

orchestra of Placer County and has engaged and enriched Auburn and the broader region with the gift of music for over 35 years.

The symphony originally began as the dream of local musician Monroe DeJarnette, who, despite the immense challenges of forming a community orchestra in a small town, partnered with Bruce Cosgrove of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce to make that dream a reality.

From there, the orchestra continued to grow and benefit the community. In fact, its programs have reached over 100,000 students in Placer County over the years.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize the Auburn symphony for 35 years of benefiting our community.

RECOGNIZING THE ORANGEVALE-FAIR OAKS
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation for their Big Day of Service.

Last Saturday, I personally witnessed the foundation bring together hundreds upon hundreds of community members to work on 50 different service projects in the Sacramento area.

As someone who was raised in Orangevale, it was especially heartening to see individuals who exhibit the kindness, generosity, and selflessness that unites our community to prioritize the needs of others and coming together to serve their neighbors.

Even in just one weekend, their work made a profound and noticeable impact by completing many necessary regional projects. It is the active and engaged citizens, like the volunteers I spoke with, and the leaders of the foundation, who make the Sacramento region such a great place to call home.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation for their hard work and dedication to our community that was exhibited throughout the Big Day of Service.

RECOGNIZING THE ALLIANCE: DEFENDING THE
CAUSE OF KIDS & FAMILIES

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize The Alliance: Defending the Cause of Kids & Families for their contribution and dedication to creating a supportive network of care for youth and families.

The Alliance is a group of churches, nonprofits, professionals, and agencies working to ensure all kids grow up in a safe, loving family.

For years, The Alliance has served countless foster youth, adoptive families, single parents, families in crisis, children who have experienced trauma, and refugees resettling locally in the Sacramento area.

In fact, for their efforts, The Alliance was recently recognized by the Sacramento District Small Business Administration as the 2023 nonprofit of the year.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to

recognize The Alliance for their hard work and dedication to our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF DON ASHTON ON HIS
RETIREMENT

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize retiring El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer Don Ashton for his years of service to El Dorado County.

Don has served the people of El Dorado for more than a decade, most recently as CAO, and never wavered from his goal of making the county a better place.

Throughout Don's tenure, El Dorado County endured department head shakeups, COVID-19, and a series of catastrophic wildfires, most notably, the Caldor fire and recent Mosquito fire.

No matter the challenge, Don provided steady leadership to help the county weather every challenge it faced. Don also achieved many long-term county goals over the years, including financing and constructing the new sheriff's headquarters, improving various parks, and acquiring facilities on the West Slope and in South Lake Tahoe that will bolster the county's ability to serve the public.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Don Ashton for the steady, stable leadership and years of service he has provided to the people of El Dorado County.

RECOGNIZING SERGEANT ERIC DOLLAR ON HIS
RETIREMENT FROM ROCKLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Sergeant Eric Dollar of the Rocklin Police Department.

Sergeant Dollar has served the people of California for almost 30 years as a law enforcement officer, with the last 23 in Rocklin.

Throughout his career, Sergeant Dollar took care to mentor younger officers, served many special assignments, including crime scene investigation and narcotics, and was continually recognized by the department for his leadership. In fact, he was among the first five individuals promoted to corporal in Rocklin's century-long history. After decades of service and sacrifice, Sergeant Dollar has made the decision to retire from the Rocklin Police Department.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Sergeant Eric Dollar for his dedication to the community and the years of service he has provided to the people of Rocklin.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM JESSUP UNIVERSITY
NURSING PROGRAM

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a moment to celebrate and congratulate William Jessup University for the successful launch of their Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program.

This past weekend, over 100 community members gathered at William Jessup's campus in Rocklin to honor this achievement. Jessup's program is

especially noteworthy considering the nursing shortage in our community.

This new program provides state-of-the-art education and training facilities, including an innovative simulation lab with mannequins that talk and breathe for live simulation with their students that will equip the next generation of nurses with the tools they need to deliver exceptional care to individuals in need.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize William Jessup University for the service provided to our community through their new program.

CONGRATULATING TINA BASICH HALLER, LOCAL
SNOWBOARDING LEGEND

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I take this moment to celebrate and congratulate local snowboarding legend, Tina Basich Haller, for her official induction into the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame.

