

2020 was one of the deadliest gun violence years on record, and we are already on track to outpace those grim statistics. More than 21,000 people are dead in just the first 6 months of this year.

We need to step up to the plate and do something to protect our constituents.

We need to make straw purchasing and gun trafficking Federal crimes. We need to expand background checks. We need to support more evidence-based community violence prevention programs. We need to build opportunity for youth to get a good education and good jobs. We cannot go on letting mothers bury their children.

This week, we mark the end of Gun Violence Awareness Month. But for far too many families, there is no end to this month of awareness and advocacy. These families are painfully aware of the impacts of gun violence because they carry the weight of this epidemic with them every single day.

I rise to implore my colleagues to exercise some courage and responsibility by advancing gun violence prevention legislation.

#### MEANING OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a quick web search on the meaning of Independence Day will give you the dictionary definition: A day celebrating the anniversary of national independence.

For a nation built upon the foundations of freedom, such as the United States of America, there is much more to the meaning of Independence Day than can be described in a dictionary.

For Americans, Independence Day is about the people who have lived and died in the defense of freedom. Crispus Attucks, who was killed by British troops in the Boston Massacre, has long been honored as an American hero and the first casualty of the Revolutionary War. Mr. Attucks has proved to be the first in a long legacy of American heroes.

Each and every generation of Americans has had their share of men and women willing to pursue a more perfect realization of that most basic of human rights, freedom.

Freedom against tyranny was the primary motive during the Revolutionary War for our first President, George Washington, alongside the Founding Fathers, who designed the government for our new Nation and the troops who fought for its right to exist.

The great efforts of President Abraham Lincoln during the most trying time in our Nation's history, the Civil War, led armies of brave soldiers who fought not only for the reunification of the country but also the freedom of people held in slavery.

This noble fight was taken up not only by soldiers but by civilians who

worked in support of those in combat, such as Clara Barton, Army nurse and founder of the American National Red Cross.

Hundreds of thousands of young men lost their lives during the Second World War fighting fascism in Europe and around the world. Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman, alongside generals including Eisenhower, Patton, and MacArthur, provided the leadership and strategy necessary to allow our soldiers to gain victory and preserve freedom.

As a nation, we have believed in and fought for freedom for so long that it can easily be taken for granted. This is a trap that we must be extra vigilant not to fall into. As President Reagan aptly stated, freedom "is not passed to our children in the bloodstream."

Pursuing freedom for over 200 years has been the result of a conscious choice, in each era, by every generation. We must continue to make that choice in this era and in this generation.

Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed that in my examples from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Second World War, I named politicians who served our soldiers and citizens. Make no mistake, it is the soldiers and the citizens of our Nation who do the work to preserve freedom. Therefore, it is the solemn duty of those of us who work in government to lead and represent the people so that they can continue to live in freedom.

I urge each and every government official, and especially my fellow Members of Congress, to make the choice to pursue freedom, as so many generations have before us. In this way, we honor the lives of past heroes such as Crispus Attucks and ensure freedom will be defended by future generations.

Mr. Speaker, that is the meaning of Independence Day that could never fit in a dictionary.

#### HONORING HEROES GORDON BEESLEY AND JOHNNY HURLEY

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, on June 21, 2021, the community of Arvada, Colorado, experienced a tragedy. In a matter of minutes, our community lost two heroes, with dozens of Arvada residents left stunned and horrified.

Arvada Police Officer Gordon Beesley was responding to a report of suspicious activity in Olde Town Arvada when he was ambushed and shot by a man who had immense hatred toward the police.

Minutes later, a Good Samaritan named Johnny Hurley intervened and shot the suspect, undoubtedly saving countless other lives. In a tragedy upon a tragedy, Hurley was then mistaken as the shooter, and he was killed.

Officer Gordon Beesley joined the Arvada Police Department in 2002 and

served in a number of roles for the department. He spent most of the year working as a school resource officer at local schools in our community, including Oberon Middle School, Lincoln Academy, and Excel Academy Charter School. During the summers, he often returned to patrol work, as he was doing last Monday in Olde Town Arvada.

