't know anyone who had committed suicide among my peers in my high school. And I am brokenhearted tonight, Mr. Speaker, to report that my kids and their age group have seen deaths from deadly addiction to these drugs that are coming over our border, our southwest border. It breaks my heart to see them at funerals when they should be at soccer games.

The opioid crisis has killed more than 100 Americans a day and caused 45,000 deaths last year, alone, almost as many as we lost in all of the Vietnam conflict. A third of these deaths were attributable to fentanyl, much of which is manufactured in China.

This Congress, bipartisan, last year, decided to get screening equipment to our postal service to interdict and try to stop fentanyl. Senator COTTON and I want to increase criminal penalties for fentanyl possession and dealing because, Mr. Speaker, in this small Sweet N Low packet that we are all familiar with, 1 gram has enough—if it were fentanyl—to kill 500 Americans. That is what confronts our kids as it is laced into heroin, pressed into pills,

soaked into marijuana on the streets of our country, coming across the southwest border.

So my kids have suffered from it. I have watched their faces. I have hugged a lot of moms. And whenever I think of this issue, I think about Nate Gordon, who lost his life, whose mom I visit with and who has helped me in my roundtables on helping me cope with how to talk to our parents about this deadly addiction that has overtaken our country.

Nate was a kid who got addicted, and he tried to beat it. And he beat it. And then, one night, it took his life.

His mom doesn't have her son anymore, but she has dedicated her life to helping parents to educate kids, to get people in treatment. And that is what we need. We need an entire community to bond with this Congress to fight drug addiction.

I spoke to our attorney general, my friend from North Carolina, and she told me that over 1,000 illegals had been arrested in Arkansas recently, tens of thousands of pills, and over 1,000 pounds of drugs.

So this is something that challenges our whole country, and we have to work together. I commend our President for keeping it at the forefront of the American people, and I commend Mr. WALKER for inviting us here to visit about it tonight.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's work and his friendship in this House as well.

A new Member from Texas, someone who represents the southwest Texas area, I believe, represents portions of Austin, Texas, as well, someone who is new but no less experienced, a former first assistant attorney general and a former Federal prosecutor, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for yielding time, and I thank him for his leadership on this important issue.

We are here because we are discussing the importance of border security for the United States of America, a question of our sovereignty, the basic duty of a sovereign nation to secure its borders.

I had the great privilege of spending some time with the men and women of the Border Patrol in the Rio Grande Valley sector in Texas this past week—2 days—with my fellow Texas freshman Congressman DAN CRENSHAW. What I saw was alarming.

What we learned from Border Patrol is that there will be upwards of 400,000 people crossing the border through the Rio Grande Valley sector this year alone. And of that 400,000 people, 200,000 of them, give or take, won't even be apprehended because the men and women of the Border Patrol don't have the tools they need, don't have the fencing and the barriers they need, don't have the ability to drive a vehicle parallel—lateral—to the Rio Grande River, don't have the radio signal to be able to communicate on the border.

We found that, of the 200,000 people who will be apprehended, 90 percent of them will be captured and released because we have judicially mandated capture and release today. We have judges who have told us that we have got to capture people and then release them back out into our communities without going through the proper processes to truly vet asylum and truly vet what we are dealing with. The result of that brings tragic consequences.

The Gulf Cartel in Mexico will make \$130 million this year—\$130 million—trafficking human beings across the Rio Grande Valley sector. They are integrated with FARC. They are integrated with terrorist networks. They have operational control of our border along Texas, and we are just acting like there is nothing to see.

The Speaker of the House had us in session for less than 48 hours last week with a handful of show votes. What do we have this week? More votes just that are kind of plodding along, suspension votes.

We are not having a robust debate. This Chamber is virtually empty. We are not having a robust debate about our border and our national security and about the lives of American citizens and the lives of the migrants who seek to come here.

There are migrants today who are endangered and enslaved to the cartels. There were 54 people found in a stash house last Friday when I was with Border Patrol, in a house in Houston, who are now being held hostage by cartels to pay their money back because the cartels brought them into the United States.

How is that compassion? How is that somehow beneficial to migrants?

That is the truth. Those are the facts when we talk to our men and women in the Border Patrol.

Let's talk about the women, the young girls, who are abused on the path. I was on the Rio Grande River, and I spoke to a 10-year-old and an 11-year-old girl. My son Charlie is going to turn 10 this year. These girls were traveling with no parents. They want to have a better life.

I want to welcome folks to the United States of America, but you have got to have legal channels to make it work, both for our safety and the safety of the migrants who come here.

It is extraordinary that we are even having this debate. I cannot believe that this body, the people's House, is ignoring this great tragedy that is going on on our southwest border, with real human lives.

And it is not just the migrants. It is American citizens like Jared Vargas in San Antonio, Texas, which I represent and I am proud to represent. Jared lost his life last July at the hands of somebody here illegally. His beautiful mom, Lori, is still brokenhearted, having lost her wonderful son. His twin brother, who goes to college in Kerrville, in my district, lost his twin brother; and his sister lost her brother because an illegal immigrant who was here, who was

caught, released, caught, released, stopped by law enforcement, let go, 2 days later murdered Jared Vargas.