Along with her longtime friend Shannon Dunn, Basich Haller is the first female snowboarder to receive this honor and serves as an inspiration and role model to countless young women in Nevada County and beyond.

Throughout her snowboarding year, she won the 1998 X-Games by landing the first 720 in competition and served as a snowboarding pioneer in that sport's infancy.

Her commitment to her community, including giving back to the Nevada Union Snowboarding team and co-founding Boarding For Breast Cancer, is also truly inspirational.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I am honored to recognize Tina Basich Haller for her groundbreaking accomplishments and commitment to Nevada County.

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

□ 2030

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS
CALLS FOR GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALFORD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to co-anchor the CBC Special Order hour along with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON), my distinguished colleague.

For the next 60 minutes, members of the CBC have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people on gun violence, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and what we must do to build upon all issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

I rise today to demand that we take decisive action to stop the gun violence epidemic. We simply cannot stand by and watch more innocent Americans lose their lives. The fate of our loved ones should not be up for partisan debate.

I will work with any elected official to put people over politics and implement solutions that keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of dangerous people. It is why I am joined here with my colleagues to support the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. This law is a commonsense and practical solution to the barrage of gun violence that many of us have unfortunately become too familiar with.

Of course, there is certainly more that Congress can do, should be doing, and needs to do.

We can pass an assault weapons ban, which would take these weapons of war off the streets and out of our classrooms.

We can enhance the background checks process, making sure individuals who purchase guns are fully vetted beforehand.

We can end immunity for gun manufacturers that produce deadly firearms that take our lives.

There is no shortage of common sense and immediate solutions that this body can implement. Unfortunately, House Republicans have failed to move with the same sense of urgency as House Democrats have in response to the spate of gun shootings.

This is not a partisan matter, either. Gun violence impacts families, blue States, red States, and purple States. Each and every heartbreaking mass shooting serves as a painful reminder of the normalcy and how normal this gun violence epidemic has become.

It is infiltrating our daily lives. These headlines frustrate me deeply, and they should do the same for each and every Representative in this body.

Thoughts and prayers must be coupled with legislative action, tangible solutions that address this crisis. Let's join together and build on the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, ensuring a safer country for the next generation and others to come.

We have the responsibility to act as lawmakers, as parents, as Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), our honorable assistant Democratic leader of the House.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening, we gathered on this floor to observe a moment of silence. We have been doing

that quite a bit over the last several years, but it seems to me that it is time for us to take some action on something that is very important to the American people.

This week, our Nation is collectively mourning the senseless murder of eight people at the hands of a white supremacist, a neo-Nazi shooter in Allen, Texas. In the days since, we have heard gut-wrenching stories of pain and devastation, like 6-year-old William Cho, who lost his entire family in the massacre, and the deaths of sisters Daniela and Sofia Mendoza, 11 and 8, who were both in elementary school.

Then there is Steven Spainhouer, an everyday citizen who tried to administer aid after the tragedy. I watched him on television this week, and he was very vivid.

If my memory serves, he is a former police officer, and he talked about how he felt when he turned over a body to remove a child from underneath its dead mother's body.

This tragedy comes nearly 1 year after the lives of 19 children and 2 teachers were taken in Uvalde, Texas, and just a few weeks before the 8-year anniversary of the mass shooting perpetrated by another white supremacist at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

We have taken some important steps in response to these tragedies. I have reintroduced my bill to close the deadly Charleston loophole that allowed the Mother Emanuel AME Church shooter to obtain a gun. Because of his record, he should not have been able to get a gun.

Because this Congress has refused to close this loophole, which says if you can't complete the background check in 3 days, irrespective of your background, irrespective of whether or not you are eligible to have a gun, if, for any reason, that background check is not completed in 3 days, you can still get the gun. That is silly.

We have no idea why that young man's information was keyed in wrong. Did he intentionally give the wrong information, or did West Columbia get confused with Columbia? They found the problem, but it was too late. It was more than 3 days. He already had the gun, and nine of my constituents lost their lives because of that loophole.

We refuse to say we will close it. That makes no sense.

We enacted the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to require enhanced background checks for people under 21, provide protection for victims of domestic violence, and institute criminal offenses for Federal and State straw purchasing and gun trafficking and some significant investments in mental health treatment.

