

remember the wisdom in Paul's letter to James: "Faith without works is dead." This bill alone won't fix the problem of gun violence, but we know that inaction will not stop the mass killings. The time for action is long overdue.

That is why this bill is supported by many gun violence prevention organizations, including the Giffords Law Center, which observes its 10th anniversary today, March for Our Lives, Newtown Action Alliance, Community Justice Action Fund, and several others. Some major retail chains like Walmart have even voluntarily raised the age from 18 to 21 to buy a firearm at their stores.

Raising the age to 21 also withstood judicial scrutiny recently. The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld a similar law on the 21-year-old age requirement in Florida that was enacted shortly after the 2018 massacres in Parkland, Florida.

The Court determined that the act's restrictions on the sale of firearms to 18- to 20-year-olds "is consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation."

Raising the age to 21 to purchase these kinds of firearms is reasonable and a crucial step, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this vital legislation.

ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SANTOS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the beginning of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

Since 1948, Israel has displayed great resilience and strength against its opposition. This incredible nation is our strongest ally in the Middle East. Our friends in Israel carry a long history of faith and resolve.

Here in the United States, we are forever grateful for their friendship and their continued partnership. We congratulate you on this tremendous milestone of 75 years of independence and democracy. In the State of New York, we are proud to be the home of the largest Jewish population outside of Israel.

For 75 years, Israel has been a tried and trusted ally of the United States. Together, we have Americans and Israelis united by our shared commitment to democracy, economic prosperity, and regional security.

Israel is America's base in the Middle East. As the only democracy in the region, Israel is the only country that embraces American values. We have witnessed the strongest relationship between America and Israel yet, not just in words but in actions.

The American Embassy officially moved to Jerusalem. America officially recognizes the Golan Heights as part of Israel. The 118th Congress is holding strong to the commitment of allegiance to Israel even in the face of adversity.

Mr. Speaker, here is to 75 more years of partnership.

DEBT CEILING CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. MAGAZINER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the Republican's default on America plan that will hurt Rhode Island's seniors. The MAGA Republicans that have taken control of this House have given us a false choice.

Either we go along with their plan for painful cuts for veterans, seniors, and children, or they will purposefully wreck the economy by defaulting on the debt. This false choice is wrong and we do not need to accept it.

In particular, their plan would enact painful cuts on senior citizens in Rhode Island. How?

By cutting funding to the Social Security Administration so that the quarter million elderly and disabled Rhode Islanders who depend on Social Security would face longer wait times for their benefits. Also, by cutting funding for seniors' nutrition programs like Meals on Wheels, housing, and slashing funding for home care, putting the lives of seniors at risk.

This is not about deficit reduction. If this was about deficit reduction, my Republican colleagues would be lining up to support President Biden's budget, which reduces the deficit by \$3 trillion. No. This is an extreme agenda that puts working people, in particular seniors, in the back seat while doing the bidding of wealthy donors and billionaires and corporations.

We do not need to accept it. People will not stand for it. I will fight this default on America plan with everything that I have.

RECOGNIZING SHERIFF DEREK SANDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. PEREZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, Thurston County Sheriff Derek Sanders was injured in a car accident while driving his patrol car. Since the accident, I have been in touch with Sheriff Sanders. He has incredible strength and resilience. Amazingly, just 2 weeks after being airlifted to Harborview Medical Center for his injuries he has been cleared to return to work.

Mr. Speaker, as I stand here in Washington, I will continue to send my thoughts and prayers to him and his family back home. I hope he has a speedy recovery. I am so grateful to Sheriff Sanders and officers like him who accept the risks of their job to keep our public safe.

VETERAN WAIT TIMES

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the long wait

time veterans endure when trying to get through to the VA.

As the granddaughter of a veteran, I have deep respect for the sacrifice that comes from serving our Nation in uniform. We make a sacred promise to veterans: If they step up to serve, the Nation will be there for them when they take off the uniform.

Yet, the wait times for primary care appointments at the Vancouver VA hospital in my district are 3 weeks; physical therapy, 4 weeks; and mental health, 8 weeks.

To make matters worse, those times are absolutely an underestimate. The Veterans Health Administration reports average wait times on its website using the time at which an appointment is scheduled by staff rather than when the appointment is requested. This does not take into account the time veterans are forced to wait on hold just to get an appointment.

Last April, the Office of the Inspector General called this out in its report, but it still has not been remedied.

A lot of time is spent in this Chamber talking about our national debt, and rightly so, but we already have a kind of debt that we are failing to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in keeping our end of the bargain and making healthcare more accessible for our veterans.

POSTAL SERVICE DELAYS

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the unacceptable state of the Postal Service in my community and across rural America. Those of you who live in urban communities might have experienced the mail just comes on time. I have constituents whose bills are delivered weeks or days after they are due, making it impossible to pay them on time and ruining their credit.

