

stand. We cannot continue to be sidelined from the decisions critical to our national security.

The Constitution is clear. Congress, not the President, has the power to declare war. The President can respond to an imminent threat to the homeland or to U.S. personnel abroad, or if we are attacked, but this is the only situation in which he may dispense with congressional approval, because as current law dictates, once the President initiates hostilities against a new enemy, Congress, not the President, dictates whether hostilities can continue.

It would be wrong for Congress to allow any President solely on his or her own authority and aside from an imminent, clear threat to sustain our involvement in any conflict, especially one so fraught as the conflict in Yemen. The United States cannot enter any conflict in the Middle East, East Asia, or Africa with no clear strategy, no clear objectives, and no authorization from Congress.

The American people need answers, and our troops and their families deserve a public debate over the sacrifices we ask them to make. I understand that for many Members, after close to two decades of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the idea of debating, let alone authorizing, new military action is not going to be popular, even if warranted. But we were not elected to pass the buck or abdicate our constitutional responsibility. We must debate these issues.

Mr. Speaker, as a combat veteran and a Member of Congress, I know it is one of our most important and solemn responsibilities to decide when and how we send Americans into harm's way. We cannot shirk that responsibility because of its gravity. We must embrace the tough decisions our role requires us to carry out.

I hope today is the beginning of our long-overdue debate over the AUMF and the true costs of war on our country and the men and women who fight and die serving it.

ROCKEFELLER CANCER INSTITUTE

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Cancer Prevention Month and to highlight the long-term, exceptional work of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock.

The Rockefeller Cancer Institute opened in 1989 and serves as Arkansas' only comprehensive cancer treatment and research facility. Now in its 30th year, the Rockefeller Cancer Institute is in the process of pursuing designation as a National Cancer Institute.

In 2018, approximately 44 Arkansans a day were diagnosed with some form of cancer, and 6,910 Arkansans lost their lives to this terrible disease. NCI

grant funding would increase Arkansans' access to clinical trials and new therapies, expand services for patients, and create more healthcare jobs in central Arkansas.

With 70 NCI-designated cancer centers across the country, not one is in Arkansas, and therefore, this is a vitally important mission.

I applaud the Rockefeller Institute's objective.

RECOGNIZING BILL HOLMES

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Bill Holmes, who passed away peacefully late last year. He left an indelible impact on the Arkansas business community.

Bill dedicated over four decades of his life to financial services, community banking, and government policy, most recently as CEO of the Arkansas Bankers Association. I was fortunate to work with him throughout my business career in Arkansas.

Among his friends, Bill was known for his quick wit, mischievous smile, and ability to connect with others. Bill's contributions to our State and our community banks will not be forgotten. I join all Arkansans in recognizing Bill for his remarkable career and his life well-lived.

I extend my respect, affection, and prayers to his wife, Rita, and their family and friends.

RECOGNIZING SYBIL JORDAN HAMPTON

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Sybil Jordan Hampton, who was recently awarded the alumni award from the University of Chicago for providing leadership in advancing social justice and equity in our society.

Sybil grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, and in 1962, in the aftermath of the Little Rock Nine integration of Central High in 1957, Sybil became the first African American student to complete her entire education at Little Rock Central High School.

She went on to earn her bachelor's degree from Earlham College, a master's degree in elementary education from the University of Chicago, and a second master's degree and doctorate from Columbia University.

After working as a higher education administrator and philanthropist, Sybil returned to Little Rock to become president of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, focusing on building a better Arkansas. She continues to be involved in many local community service organizations and is a life member of the Girl Scouts of America.

As a local educator and civic and community leader, Arkansas has been an enriched place to live and work due to the outstanding accomplishments of Sybil Jordan Hampton.

RECOGNIZING JIM HINKLE

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Mr. Jim Hinkle, who was inducted into the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame last year by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Born and raised in Mountain View, Arkansas, Jim graduated from the University of Central Arkansas before pursuing a lifelong career in community service and the outdoors. He served as commissioner of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission before transitioning to 14 years on the board of the National Wild Turkey Federation, ultimately serving as president of the national chapter.