In a shocking and long-overdue turn of events, Texas Republicans, on Monday, unexpectedly allowed a bill that would raise the purchase age for semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21 to advance out of a Texas House committee. I am very pleased to see that, but I am

wondering what will happen when that bill gets to the floor.

Raising the age to purchase a gun made for war from 18 to 21, that, to me, tells it all—to allow a teenager that we would not allow to walk into a restaurant and order an alcoholic beverage but will be allowed to purchase a weapon of war.

For all of our progress, more must be done.

There have been over 200 mass shootings this year alone. I think we all know the definition of a mass shooting is four or more injuries, irrespective of whether or not they are fatal.

In 2019 and 2020, we didn't reach this grim milestone until late June. Between 2016 and 2018, the country passed 200 mass shootings in late July. Two years ago, late June; 2 years before that, late July; this year, early May. What will it be next year? This epidemic is growing more and more deadly with each passing year.

My Democratic colleagues understand the weight of these tragedies and are prepared to advance the legislation needed to protect our communities.

To our colleagues across the aisle and in the Senate, I say silence gives consent. For us to remain silent on this issue is to give consent to these tragedies.

It is not enough to denounce the actions of mass shooters and offer thoughts and prayers in tweets and on cable news. My colleagues on the other side's refusal to join House Democrats in advancing serious gun violence prevention measures signifies that your silence and your consent represent your feelings.

Legislative actions such as closing the Charleston loophole, strengthening red flag laws, and getting weapons of war off our streets would not prohibit law-abiding citizens from purchasing a gun.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why it is that all of us can readily agree that there should be a limit on the First Amendment of the United States that protects speech but no limit on the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution that authorizes the possession of firearms.

Nobody wants to take anybody's guns away. We are trying to take measures that will keep guns out of the hands of hateful people like these white supremacists who are killing people because they don't like their skin color, people who are mentally ill who have had all kinds of fantasies that are killing people because we do not have the intestinal fortitude to put constraints on their abilities to purchase these guns.

These policies, which have broad support among the American people, would save lives without infringing on anybody's Second Amendment rights.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my Republican colleagues and the Senate to join us in taking a stand to protect our communities. This epidemic will not end until we act.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

□ 2045

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me express my appreciation to the gentlewoman from Florida for her grand leadership and the gentleman from Illinois. They have been dynamic. I acknowledge our chair, Congressman HORSFORD, of the Congressional Black Caucus, who had a very powerful morning this morning, and as well continues to lead us in the right direction.

I was late today because I could not leave the pain of Texas without standing with those in a press conference in the Mickey Leland Federal Building to express both our outcry, our pain, and our outrage.

Last evening, MSNBC had a headline show that said the "Lone Star Hate." I stand here today to say there are good people in Texas. There are people who are demanding that there be action in the aftermath of the worst couple of days that we have had in a long time.

The parents of the Uvalde children waited 13 hours in the State legislature just to be heard on raising the age of those who could purchase weapons of war. In the midst of that, a family who simply wanted their baby to sleep was slaughtered and murdered, in the midst of that, by a person shooting an AR-15. A veteran explained to me that that is an M16, a weapon of war, which maims and kills the enemy so that they cannot rise, not be taken care of, and not move away from other gunfire.

Of course, though not by guns, in Brownsville, Texas, some eight or so people were killed who were simply trying to make sure that they had a peaceful place to be.

I come here today to insist on my own State taking a stand to ensure that the people who are crying cry no more.

The individual who killed the people in the mall in Allen, Texas, family members removed him from their house. He was tattooed with huge Nazi and white supremacy insignia.

My bill that I introduced, H.R. 61, indicates that white supremacy is hate, it is a hate crime, and I amended the hate crime bill to ensure that if you die because of white supremacy, they get an enhanced sentence due to hate crime legislation.

He only lasted 3 months in the United States military. We have to do a better job communicating about individuals—not brave soldiers who have PTSD, but individuals like this who didn't even last because of his views and attitudes and behavior. He obviously hated viciously, but he was able to get an AR-15.

After Uvalde, the State of Texas, the Governor's office, established a DPS task force that was supposed to monitor social media. Why wasn't this individual monitored, with all of his hate?

