

Last week, Oxford High School became the 30th school shooting in 2021, with four dead and seven injured. Thirty times this year alone.

These are not isolated incidents. They join a long history of our Nation's failure to have an honest discussion about guns and gun violence.

Lawmakers have the responsibility to legislate and to protect our children and our neighbors from gun violence.

When will we wake up to a new day?

□ 1615

DEMOCRATS' DRUG PRICING SCHEME JEOPARDIZES FUTURE CURES

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, the Federal Government cannot be given the ability to police innovators who create lifesaving products. Top-down, government-imposed drug pricing would eliminate consumer choices, jeopardize future cures, and ultimately lead to socialized medicine.

The United States invents approximately two-thirds of the world's new medicines. Our system encourages private investments which spur innovation. This is something we should be proud of and encourage, not curtail.

But under the Democrats' radical Build Back Better Act, new drugs and cures for diseases like cancer and diabetes would be reduced. Price controls will lead to reduced access for patients and will set a dangerous precedent.

If the Federal Government has the authority to dictate the cost of prescription drugs, what else will it decide to set prices for?

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today regarding the ongoing threat posed by COVID-19.

After 22 months of this pandemic, we cannot be complacent. In order to prevent further spread of the virus, either someone has to die, which I don't consider a very good alternative, or everybody else who isn't vaccinated ought to get their vaccines. By doing so, you prevent more suffering and death.

In Ohio, COVID-19 is ripping across the State. Our emergency rooms are full of patients, and our ICU staffs are overworked. Ninety-five percent of COVID hospitalizations are among unvaccinated individuals—95 percent. This is costing our healthcare system billions of dollars and wear and tear on all of our medical professionals.

However, only 61 percent of Ohio residents have received their first dose. That means the majority aren't pulling with the crew.

I urge all of us to think about the safety of our family, our friends, and

our neighbors and do what we must to assist the well-being of those who are working overtime now for almost 2 years in our healthcare facilities. They are serving on the front lines.

We all have a duty to be patriotic, and that means saving lives, not taking them, and making sure that you get your vaccine.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING IN LIBERAL CITIES

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Speaker, this holiday season, most Americans are using the conventional shopping method. They choose their item in the store and pay for it at the checkout.

However, this year, others are going with a different approach: smash and grab robberies. Thugs are ambushing stores, breaking windows, and destroying store property, then walking out with all the merchandise they can carry. Robberies at pharmacies and retail stores are on the rise this year, mostly in liberal cities like San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City. There is a clear pattern here.

Store robberies are up in Democrat-run cities that push defund the police agendas and refrain from punishing criminals in the name of equity. Criminals in these cities figured out there is no consequence for busting up a Gucci store and walking out with thousands of dollars of merchandise.

For example, in California, people can steal up to \$950 worth of merchandise without being charged with a felony. Many looters in California cities who get arrested are quickly released because they don't even have to pay bail.

Unfortunately, many Democrats are willingly ignorant of this trend. They even attribute the rise in smash-and-grab robberies to the coronavirus or deny the problem exists at all. They keep pushing their antipolice, procriminal policies, and it is hard-working businessowners and employees who end up paying the price.

Madam Speaker, I always remember what my parents told me: Let's not close the barn door after the cows have already left.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY CHINA

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

Mr. BOWMAN. Madam Speaker, we know that about 1.5 million Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims have been detained in reeducation camps and that products made in the Xinjiang region have been made with forced labor—in other words, slavery.

The House considered the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, led by Chairman MCGOVERN, that would ban

the import of goods made with forced labor and sanction people responsible for modern-day slavery.

This is ethnic cleansing happening here. The world cannot look away from one of the most egregious and deadly incidents of ongoing Islamophobia, genocide, and slavery.

I was proud to vote "yes" on this legislation and hope to ensure that we hold China accountable for this egregious human rights abuse.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MIKE SCHERNECK

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael Scherneck's selfless 18-year career with the Southeast Georgia Health System.

After nearly two decades of dedicated service to residents of Georgia's First District, Mike will retire early next year as CEO of the Southeast Georgia Health System.

In 2003, Mike began his tenure as the executive vice president and CFO. In 2015, he was named president and CEO due to his dedication and hard work ethic.

Without Mike's tireless advocacy, the Southeast Georgia Health System would not be the top-tier facility it is today.

In a tenure wrought with trials, including three hurricanes and a global pandemic, Mike's extraordinary leadership allowed the health system not just to survive but to thrive.

While we know that Mike is looking forward to retired life, we are certainly sad to see him go.

Mike is leaving the Southeast Georgia Health System better than he found it and decades of future CEOs will surely be inspired by his lasting legacy.

NICOLE MONTNA VAN VLECK HONORED AS RICE FARMER OF THE YEAR

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, I am here today to recognize the great work of a fellow rice farmer, Nicole Montna Van Vleck. She was just named the USA Rice Federation's 2021 Rice Farmer of the Year.

She is a third-generation rice farmer in northern California and serves as president and CEO of her Montna Farms in Sutter County.

At Montna Farms, conservation is a priority. America's rice farmers have a longstanding commitment to protect and preserve natural resources.

Not only is she involved with her family's California rice operation, but she also makes time for her passion of promoting the U.S. rice industry.

She previously served as the chair of the USA Rice Farmers board of directors, where she collaborated with growers across the country to solve difficult policy issues and strengthen the industry.

Today, U.S. rice farmers produce more rice using less land, energy, and water than they did just 20 years ago while providing critical habitats for many, many species.

With leaders such as Nicole, America's rice farmers continue to serve as leaders in farming by producing a very healthy, conservation-friendly food that generates jobs and economic opportunity in rural areas.