Jim's leadership helped lead toward the expansion and improvement of habitat throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada. His service to the State of Arkansas and to wildlife and conservation causes will not be forgotten, and I join all Arkansans in congratulating Jim on this achievement and wish him much continued success.

RECOGNIZING THURMAN BOOTH'S RETIREMENT

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Thurman Booth. Thurman retired earlier this year after serving more than 52 years in wildlife services, most recently as the Arkansas director of Wildlife Services for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Thurman's journey began at Louisiana State University. He quickly joined the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife as a trainee and then became assistant State supervisor in the Division of Wildlife Services. He served as the Wildlife Services lead in Arkansas since 1968.

We appreciate his service to conservation and to the Game and Fish Commission, and I wish him a great retirement.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what it is like to lose a child to gun violence. My words are not sufficient to describe that pain.

These are the words of Patricia Oliver, the mother of Joaquin Oliver. Joaquin was killed 1 year ago tomorrow at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

Dear Representative DEUTCH: I am writing to you to plead with you to ensure that other mothers and fathers do not have to endure this gut-wrenching pain, the senseless and unnecessary loss of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for my family.

My name is Patricia Oliver. My beautiful son, Joaquin, was one of the 17 who lost their lives at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School last year. Words cannot express the devastation wrought on the families of the victims, the shattering of families, friends, and those who survived.

After the avoidable mass shooting, many said we were in their thoughts and prayers. How many of you in this Chamber uttered just those words?

I thank you for your prayers, but are you actually thinking about your constituents, about those you have sworn an oath to serve, and about those you know and love? If you were thinking, you would do something.

It is in your power to enact commonsense gun laws, commonsense mental health support, and appropriate support and guidance

to law enforcement. If we have the courage to stand up and do this, then never again will thoughts and prayers be needed in the aftermath of a mass shooting.

This country is at a crossroads. We need your leadership. We need your love, your compassion. We need your serious thought unmarred by lobbyists.

I implore you to think about the kids. Think about how you would feel if it were your son, your daughter, your granddaughter, or your grandson, because it could be.

Had we—had the Members of this body—learned the lessons of Columbine and of Sandy Hook, Joaquin would still be here. The lives of hundreds would not have been ripped to pieces. This was preventable.

Something you can do, and urge your colleagues to do right this moment, is support the recently introduced universal background checks bill.

It is now my mission in life to do whatever I can to ensure that no mother and no father have to endure the pain I have, that no shining beacon of light, hope, and love like my Joaquin is snuffed out too soon in a preventable mass shooting.

We know that he didn't have to die if our leaders had done enough. Other countries have solved this problem. The roadmap exists. Please follow it.

Sincerely, Patricia Oliver, Parkland, Florida.

Mr. Speaker, Patricia and Manuel, Joaquin's father, have not allowed Joaquin to remain a victim. He is an advocate.

Last month, the Olivers visited Capitol Hill with a statue of Joaquin to deliver this letter and to call for change. It is time to listen to them, Patricia, Manuel, and Joaquin. We shouldn't have to know the pain that Patricia and Manny know, that 16 other families in Parkland know, and that families in every corner of this country know, to do something about gun violence.

The time to act is now.

DISASTER RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind you and my colleagues that Congress appropriated billions for disaster relief for Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In the latest effort, however, to find funding to build a wall, the White House and top budget officials continue to discuss shifting disaster funding to pay for a wall that a foreign nation was to pay for and now must be borne by people still recovering from disaster.

The 2017 hurricane season was one of the worst on record. Among the hardest places hit were Puerto Rico and my home, the Virgin Islands of the United States, which not only lost power across the islands, but many vital pieces of infrastructure were heavily damaged and destroyed, and, most tragically, lives were lost.