Underlying all of that are guns. That is what we spoke about today, guns. We

asked the State of Texas, the legislature, my friends, and those who work with Republicans, we asked them to be sure to move this bill to raise the age to 21. The Uvalde parents waited 13 hours. It came out of committee. It has to go to the House and Senate.

I stood there today and asked for universal background checks, and I asked the State of Texas why—with the Safer Communities Act, where we had the red flag laws and, of course, Congresswoman MCBATH, we led in the House to protect our kids. It was mandatory. It was mandatory. But in the Safer Communities Act, it was optional—our State has not taken advantage of it? They squeaked through and got a few dollars for the veterans court. I am asking the Governor to opt in to the red flag law, universal background checks, the Kimberly Vaughan gun storage legislation, the ban on assault weapons, and raising the age. These are all items that Texas and other States can do without violating the Second Amendment.

I uphold the Second Amendment. Standing with me today, with Moms Demand Action, a young man by the name of Jay Love, who is marred for our lives; along with Captain Phillips, a police officer, who says that 3,200 guns are stolen or taken in Houston, Texas, as the ATF says, out of people's cars. Yet, we can't get Texas to act. Rhonda Hart, whose daughter was killed in Santa Fe, who is begging for relief.

With that kind of pain comes the ability to act. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who have been at the forefront of leadership. My colleague ROBIN KELLY has mentioned over and over again the absolute violence that kills children and others.

I close with this simple acknowledgment. There were eight people who died, I believe, in Allen, Texas, three family members, left a little 6-year-old with no one; two sisters. This is what this sinister, evil man did. With evil in his evilness, he did it with a gun.

We must come back to this Congress and do something that is going to make a difference. I hope the Senate can pick it up and realize that we cannot live in this country anymore with the reckless killing and violence that is perpetrated on our loved ones and on Americans.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking Congresswoman CHERFILUS-McCORMICK and Congressman JACKSON for holding the CBC Special Order hour on gun violence in America.

Last week, our Nation was shocked by the acts of horrific violence in Allen, Texas, where eight souls were lost unnecessarily.

How many killings must we endure?

We are here tonight to send a message that we must keep guns out of the hands of criminals and would-be terror-

ists, and we must expand background checks for individuals looking to purchase guns. We must pass some commonsense legislation that provides avenues to get guns off of our streets.

Legislation like my Safer Neighborhoods Gun Buyback Act would utilize Federal grants to get guns out of the hands of criminals. Programs like it have been proven to work all over this Nation, from coast to coast. We need to act on this bill and others like it to protect American lives.

It is unacceptable that countless Americans continue to die senselessly from gun violence and Congress stands idly by. They do nothing.

I came up with a phrase back after Newtown. The NRA, which is really who pushes this: The NRA stands for "no Republican action."

Here we are once again. Yes, we stood up for a moment of silence tonight once again. Then once the gavel hit the rostrum, everybody walked away and that was the end of that. My colleagues on the other side feel good after that, after they stand up and acknowledge that. But that is the extent of what they are willing to do, just stand up to honor these people for a moment. That is all they can spare. That is all they can give to the American people who are suffering, children suffering.

This issue is so pervasive that it impacts us everywhere: movie theaters, churches, schools, banks, post offices, businesses, everywhere. That is an epidemic. COVID was everywhere. That was an epidemic. This gun violence is everywhere. That is an epidemic.

But what do we do? Stand up, quiet for a moment, and then onto the next thing.

I see it at home in New Jersey in my district, New Jersey's 10th Congressional District. The 10th Congressional District, unfortunately, has one-third of the State's total gun deaths in New Jersey. I know my constituents know the destruction that gun violence inflicts. This is a problem that will continue to grow without swift legislation and action.

But my words are just going into the wind. My colleagues on the other side don't hear this. The American people want real action on gun violence. The NRA endorsed Republicans, which is practically the entire party, and has offered no substantive legislation to keep our communities safe from gun violence.

My colleagues are the majority now. Let's see what we implement. I can answer that now: nothing.

So many of our constituents are haunted by the gun violence that is taking their loved ones, and that is why Democrats are in favor of stronger gun laws to keep these weapons out of dangerous hands.

