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No. 24

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 5, 2020.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2020, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

TELEHEALTH INCREASES ACCESS TO CARE FOR MONTANANS

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

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, many Montanans live in frontier and rural areas where access to doctors and specialists is a big challenge. They don't worry about when they can see a doctor; they worry if there is even a doctor to see.

For Montana seniors with mobility issues, getting out to see a doctor can

be difficult and can delay their care leading to worse health outcomes.

Montana, unfortunately, also has the highest suicide rate in the Nation. Thousands of Montanans lack adequate access to mental healthcare.

Telehealth can fix these problems. Telehealth increases access to care, brings down healthcare costs, and, in some cases, saves lives.

Unfortunately, Federal telehealth programs have been poorly managed. Currently, 10 different Federal agencies operate telehealth programs with little or no coordination between them.

That is why Chairwoman ESHOO and I have worked for months on ways to improve and increase telehealth services. I appreciate her leadership on this important issue.

Today, we introduce the National Telehealth Strategy and Data Advancement Act. Our bill reauthorizes telehealth grant programs, provides greater oversight of Federal agencies, and helps implement telehealth programs across the country.

Using modern technology to make healthcare more accessible is a commonsense solution. It will particularly help us with our rural doctor shortage in Montana.

This bill will ensure that patients can have access to doctors and specialists in a way that is convenient for them.

I look forward to working on this bipartisan bill. It is a critical step as we ensure all Americans, particularly those in our rural and frontier areas, have access to better, affordable healthcare.

GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WEEK

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last night in this Chamber, we heard a bloviating, self-congratulatory speech

full of exaggerations, half-truths, and outright falsehoods. The President pretended to have addressed, or was going to address, concerns of the American people.

He said he is taking care of prescription drugs. Yeah. Really. They haven't done a damn thing. We sent a bill to the Senate and it is sitting there.

Second, he said, oh, we are going to protect preexisting conditions. Funny thing, his Attorney General is in court arguing that those preexisting conditions should no longer be protected. But, hey, what the heck.

And then he did devote one sentence—one sentence—to infrastructure. What happened to the \$2 trillion plan he campaigned on and carries on about all the time? Well, so far, he has only proposed cuts.

But one issue of vital concern to the American people that is the focus this week—this is National Gun Violence Survivors Week—did not receive a single mention by the President, despite the fact that several commonsense bipartisan reforms and programs have passed this House and have received no action in the Senate in a year.

H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Comprehensive Background Checks Act, passed on February 27. No action in the Senate.

The Enhanced Background Checks Act passed February 28—bipartisan. Again, no action in the Senate.

Every year, guns are sold to people who aren't supposed to have them—including at that horrible church shooting a couple of years ago—because of a mandate that, if there is confusion over a background check, they have to get the gun within 3 days.

Over the last 10 years, 35,000 guns, because of that provision, were sold to people who were not qualified under Federal law to have the guns. And guess what. Then the Feds contact the FBI who screwed up the background check, contacts the local law enforcement and says, "Hey, go get the gun

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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from that felon," endangering our local law enforcement.

This would plug that loophole.

The Violence Against Women Act Re-authorization passed April 4. No action in the Senate. And, for the first time in 20 years, we are going to do some research on gun violence. There are other bills we should be doing.

In my State, we have adopted red flag laws. And over here, they say, well, we can't have red flag laws for abusers because of their constitutional rights.

Well, we have set it up in a way that we have had 160 petitions for red flag restrictions. Most of them—actually, the majority—were for people at risk of suicide; and then a minority were for abusive relationships, and 32 of those were denied by a judge.

Due process was followed, but lives were saved. But, no, we can't take that.

Bump stocks, we banned fully automatic weapons decades ago. Bump stocks, essentially, turn a semiautomatic into a very inaccurate, nearly full automatic in terms of ready to fire. But if you are shooting at a stadium full of people, it doesn't matter how inaccurate it is; you are going to hit a lot of people.

We can't even bring up legislation—or, well, the Republicans won't support legislation to ban bump stocks, hate crimes legislation, the list goes on.

Just one other quick issue. You can go online to armslist.com, and if you are not eligible to buy a gun, you can get one. It is very evident that, in study after study done, that many of the people selling guns on armslist.com are felons and not allowed to own firearms, and they will sell to other felons. It will say: No background check necessary. Will cross State lines—all sorts of things like that.

All those things need to be banned. Those are commonsense gun violence reforms.

And, in this week, just, really, this week, National Gun Violence Survivors Week, let's do something to end the bloodshed.