How can we allow this to happen in the greatest country and the most powerful nation the world has ever known? How can we allow American citizens to die at the hands of illegal immigrants who are here who shouldn't be here, who have broken our laws previously? How can we allow American citizens to die at the hands of the terrorists who are moving drugs into and out of our country through cartels, die because of dangerous fentanyl and dangerous heroin that are coming across our borders at the ports of entry and, yes, between the ports of entry, which the data fully backs up?

It is not just coming through the ports of entry. It is, in fact, coming across on loads across the Rio Grande River, which is not policed.

We have a duty to defend our border. One last point: Fencing, walls work. In the Rio Grande Valley sector, in the eastern section next to the Gulf of Mexico, there is 35 miles of fencing. In the western section, in McAllen, there is far less fencing and far fewer roads. Ninety-four percent of the traffic comes through the McAllen portion of the Rio Grande Valley sector.

We have a duty to defend our borders. American citizens like Jared Vargas, who lost his life, and the Vargas family, who is now without their family member, and the United States of America deserve better. The migrants who seek to come here deserve better.

□ 1800

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, this evening, we have heard from Members across the country about the devastating toll illegal immigration has had on American families and American workers. The Democrats' divisive and disconnected immigration agenda has real consequences and leads to real victims.

What makes this such a calamity is not only the cost to Americans that we have talked about tonight, but the fact that these tragedies are completely avoidable if Congress, as we heard earlier, would do its job and secure the border.

I want to tell you about Miss Sharon Gross from my district in North Carolina. Just over a year ago, Sharon had finished a 5-mile bike ride with her 18-year-old daughter in Creekside Park, where I have been, in Archdale, North Carolina. They began their trip home in "Roxie," the vehicle her daughter received for her 16th birthday.

As her daughter was driving home, she saw a white SUV heading the opposite direction and beginning to swerve from the outer lane. The vehicle hit them head-on. Sharon described the next moment: "The next thing I remember was the sound of the metal crashing and twisting in front of us. I vaguely remember everyone running to us and telling us to get out because the car was about to explode. I couldn't get out and could barely breathe."

Sharon thanks God that her daughter was largely unharmed, but Sharon suffered five broken bones in her back and a severely broken sternum, leaving a large hole in her chest. She now has chronic pain that impacts her daily life.

The driver of the white SUV was a man by the name of Mr. Rodriguez. He had a blood alcohol concentration of .20, 2½ times the legal limit in North Carolina.

Mr. Rodriguez is in our country illegally. He did not own the vehicle he was driving, nor did he even have a driver's license, and this was his third drunk driving charge. He then served only 11 months in prison and has now been released.

Mr. Rodriguez's time in prison may have come to an end, but the physical, mental, and emotional scars that Sharon has, well, they will never fade. Making matters worse, Mr. Rodriguez was uninsured, leaving thousands of dollars in medical bills, adding to the emotional and physical and now financial pain for Sharon and her family.

Sharon stated: "It is very difficult for me to have all this constant pain and then deal with all the emotions I am feeling about someone who comes into our country illegally and gets a little pat on the hand when he breaks all our laws." She said: "To say my life was shattered is an understatement."

You see, we can do better. We must do better for Sharon and for all Americans who have been impacted by illegal immigration. That means an all-of-the-above approach to border security, including construction of additional physical structures and barriers. Border security not only helps keep our families safe, but it also continues the American tradition of being a welcoming Nation.

Many of us are proud of our legal immigrant heritage. Though it goes underreported, America has the most generous legal system in the world. Think about it. We proudly welcome 1 million legal immigrants into our country every single year.

In fact, just last year, the first full year of the Trump administration in 2017, the number was 1,127,167 new citizens whom we welcomed. These are people from all over the world who have raised their right hand, promising to obey the laws of our land and contribute to our blessed Nation.

As President Trump said on this very floor just 2 days ago: "Legal immigrants enrich our Nation and strengthen our society in countless ways. I want people to come into our country . . . but they have to come in legally."

You see, in America, we can do both. We can continue to be the beacon of hope throughout the world, and we can do much better in protecting the American people. After all, it is the first oath we take.

But the clock is ticking. We face another impasse this week. Will our Democratic colleagues support commonsense policies to end this crisis, or

will they continue to disengage on solutions, suggesting ideas like abolishing ICE and stopping additional funding for the Department of Homeland Security?

It is time to put productivity over personality and people over politics. Anything less would be immoral.

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

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), my friend and a member of the Judiciary Committee, a leader in responding to the American people who broadly support gun violence prevention.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I particularly thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on this issue and for organizing today's Special Order hour.

One of the great blessings of being in the majority is wonderful new colleagues who are bringing their incredible intellect and passion and commitment to the issues facing the American people, and the gentlewoman from California is obviously a magnificent example of that, so I thank her for the courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. On average, 100 Americans are murdered with firearms every day. Three hundred more are shot and wounded.

In 2017, the number of gun deaths in this country hit 40,000, the highest level in 20 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Globally, we have the highest rate of gun violence of any developed Nation on Earth.

We have a gun violence epidemic in this country.

The U.S. is now the world leader in child gun deaths, with death by gunshot being the second highest cause of death among children.

This is a public health crisis.

People are being killed at schools, at houses of worship, in restaurants, at homes, and everywhere in between. There is no place safe from the threat of gun violence in this country.

We have seen it at the Sandy Hook Elementary School and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School; at houses of worship in Charleston, Oak