This summer, a mail carrier in my community got sick and there was no one to deliver the mail for months. In another instance, a postal master key was lost in Clark County, which has led to incredible, rampant mail theft in the area. In all of these cases the Postal Service seems unwilling or unable to fulfill their mandated duties.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't just about southwest Washington, it is all across rural America. This state of affairs is unacceptable. The United States Postal Service is a lifeline to our communities and a critical piece of infrastructure for connecting our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up and find a bipartisan solution with me to fix these issues, reform the Postal Service, and improve service for Washingtonians.

CONSOLIDATION

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out of deep concern for growing consolidation of agricultural farms throughout the food supply chain.

These mergers put small farmers, small businesses, and workers at a

huge disadvantage. There are fewer options for processing plants, cold storage, distribution, and retail.

I have heard concerns about consolidation at farm bill listening sessions I have hosted in Centralia and Battle Ground. We are seeing consolidation everywhere, including meat processing plants, fruit processors, and beverages distributors.

In my community, Corwin, a local beverage distributor was just bought out by a huge conglomerate, and now their beer and wine division is closed. The potential merger between Kroger and Albertsons would only add to this pressure. It is hurting our small producers.

The cost to transport and distribute goods is no longer sustainable and is forcing small businesses to close. This drives up the cost at the checkout stand, and it makes it more challenging to rely on American-grown goods. This is a national security threat.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to serve the people of southwest Washington, not big businesses. Every merger that cuts costs and skirts accountability is a blow to working people; to farmers, to processing plants, grocery cashiers, and families at the checkout stand.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand with me to find a solution to these critical issues.

CELEBRATE LOGGERS

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate generations of loggers in Washington State, including my grandfather, Dale Gilmore. If you visit my office in Longworth, you will see a chainsaw that is almost 9 feet long. It is a McCulloch Model 99. It is the same model of chainsaw that my grandpa ran in the woods up and down the peninsula.

It was shipped here in a crate built by the Stevenson High School shop class under the leadership of Scott Midland. I brought it here to remind this Washington, D.C., what real work looks like.

The lifespan of men who ran these chainsaws could be pretty short, but they chose to sacrifice to provide for their families. The power that comes from mastering a skill should invoke humility and respect for all of the people who choose to work with their hands in the woods.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

God of us all, we pray Your grace over our labor and Your blessing on all that we seek to achieve this day. Should our sense of success be borne of our envy over another, we pray Your mercy. Should we find ourselves chasing the wind in our pride, we pray You humble us gently that we would submit even our best efforts to Your sovereign will.

When winning seems to be our only goal, when we are so often caught up in our vain desire to overcome any perceived or imagined adversary, remind us again that only in You do we find the promise of true victory.

By the power of Your love, You have already defeated all that we call hateful. So with Your standard of strength before us, may we follow You and greet any fear or frustration before us with the certainty found in You, face any anxiety or anguish that threatens us with the hope You provide, and encounter any enemy with the faith in Your promise of redemption.

In all contest and critique, defeat and disagreement, in all that seeks to overwhelm our spirit of unity and purpose, remind us that we are more than conquerors in You who have shown Your steadfast love for us.

In the strength of Your holy name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILMER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING MARTHA RUTHVEN

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to recognize

Martha Ruthven for her service for the Second Congressional District of South Carolina. Martha has been an invaluable team member for nearly 9 years, dedicated to constituent service.

Moving from North Carolina after her nuclear physicist stepfather accepted a position at the Savannah River Site, Martha began her love of the Palmetto State.

Working in the Congressional Aiken/Barnwell office, Martha quickly became embedded in the community, attending events, meetings, and advancing constituent services. As deputy district director, Martha has long been a trusted adviser to the many thousands she has assisted.

I appreciate she will remain in Aiken. In fact, she will be heading to Savannah River Nuclear Solutions to continue community relations. I wish the best to Martha and her husband, K.T., a respected Realtor and president of Aiken Republican Club.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, who successfully protected America for 20 years, as the global war on terrorism continues moving from the Afghanistan safe haven to America.

Our prayers for the courageous people of Ukraine resisting war criminal Putin, who is sacrificing young Russians for Putin's oil, money, and power.

HONORING PATTY ROSE

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor my friend Patty Rose for her decades of service to the working people of Pierce County, Washington.

Born and raised in Tacoma, Patty began her journey at the Service Employees International Union in 1974 where she held various roles, eventually becoming a union representative advocating for workers' rights.

In 1981, Patty joined the Pierce County Central Labor Council, serving as a delegate and executive board member before her election as the first female secretary-treasurer.

In this role, she has worked passionately to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions, making Pierce County a national leader in union membership with rates twice the national average.

Patty has emphasized inclusivity by partnering with communities often marginalized and increasing apprenticeship opportunities for young people.

Her empowering leadership has significantly shaped our community and helped workers. I am grateful for her partnership and her friendship and her invaluable advice throughout my career.

As Patty retires, we will miss her presence, but I am happy to report that she can enjoy more time with her family and traveling in her RV.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Patty Rose's remarkable career. I wish her a well-deserved retirement.