RECOGNIZING THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS, SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS, AND BOB DOLE

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, much like America's great comeback that President Trump described at his State of the Union message last night, this past Sunday, my team, the Kansas City Chiefs, had a miracle comeback victory in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl LIV.

After 50 years, the Chiefs are once again Super Bowl champions. As a born-and-raised Chiefs fan, watching them win the title was a dream come true.

Of course, we all saw the game, but just before it started something happened that you may have missed. Dur-

ing the singing of the national anthem, just past the end zone, my mentor and friend, 96-year-old Senator Bob Dole, who was seriously wounded during his service in World War II, insisted on standing up out of his wheelchair during the performance. And with a little help, that is exactly what he did.

In an age when people can't even agree in honoring our flag, it is powerful to see one of our Nation's greatest heroes from our Greatest Generation continue to show us the way.

Thank you, Senator Dole, for your patriotism and love of country.

And congratulations to my Super Bowl champions, the Kansas City Chiefs.

CHAOS AT THE IOWA CAUCUS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we all saw the Iowa caucus and the chaos that Democrats are offering—chaos, along with higher taxes and Medicare for all that takes away the insurance that you get at your job.

As Senate Majority Leader McCONNELL said yesterday, these same Democrats who want to take over everyone's healthcare and micromanage the entire economy couldn't even organize their own traditional Iowa caucuses.

Contrast this to last night at the State of the Union message when President Trump talked about the strongest economy of our lifetimes, including record job and wage growth. We saw how the President wants to bring us together to deliver even more results, more trade deals for Kansas, and a safer, more secure America. You can count on me that I will be standing beside him to help deliver those results.

The Democrats offer chaos, higher taxes, and poverty. President Trump and the Republicans offer prosperity, hope, and security.

CREATING A PROGRAM WITHIN THE VA TO GIVE VETERANS ACCESS TO SERVICE DOGS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, tonight the House will vote to pass the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, which will create a program within the VA to give veterans access to treatment by working with service dogs.

Midwest Battle Buddies is an organization based in Kansas that works with veterans who are suffering from PTSD or other service-related issues. The veterans are paired with a dog and attend weekly sessions to train the dogs. Once the training is completed, the dogs become their service dogs.

According to Chip Neumann, president of the organization, therapy dogs provide veterans unconditional love. They do not judge their owners when they have breakdowns from stress or external triggers and can react and intervene if the veteran is having an episode and can often prevent them from spiraling out of control.

There is just something wonderful about dogs, as we all know.

The training sessions also act as mini therapy sessions, as veterans realize they are with others dealing with the same issues.

Midwest Battle Buddies has seen the possible impact service dog therapy can have for our cherished veterans.

I look forward to passing the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act to extend access to service dog therapy throughout the VA, to provide the best treatment for America's veterans.

HONORING GUN VIOLENCE SURVIVORS' WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Gun Violence Survivors Week because I, too, am a survivor.

This week, just a month into the new year, there will have been more gun deaths in the United States than our peer countries will experience in an entire year—one month.

I wear black today. I wear black all week long to stand for every survivor, every victim, every family that mourns the unnecessary gun deaths that happen each and every single day.

I met earlier this week with Mary Miller-Strobel, whose brother, Ben, was a combat veteran suffering from depression and PTSD. Ben had lost 30 pounds after his tour. Returning home, his father asked him about his weight loss. Ben replied that he couldn't eat, and he said: "It's just so hard out there, Dad. It smells like death."

Ben was seeking treatment at a local VA hospital, but his family continued to worry about him. They worried that, in a moment of desperation, Ben might end his own life.

Mary and her father drove to every gun store in their area. At each store, they showed photos of Ben, pleading with them not to sell him a gun.

Ben Miller died by suicide. He used a gun that he bought at a local gun store.

Too often we are told that we must accept these tragedies. We are told that, instead of changing our laws, we must have more active shooter drills, more first graders coming home with tears in their eyes, 6-year-olds asked to decide for themselves whether they are more likely to survive by hiding in a closet or if they should rush the gunman; more mothers reading messages from their children as they are locked inside a school and they are pleading: Mom, if I don't make it, I love you, and I appreciate everything that you have done for me; more vigils each and every day for those that we continue to lose.

Too often, we are told that we must accept these tragedies. I refuse to accept that. Millions of Americans across the country refuse to accept that. This Congress should refuse to accept that.

We refuse to accept that, because we have passed bipartisan legislation that will help save lives, legislation like the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, a commonsense bill that will keep guns away from those who should not have them.