Officer Beesley was a well-known and well-liked member of our community. His calm, gentle, and patient demeanor made a big difference in his day-to-day interactions with students, especially those students who needed it most.

In 2015, he was named employee of the year by the city of Arvada after the city learned Officer Beesley was riding his bike to school multiple times a week with a student who suffered from developmental delays and was not able to ride by himself.

Countless other stories have surfaced from students, his colleagues, and community members in the days following his death about the impact he had on their lives, big and small.

He was an accomplished drummer and singer who played in local Arvada bands Railbenders and Brethren Fast.

We will remember Officer Beesley's kindness and bravery and the approach he brought to life each and every day to "make someone feel special today."

Hearing gunshots, another hero stepped up to protect and defend the community, 40-year-old Denver resident Johnny Hurley. According to Arvada's chief of police, Johnny's actions were "decisive, courageous, and effective in stopping further loss of life."

Johnny's friends and family remembered him as an idealist and iconoclast and were not surprised to learn Johnny stepped up to defend his community in a time of need.

The loss of Johnny Hurley is tragic. I join the Arvada Police Department and our community at large in honoring his bravery for his actions that day, which undoubtedly saved lives.

Although we don't know all the facts, our hearts go out to the officer who mistook Mr. Hurley for the shooter.

This has been a difficult week for our community, including for members of the Arvada Police Department. Our heroes in uniform are charged with protecting our communities, and last week's shooting is a reminder of the dangers our police officers face each and every day across the country.

Olde Town Arvada is a close-knit community at the heart of Arvada. On a typical day, it is a busy, vibrant, cheerful part of town. Mr. Speaker, June 21, 2021, was a dark day for our community, and it is difficult for many of us to process it.

My deepest and heartfelt condolences go out to the families of Officer Beesley and Johnny Hurley and the entire Arvada community. Arvadans are resilient and strong. Together, we will get through this.

COMMONSENSE SOLUTIONS ON  
INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that Congress must take action to improve our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. But, sadly, bipartisan negotiations have hit a roadblock, and the infrastructure legislation on the floor this week is a go-at-it-alone, my-way-or-the-highway bill.

Instead of focusing on traditional infrastructure, Democrats have chosen to prioritize the left's Green New Deal agenda. This bill includes an estimated \$276 billion for Green New Deal-related mandates, requirements, and programs. To put that into perspective, \$1 out of every \$2 spent by this legislation is tied up in Green New Deal goals.

Further, this bill reduces flexibility for States to meet their own unique infrastructure needs and fails to streamline major project reviews, which typically face a 6-year delay. To make matters worse, the spending increases proposed in this bill rely heavily on more deficit spending. There are no pay-fors, which will only further fuel inflation and increase the cost of goods like gas and food.

We need commonsense solutions that truly work to improve our roads, bridges, railways, and rural broadband. I am pleased to hear that there are bipartisan negotiations underway to achieve these goals, but this bill this week veers off the road and into a partisan ditch.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" later this week on H.R. 3684.

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RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ANNE  
SEATON

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and legacy of Anne Seaton, who went to be with the Lord on April 23, 2021.

Anne was a pillar of the Sixth District of Virginia, but her light shone well beyond the valley.

Charitable at heart, Anne and the Mehnert family served as missionaries in Jamaica and hosted refugees from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to help provide comfort and aid to those afflicted.

In the valley, Anne was a passionate supporter of Grace Christian School and Wilson High School, as well as one who helped fundraise for the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra.

Further, Anne was active in local politics, including the successful campaign of her husband Scott to the Augusta County Board of Supervisors.

Anne was the founder of the Republican Women of Greater Augusta and inspired many to get involved in the community.

Above all, though, it was Anne's family and her faith that defined her. A loving wife to Scott, mother to

Joscelyn Hodge and her husband Christopher, Phillip, Samuel, and Daniel, friend and daughter, Anne was a devoted follower of Jesus Christ and was a member of Tabernacle Presbyterian Church.

