

STILL I RISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TORRES of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, still I rise. And I rise today to address the unfortunate circumstances that took the lives of 19 children and 2 teachers in Uvalde, Texas, at Robb Elementary School.

I rise to address this because the families are still suffering. Children did not return home from school. This should never happen in our country.

I will never forget the baby, the child who indicated that she took the blood from a friend who was lying on the floor, and she took that blood, and she put it on her body and on her face so that the gunman wouldn't shoot her. She will have to live with this for the rest of her life.

I rise because there have been many conflicting stories about what happened. Almost daily there was a different story, a different narrative. And at some point, the families deserve the truth about what happened in Uvalde, what happened at Robb Elementary School.

They deserve the truth.

And they deserve the truth because the pain and suffering may not immediately leave them, but it will give them some hope that one day they will be able to wake up one morning and be relieved of some of the pain and suffering that they are enduring currently.

And to get to this truth, which some persons have tried to crush to earth, of course, we know that William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again."

They tried to crush the truth to earth, and they used—someone did—the Governor of the State of Texas because, wittingly or unwittingly, the Governor of the State of Texas laid a foundation for a coverup.

Some things bear repeating. Wittingly or unwittingly, the Governor of the State of Texas laid the foundation for a coverup. For, you see, the Governor took to the stage shortly after the shooting, perhaps a day later, he took to the stage, and he had with him persons with great credibility.

He had with him the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Texas, two U.S. Senators from the State of Texas; he had with him a State Representative and a State senator; with them, the Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, all on the stage with the Governor.

With them, the Chief Patrol Agent for the Del Rio sector of the U.S. Border Patrol. He had with him the Uvalde mayor, the Uvalde County Judge, the chief of the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, the Superintendent for the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, and the Commissioner for the Texas Education

Agency, all on the stage with the Governor.

While on the stage with the Governor, and in their presence, the Governor made the following statement—I had my staff give me the statement. I want to read the statement that the Governor made because the Governor, whether wittingly or unwittingly, laid the foundation for a coverup.

Here is what the Governor said: "The reality is, as horrible as what happened, it could have been worse."

"The reason it was not worse is because law enforcement officials did what they do."

They did what they do. This is the Governor speaking. And he goes on to say: "They showed amazing courage by running toward gunfire for the singular purpose of trying to save lives."

And these are the Governor's words.

"And it is a fact that because of their quick response, getting on the scene of being able to respond to the gunman, and eliminating the gunman, they were able to save lives."

Well, Governor, you and I know that it is not a fact that this occurred, as you articulated. And we know, not because some righteous person came forward to share the truth; not because there was an investigation and as a result of the investigation truths crushed to earth are now alive again.

No, it is because a news source released a video. It was a George Floyd moment. But for the video, there probably would not have been a successful prosecution in the George Floyd case.

It was an Edmund Pettus Bridge moment. But for—at that time, the tape, I suppose—the actual showing of what happened at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, on Bloody Sunday, I wouldn't be in Congress.

The video spoke truth to power. When power was attempting to cover up the truth, the video spoke truth. The video is available for the world to see.

And upon seeing this video, the Governor indicated that he was misled, deceived, if you will. That is what the Governor says.

Well, before we go on, I think it is important for us to expose the definition of coverup, because there are many persons who have their own definition. But I like the one that Oxford gives. This is the Oxford definition. The Oxford definition of coverup. Coverup per Oxford: An attempt to prevent people's discovering the truth about a serious mistake, a serious mistake, or a crime.

You can have a coverup and not have a crime. You can have a coverup, and there is only an attempt, an attempt to prevent the discovery.

So our discovering by way of the video does not eviscerate the fact that a coverup was taking place. They were trying to hide the truth. They were engaging in insidious prevarication.

"... because Carlyle is right, 'No lie can live forever.'"

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again," William Cullen Bryant.

The video is the truth. And now, Governor, you have a duty, responsibility, and an obligation to the people of the State of Texas and to those babies who lost their lives, you have got a responsibility to come forward and tell us who told you that all of these heroic actions took place. The people need to know, but those parents need to know because of their suffering.

Who was it that was trying to cover up the truth? You know who the person is, Governor. You have the responsibility to bring it to the attention of the public.

And if that person received that intelligence, or lack of intelligence, flawed information, fallacious commentary, if that person received it from another person, then we need to know who that person is. And we need to know until we get to the person who initiated this fabrication, this prevarication. We need to know who initiated it.

Who was the genesis of the coverup? That is the Governor's responsibility.

You need to do this, Governor, and you need to do it immediately, if not sooner. You need to do it because you are the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Texas. You are the person who can assemble all of these high-profile persons.

You are the person who gave credibility to the insidious prevarication. You are the person, Governor. All of these high-profile people were there because you were there. That was your call.

All of your credibility is on the line now. You need to expose the person who brought this fabrication to you such that you would then present it to the world.

And I say to the public at large, and anybody who is listening, my dear friends and colleagues, I say to you, it has to be somebody the Governor trusts.

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It has to be somebody that he believes in. It has to be somebody that he was willing to accept that person's word and go on national TV and repeat, echo, what that person told him.

Governor, you have got to do it. You have got to expose the person who brought this to you, and it has to be, in my opinion, somebody that you trust. Somebody that you believe would vet the information before sharing it with you. Somebody that has been with you. Somebody that you have confidence in.

It is not somebody that just walked off the street. It is not somebody that you just happened to meet as you were coming to the press conference. No, Governor. It is somebody that you know and trust, and you've got to expose that person.