We are not asking to take anybody's guns, but we can't have enough mindset to say: Hey, there is a problem here? I don't know where my colleagues on the other side are listening and getting this from. Eighty-seven

percent of this country says that we need stricter gun laws, but you don't hear them.

Too many lives have been stolen, too many children killed. Can't Republicans feel the pain of the survivors of these victims' families?

The American people are calling for passage of meaningful legislation to address gun violence. They are calling for action to stop mass killings in this country. They are calling to stop the taking of innocent children's lives in their schools.

I couldn't imagine sending my children to school these days and wondering if they are going to make it home. I am sending them there to be educated. I am not sending them there to do armed drills. What happens if there is an active shooter? That is what they are learning?

I look at my colleagues across the aisle and ask: Is there nothing that we can do together to stop this?

When children cannot go to school without fear of being shot, when innocent Americans cannot go to a nightclub or a movie theater or church without fear of being executed, then it is time for a new approach. The Congressional Black Caucus, with our Democratic colleagues, stands ready to deliver that approach.

□ 2100

Mr. Speaker, I want to read to you from a letter sent to me by a student at Cranford High School in Cranford, New Jersey, named Alessandra, who puts into words the thoughts of most Americans. She wrote: "Although the Second Amendment of the Constitution protects the right to gun ownership, this does not mean that Congress cannot pass more laws to restrict the kinds of firearms and people buying them. As a high school student from Cranford High School, this issue affects me daily as the number of school shootings increases."

Mr. Speaker, I will close and say that we have a responsibility to our constituents, like Alessandra. We have a responsibility to ensure our Nation's laws keep us safe and to ensure that we hear their voices and act on their behalf.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to be another voice on the epidemic of gun violence in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida and the gentleman from Illinois for leading us in this Special Order hour. Certainly, to the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, we thank Congressman STEVEN HORSFORD for keeping this at the forefront of our agenda.

I will begin by saluting the actions of my colleague and friend, Congressman JAMES CLYBURN, for leading us in this charge tonight. Listening to him, I remember quite vividly, unfortunately,

as I sat in that Charleston, South Carolina, church, the Emanuel AME Church, during the funeral of those killed.

Tonight reminds me of the far too many lives—children and adults—taken by guns in the hands of a killer who should not have had that gun. You will hear it repeatedly, so I won't go through my entire address. Let me just highlight that gun violence continues to serve as a public health crisis.

I am horrified to see another devastating act of hateful gun violence in America. Let me join others in giving my thoughts and prayers to the families of the eight innocent people who lost their lives due to this tragic hate crime in Allen, Texas.

This story is not a new one, Mr. Speaker. We have seen this play out repeatedly. We are very clear that thoughts and prayers are not enough.

I am honored, again, unfortunately, to have to say that I am a colleague and friend of Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, and early on, she sat in that front row and said to us that she would no longer stand up and give 60 seconds for someone who has lost their life, whether it was a mass shooting or whether it was a kid in a playground or a kid in a car. Enough is enough.

A few weeks ago, I stood in this same spot with the same microphone begging, Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues to do more than say to trust in God and let's pray for 60 seconds. Every time we say that, multiple lives are lost in our district.

There have been, as we heard earlier, more than 200 mass shootings in 2023. When will it end? How many lives must be lost? How many mass shootings must occur? How many times must we meet here on this floor for another Special Order hour or another moment of silence for families of the victims who have lost their lives?

Literally, I am standing here begging my Republican colleagues to join us in passing legislation that will help protect our communities.

I have nothing against the Second Amendment. My father was a hunter. I have been around guns all my life. It is not about that. It is about assault weapons. It is about those who should not be able to get a gun without being vetted, without being of proper age, without being able to go in a back alley or to a gun show to buy it. We need legislation like the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

We are coming tonight as Democrats with not just rhetoric and not just begging and pleading. We are giving you resolve and action. We need the first gun control action in decades that will advance more lifesaving measures like universal background checks, banning high-capacity magazines, red flag laws, and raising the age to buy assault weapons. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye.

Lastly, in my district alone, we have seen a number of lives being lost to gun violence. Over the weekend, three

shootings across Columbus injured people, including multiple family members and officers. The American people are demanding action.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you: Let it not be about Democrats and Republicans. This is what the American people who elected us are asking us to do. Inaction, Mr. Speaker, should not be an action.