Anne has a grandchild due in December.

Anne not only believed in her faith, but she lived it as exemplified through her life's work.

Living through our faith is a lesson we can all learn from the late great Anne Seaton.

Anne is greatly missed and will not soon be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING AMHERST COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL  
GIRLS SOFTBALL TEAM

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Amherst County High School girls softball team for winning this year's Class 4 State Championship.

It was a defensive game all around, and Amherst County's pitcher, Dylan McNerney, kept the Lancers in it with an incredible performance, striking out 10 batters.

With the game tied at zero at the end of regulation, it took extra innings for the Lancers to pull off a victory against the Hanover Hawks.

Before the final inning began, head coach Samantha Thacker told the team: "This is our time, this is our inning, we have got to stay settled and be patient," and they did just that.

In the top of the eighth, two errors by the Hawks put runners on base for Amherst County with one out.

When Kayleigh Combs stepped up to bat, she put the ball into play, and an overthrow allowed Cheyenne Wall to race home from third giving the Lancers a one to nothing lead. Soon after, a wild pitch brought Maegan Lloyd home adding another run to the board.

With a two to nothing lead heading into the bottom of the eighth, the Lancers were able to keep the Hawks scoreless, securing the team's first ever State softball title.

Congratulations to the players and coaches on a great season, they have earned it.

WATER ISSUES

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

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of water and my concerns with the Biden administration's unnecessary overreach.

We use water to sustain ourselves; for industrial manufacturing; for swimming and recreation with our family and friends; to bathe; and to produce the most affordable, abundant, and safe food supply in the world.

Agriculture is the largest industry in Kansas' Big First District and across the State, so water conditions determine good or bad crop years, the amount of time livestock producers spend hauling water or moving cattle to land with a better pond, and ultimately, the kinds of foods that show up

on the grocery store shelves across the country.

In western and south-central Kansas, the Ogallala aquifer is the main source of water and represents the supply of one-third of the State of Kansas. The Ogallala covers about 175,000 square miles across eight States from South Dakota to Texas, making it the largest aquifer in the country and one of the largest in the world.

At the beginning of the 20th century, States began pumping water from the Ogallala to irrigate the land for agricultural production use. In arid climates like western Kansas, irrigation transformed the Dust Bowl ridden region into the incredibly productive land that we see today. On average, Kansas has about three million irrigated acres with nearly 2.6 million acres irrigated with water from the Ogallala and the rest of the High Plains aquifer. The Ogallala's groundwater is essential to our food supply, as it supports nearly one-fifth of all of the wheat, corn, cotton, and cattle produced in the United States.

In 2018, when I was Lieutenant Governor of Kansas, we worked with the Ogallala Water Coordinated Agriculture Project to hold the first ever Ogallala Aquifer Summit in Garden City and gathered stakeholders from the eight States covering the aquifer to discuss the need to conserve water and sustain the Ogallala region's agriculture productivity over the long-term, adapting new technologies and voluntarily reducing water waste.

Since then, producers like Lynn Goossen have made changes to their operations to reduce the amount of water they pump and protect Ogallala. Goossen Farms has shifted from irrigated corn to a wheat rotation, adapted conservation practices when applying fertilizer, and changed from flood to sprinkler irrigation. Understanding the depletion of the Ogallala caused Mr. Goossen to take on leadership within his Groundwater Management District and work with other producers to voluntarily use their water wisely.

Efforts at the State level in Kansas through Groundwater Management Districts have also supported the sustainable use of the Ogallala aquifer where districts work with communities to set their own water conservation goals and control measures; develop plans to reduce water withdrawals in a designated area; and continue using water in a manner that is economically viable. The research from the Northwest Kansas Technical College Water Technology Farm has helped producers like Tim Franklin in Sherman County. The Franklin family farm was early to enroll in a Water Conservation Area, and uses the technology developed and tested at Northwest Tech to help meet their water reduction goals.

These voluntary, locally led efforts to safeguard our water were supported during the Trump administration when they published a reasonable and clear definition of "waters of the United