This disaster significantly impacted the Virgin Islands, destroying the island's infrastructure, with the loss of our only two hospitals, multiple

schools, thousands of homes, and it left residents without electricity for a period of 9 months.

The total damage to the Virgin Islands is estimated at \$10.8 billion—\$10.8 billion in a place that only has a \$1 billion budget—\$6.9 billion for infrastructure, \$2.3 billion for housing, and \$1.5 million for the economy.

Diverting disaster funds from this community would create a security risk and make them even more vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, shifting disaster relief funds appropriated by this body from my district and others impaired by the 2017–2018 natural disasters would create a catastrophic economic disaster.

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Disaster funding from the Army Corps was critical to disaster recovery, including power restoration, studies, repairs, and construction projects in the Virgin Islands and other territories and States impacted by the national disasters.

The Army Corps of Engineers, however, has barged more than 25,000 cubic yards of construction and demolition debris from the territory. However, approximately more than 6,000, almost 7,000, cubic yards remain on the island, still to be removed.

There is still so much work left undone. Individuals are still without roofs. After extensive debate and discussion with FEMA, the roof repair program is just now, a year and a half later, repairing the thousands of roofs and homes destroyed.

The STEP roof program has been extended to March 1. The STEP program debris removal is still in progress throughout the territory.

The hurricanes left not one but two hospitals overwhelmed with debris and destroyed—our only two hospitals—and, now, worksheets still have not been approved by FEMA for the rebuilding of those hospitals. The modular hospital is still not in place.

Students have only recently, in this month, moved into the modular classrooms. Can you imagine?

School reconstruction has not begun. Our communities still have a long way to go to get in the disaster recovery and rebuilding process.

Mr. Speaker, nowhere else in this country would this be allowed. This would not be allowed in any of your colleagues' homes.

However, before and after the storm, Virgin Islanders put their heads down and did the work. They pitched in and helped one another because that is all we had at that time, and the benevolence of other people, until you, Congress, until you, colleagues, gave them the disaster funding that was needed to rebuild.

Mr. Speaker, unlike other places, the Virgin Islands doesn't have five or six Members of the House or millions of constituents living in your own districts. The Virgin Islands didn't have thousands of people on the news media

or chefs or playwrights bringing musicals to our island to draw attention to the devastation in our home.

The Virgin Islands had me, and I pray they have you—they have you, Mr. Speaker; they have you, colleagues—to continue the fight for them, for these Americans, to tell the White House that they should not shift disaster funding to build a wall away from Americans living in territories for something that a foreign country was to pay for in the beginning.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize February as National Children's Dental Health Month and to raise awareness around the critically important issue of access to quality dental care for our Nation's children.

The most prevalent chronic infectious disease among children in the United States is tooth decay. This disease is responsible for countless health problems in children and more than 51 million hours lost at school every year.

However, this disease is preventable with basic dental care. Sadly, even with improvements in recent years, too many children are not able to access the quality dental care they need to simply stay healthy.

I have a long history of advocating for increased access to dental care for all, particularly our Nation's young people. I have often said that our children are the living messengers we send to a future we will never see. That means that we must do everything in our power to ensure that they are healthy and given every opportunity to succeed.

Today, I also rise to share the story of a young Maryland boy named Deamonte Driver. He died because of a lack of access to basic dental care.

In February of 2007, 12-year-old Deamonte Driver came home from school with a simple headache, which had started as a toothache. His mother worked hard to make ends meet with all kinds of low-paying jobs. She searched for a dentist who would accept Medicaid for her children, but she found no dentist who would care for children's teeth.

Deamonte's mother took him to the emergency room, where he received medication for pain, a sinus infection, and a dental abscess. Unfortunately, that was not enough. The bacteria from Deamonte's cavity spread to his brain, and, at 12 years old, Deamonte Driver died—12 years old. Deamonte could be alive today if it were not for the lack of a simple procedure and the early removal of one tooth.

Deamonte's story is one we must never, ever forget. We must imprint it in the DNA of every cell of our brains.