Congrats, Nicole, on this great honor.

SOCIAL SECURITY 2100: A SACRED TRUST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KAPTUR). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to use this hour to discuss "Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust," or, as Martin Luther King would remind us, the fierce urgency of now and Congress' need to act on Social Security.

Let me start with the fact that Social Security is the Nation's number one insurance program, the number one insurance program that some on the other side call an entitlement. There is nothing further from the truth, and this is easily verifiable. All you have to do is look at your pay stub. It says FICA. FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contributions Act. Whose contribution? Every citizen in the United States who pays into the program.

It is an earned benefit, and one that has never missed a payment. It is a guarantee, and that is why it is so vitally important to every American citizen.

Congress has been negligent. It has been 50 years since there has been an enhancement to the program. It has been more than 38 years since there was an attempt at solvency. Yet, 38 years ago, Congress enacted a cut that will take place this January.

The time to act is now. No more procrastination. For all of our C-SPAN listeners, make sure that you contact your Member of Congress in both Houses.

We are pleased that 200-plus people are original cosponsors of the bill. You will hear from some of them today.

We have taken the liberty of pointing out to every Member of Congress how many people in their district receive Social Security benefits and what that brings into their district on a monthly basis. I assure you, there is no more greater economic development plan for Members' districts than what happens on a monthly basis to those who need it most.

Let me reiterate again: Social Security is the number one antipoverty program for the elderly and the number one antipoverty program for children as well.

I have here, Madam Speaker, something we have done for every Member of Congress. In this case, we are illustrating our great leader, Representative JIM CLYBURN, who is a proud cosponsor of this bill.

In his district, in South Carolina's Sixth, there are 149,433 Social Security recipients who receive \$189 million in monthly benefits. That is monthly benefits. There are 1.2 million Social Security recipients in South Carolina who receive \$1.7 billion in monthly benefits as well.

For about half of senior beneficiaries, Social Security provides a majority of their income. Now imagine that, for half the seniors in the country, Social Security provides a majority of their benefits, yet there hasn't been an enhancement or an increase in over 50 years in a COLA. That doesn't even come remotely close to what people need.

For more than a quarter of our seniors, it provides 90 percent or more of their income, 90 percent for a quarter of our seniors. At a time when the wealth disparity is the greatest it has ever been in our country, the wealthiest nation in the world, there are 5 million of our fellow Americans, mostly women, who receive a below-poverty level check from their government.

□ 1630

Why? Because Congress hasn't acted. This isn't something the President can do through executive order, nor is this something that the Supreme Court is going to adjudicate. This is the responsibility of the United States Congress.

I am proud that we had a hearing the other day in the Ways and Means Committee that we are going to bring to a markup and ultimately to the floor of this House: Social Security 2100. I am proud of the fact that we have a President of the United States who refers to Social Security as a sacred trust, a sacred trust between the government and their people. And Social Security has never failed. It has never missed a payment.

It used to be—and Mr. CARTWRIGHT from Pennsylvania knows this—that we could go back to 1935 to explain why Roosevelt back then, in the midst of the Great Depression, put forward Social Security because of the devastation that had taken place in 1929 during the great crash.

But Members on this floor, Members in this Congress understand all too well that we only have to go back to 2008, 2009 during the Great Recession when people saw their 401(k) become a 101(k) where people lost their benefits. And that coupled with the great pandemic, this roller coaster of a pandemic that we are living through now has only further underscored the need for us to enhance the Nation's number one insurance program.

And during that same time, during that recession that they witnessed their funds depleted and devastated or lost altogether or during layoffs that have occurred through no fault of their own, Social Security has never missed a payment. Not a pension payment, not a spousal payment, not dependent coverage, nor disability.

Madam Speaker, it might surprise some of our viewers and listeners that more veterans depend on Social Security disability than they do on the VA. And it is because Social Security provides these benefits and especially for our veterans. People in this Chamber and in the Senate take great pride in talking about our veterans on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, and rightfully so, and saluting them and saying what a grateful Nation we are.

Well, if we are truly a grateful Nation, then it is time we end the more than 50 years of neglect and make sure that our veterans are able to get the benefits that they richly deserve without 5-month delays, in making sure that they have disability that they know they can rely on, that works for the times that we are living through currently.

Children continue to rely on Social Security, and it is the number one antipoverty program for children. And you know what, 10,000 baby boomers a day become eligible for Social Security, and millennials will need the benefit more than baby boomers. Millennials have been put in the position where they have less money to be able to afford private pensions, where they have been burdened with college loan debt, where they are unable to get the kind of mortgages their parents enjoyed, and, in fact, have incomes that are below that level, and so, Social Security becomes their salvation. But it can't be their salvation if they are locked at the bottom, and we are not making the benefit increases that will provide that opportunity for all generations to enjoy.

Madam Speaker, we are pleased also that Social Security 2100 will not only lift benefits across the board, but it will make sure that no one can work all their lives, pay into a system and retire into poverty. More than 5 million Americans get a below-poverty-level check from the government after having paid in all their lives. That is unfair. That is unjust. That is flat out wrong. We are a body that can pass out trillions of dollars of tax cuts to the Nation's wealthiest 1 percent and yet we can't take care of people who have paid into the system because Congress has not fulfilled its obligation and responsibility.

Now is the time to act, and under Democratic leadership, that will take place. People say to me often, "Well, what is different?"

What is different is: we have a Democratic House, a Democratic Senate, and most importantly, a President who believes that this is a sacred trust. A President, as MATT CARTWRIGHT also