They tell us to direct all comments to you. You sit in the chair tonight. I am asking that when you leave this chair and go to your caucus, you have an obligation, I believe, to share with them what you have heard on this floor tonight and what your constituents have said to you.

I think if we have any conscience of doing what is right for the American people, we will put gun violence at the forefront of our agenda. We will put people over politics no matter what side of the aisle we sit on. We should come together to do the right thing.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for hosting this Special Order hour tonight.

Mr. Speaker, when I ran for Congress, I ran on gun violence prevention. That was 10 years ago, and I am running just as hard today.

I always ask just who or how many have to be killed before we really do something about this public health crisis.

According to a recent study by professors from Harvard and Cambridge, by the age of 40, half of Chicago residents have seen someone shot. Just seeing someone shot is known to cause trauma and PTSD that impacts your ability to lead a happy, healthy life. Our communities deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, 56 percent of Black and Hispanic residents under 40 witnessed a shooting, compared to 25 percent of White residents under 40. Black Chicago residents are more than three times more likely to be shot than White residents. Mr. Speaker, 176 victims have been killed in Chicago in 2023.

Just this weekend alone, 4 people were killed and 22 were wounded because of gun violence in Chicago. This past weekend, a 27-year-old man was shot while putting groceries in his car.

Hours later, a Chicago police officer was fatally shot as she arrived home from work early Saturday. She was 24. Instead of graduating with her master's next week, it will be her funeral.

The next day, a 25-year-old man was killed in a drive-by shooting.

Among the 22 wounded in the past weekend was a 15-year-old boy who was shot in the leg and rushed to the hospital.

In the last month around the country, a young lady was shot and killed while turning into a driveway, something we have all done. A boy was shot because he knocked on the wrong door while looking for his siblings. We have

all knocked on the wrong door from time to time. A dad and a little girl were shot because the basketball they were playing with rolled into a neighbor's yard.

Mr. Speaker, two cheerleaders were shot because they went to the wrong car—something I know I have done before—and the guy jumped out and shot the cheerleaders.

Is this the kind of country we want to survive in? I will tell you, this is not living.

□ 2110

We have got to do more. My colleagues have named the various things that we can do, and I work in a very bipartisan way. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, Republicans have blood on their hands. It is just amazing to me that in these 10 years they have turned a blind eye. They talk about the Second Amendment. Many of us have told them we believe in the Second Amendment, but we also believe that people have the right to go to the park, to go to the store, to go to school, to ride the city bus, to come out of band practice, and to come out of choir practice.

What about those rights for those people?

Think about it.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative KELLY for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ALLRED).

Mr. ALLRED. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday started out as a beautiful day, and families with kids just like mine headed to the Allen Premium Outlets. It is a place that every north Texan knows. It is where we go to get good deals and to get a new outfit for school or for work. Now some of those folks are never going to come home. Eight people were murdered, and dozens of lives were changed forever.

As a Texan, I want to say their names here so that they will live on in our CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for as long as our Republic stands.

The Cho family: Cho Kyu Song, his wife Kang Shin Young, and their 3-year-old son James—just 3 years old.

They are survived by their 6-year-old son, William, who is a child who lost his entire world in one afternoon.

Along with the Cho family, we also lost Christian LaCour, a security guard who died saving others and showing incredible bravery. Christian was just 20 years old.

We lost Aishwarya Thatikonda who was an engineer and who moved to the U.S. from India just 5 years ago and was full of high hopes.

As well we lost Elio Cumana-Rivas who was working hard to send money home to his mother and father in Venezuela.

Finally, we lost Daniela and Sofia Mendoza. Daniela was in fourth grade. Sofia was in second grade. Their mother Hilda is in critical condition.

A high school classmate of mine emailed me yesterday, Mr. Speaker, to

tell me that one of our classmates had a son who attended their elementary school. My district lies just south of the mall in Allen. This is deeply personal for me and for all north Texans.

My deepest prayers and condolences go out to these families. I cannot imagine what they are going through.