That person doesn't deserve to be secreted. That is not something that we would accord a person who would present such a prevarication. You have got to reveal the name of that person.

If there is a person that told this person that you are secreting so far or you

are not telling us about, then we need to know who that was. We have got to get back to the source, the genesis, of this misinformation that you claim you received.

Governor, I will give you this admonition. If you do not go back to the genesis, at some point, Governor, the eye of suspicion will be on you. At some point, Governor, this will no longer be a question of who told you. At some point, this will become a question of why did you do this? Why did you do this to these families?

Why would you further a prevarication that would cause them to embrace the people who behaved in a pusillanimous fashion; timid, cowardly. Why would you want them to embrace them as heroes?

I support law enforcement. My uncle was a deputy sheriff. I am in Congress because of my uncle. One day he told me I was going to be a lawyer, and I believed him. I went on the rest of my life trying to become a lawyer because my uncle said it was such that I would do.

Well, I support law enforcement, but I don't support what happened that I saw on that video. You can be opposed and antithetical to what happened on the video and not be antithetical to law enforcement. That is just a fact.

You don't have to be antithetical to every law enforcement officer because you see something that you find distasteful on the video, that is disdainful. No.

I support law enforcement, but I will never support what I saw on that video, and those babies deserve justice, Governor. So it is up to you, Governor. It is up to you now to do that which righteousness requires. Righteousness.

I am also saddened because the officers who appeared, they were in body armor. Some of them; not all, but some of them. They had shields; not all, but some of them. They had long guns; not all, but some of them.

It has been reported that more than 300 officers appeared—300. Long guns, short guns, body armor, shields, helmets.

In Texas, there are those who want a teacher with a pistol to do what more than 300 persons armed with long guns, protected by body armor, some with shields, what they could not do or did not do within an hour.

More than 70 minutes lapsed before the gunman was taken out, but we expect a teacher in the State of Texas to be prepared to take out a gunman with an AR-15-type weapon.

This is a level of inanity that borders on insanity, something that is totally unacceptable among people of good will. Teachers ought to be allowed to teach. Let teachers teach.

We train the constabulary to deal with these kinds of issues, the police, the Department of Public Safety officers, the Texas Rangers. They get paid to deal with these issues. Let teachers teach.

Let's secure schools. Let's make sure every school has locks that lock—locks

that lock—doors that shut, and that there is a culture in the school that prohibits the use of emergency exits for routine visits to your automobile or some other place outside of the school. That would be important for the protection of life.

But there is something else that could have been done, because, Governor, those babies shouldn't have lost their lives. There is something that you and I and other persons who hold public trust, who can pass laws, could have done to save the lives of those babies.

Governor, 18-year-olds should not be able to purchase weapons of war. Weapons of war belong in Ukraine, not Uvalde.

Babies shouldn't die in school because someone has a weapon of war. He should not have been able to purchase that long gun, that weapon of war. If he had not been able to purchase it, they wouldn't have died at the hands of a person with a weapon of war. So I say to you: They shouldn't have died as a result of that long gun, that weapon of war.

But there is a way for you to vindicate yourself. Here is how you can vindicate yourself, Governor. You have the authority, the awesome power. By virtue of the office you hold, you have the power to call a special session of the State legislature in the State of Texas.

When you call that special session, Governor, you have the power, the awesome power, to have on the agenda legislation that will prohibit the sale of an AR-15-style weapon, a long gun, to an 18-year-old in the State of Texas. It shouldn't happen. It shouldn't have happened.

We can prevent it from happening again, but it takes will more than way. The way is there. We have the power. Do we have the will is the question.

I haven't seen the will. There ought to be the will because we have seen this circumstance before. This is not the first time. We have seen it in the Tops grocery store; 10 people murdered. Walmart store, people murdered. We have the power.

At some point, the American public, which believes that there should not be long guns of this type in the hands of persons who are under 21, at some point, the American public is going to turn on somebody, and I don't mean in a violent way—I mean at the polls on election day. The American public is going to announce its position at some point. At some point, some persons are going to find themselves making an early exit, if you will.

So I am going to ask that we cease and desist with this fabrication or belief that there is nothing we can do, that the Constitution doesn't allow it. Yes, it does.

The Constitution doesn't say you can't have some regulations. The Constitution doesn't say you can have a bazooka. You can't have a switchblade drone; you can't have a predator. And

if you are under 21, you ought not be able to have a weapon of war.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close with this commentary. It is not enough for things to be right. They must also look right.

While it may be right for the Governor to have had a press conference with all of these outstanding personalities with great credibility, it may have been right. It may have been right for the Governor to receive what he perceives at the time to be credible information and find out later that it is not credible and to just ignore this. I don't say that it is, but maybe it is right.

But it is not enough for things to be right, they must also look right; and it doesn't look right for the Governor to know who gave him this insidious prevarication and to secret the name of the person.

It is not enough for things to be right, they must also look right; this does not look right.

Because I believe it isn't right, I am calling on the Governor to act expeditiously, reveal the name of the person, and to do so with the understanding that if this person is under your command, under your office, then there has to be some sanctions imposed.

Mr. Speaker, the babies and the people of the State of Texas deserve no less.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 8351. An act to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to suspend temporarily rates of duty on imports of certain infant formula products, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3895. An act to extend and authorize annual appropriations for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom through fiscal year 2024.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 117-81, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy:

Mariah Sixkiller of Washington.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 117-81, the Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology:

Ms. Dawn Meyerriecks of Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 1 of House Resolution