I grieve with my fellow Texans as we endure yet another mass shooting. The wounds from that day will be with our community forever. It impacts all of us. I know because my wife and I have two boys who are 4 and 2. I held my boys so much closer the morning after that shooting. I know how so many parents are feeling right now: the fear that the next time it will be your family in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I also don't believe that it has to be this way. I know it doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live like this.

Our public places don't have to become memorials. Our places of worship, our malls, and especially our schools don't have to become the site of the next tragedy.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am so sick and tired of hearing some politician talk about what we can't do or saying that just raising the topic is dividing us. That is not who we are. There is nothing that we can't do in the United States of America when we put our minds to it. We can keep our families and our children safe.

It is also not my Texas.

Just yesterday, though, a bipartisan group in a Texas Statehouse committee did vote to raise the age to buy an assault rifle from 18 to 21.

That is my Texas where folks can come together across the aisle to get things done consistent with the Second Amendment and without abridging the rights of law-abiding gun owners. There are commonsense things that we can agree on and that the American people overwhelmingly support, like universal background checks, red flag laws to keep the guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals who shouldn't have them and raising the legal age to purchase semi-automatic rifles.

We could do those right now in a bipartisan fashion.

Let us start there and work together to save lives.

While we offer our prayers and as we observed a moment of silence tonight, let us act for the north Texans we lost and the ones who will be forever changed.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the honorable Representative CHERFILUS-McCORMICK and the honorable Representative JACKSON for hosting this evening's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour on gun safety.

This evening we are in this Chamber just merely weeks before we commemorate the massacre of 19 children

in their elementary school, and in the last few days even parents have died as human shields in Cleveland, Texas. A woman was murdered, and four others wounded even in my home State of Georgia, and a first grader lost both of his parents and his baby brother in the same shooting in Allen, Texas.

Eight people were murdered as they just simply went about their day.

What is our answer?

Every day we wake up to more dead Americans, we wake up to thoughts and prayers, and we wake up to a refusal to act.

Is this the God-given freedom endowed by our creator—the freedom to go about our day and be gunned down in our malls, in our churches, and in our schools?

Horribly, first responders are finding little girls without faces in their first grade classrooms.

Children are now orphans, wives are widows, and communities are simply being ripped apart.

□ 2120

Thoughts and prayers, that is not stopping this carnage, this crisis, this ugly, horrific public health crisis. If thoughts and prayers are all that we have to offer survivors like myself and all the survivors that we continue to see day in and day out in this country, I tell you this: Faith without works is dead; our prayers without action are hollow.

God has given us the path to action. He has given us the tools to dam this river of despair that the American people are living in every single day of their lives. It is commonsense solutions that save lives; it is background checks; it is red flag laws; and it is banning assault weapons.

How long are we going to simply stand here and do nothing? How long? How long do we stand in the silence? How long do we listen to the cries of mothers like me that have lost our children and our loved ones to unnecessary gun violence?

This Nation is under siege, and we are simply without the courage to act, the courage to pass laws that the majority of the American people support, they are crying out for, they are begging this body to pass. I and hundreds of thousands of people like me are terrified that this carnage is going to continue.

My son was murdered by a man who never should have had a gun. These children and these families were murdered by those who never should have ever had access to these weapons of war. The life of my son and all those that we have lost were endowed by our Creator. My son's life was stolen from him. These children, these families had a God-given right to live free from this violence, and it was taken from them.

God has called on each and every one of us in this body to act. Only we can stop this. That truth is self-evident.

We can keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them, and we

can feel safe in our communities, free from the terror of gun violence, free from the grief and the heartbreak that our families and our communities live with every single day. We should be free to live our lives the way God intended us to live.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a part of this body, a Member of this body for 5 years now, and I have lost count of the times I have come down here and begged my Republican colleagues to act, to put public safety over their love of guns. The sad thing about it is I know deep in my spirit and my soul that this will not be the last time that I have to come down here and beg again.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the terrifying regularity of gun violence across this country.

The tragic shooting in Allen, Texas, is part of a near-daily pattern of gun-related tragedies in America. This year alone, there have been almost 200 mass shootings in our country, more mass shootings than we have had days in the year.

I feel for the Allen, Texas, community and empathize with the pain that too many American families understand. I also feel for the survivors of gun violence that have to relive their own trauma every time another shooting occurs and watch as Republicans fail to act. Over 4,800 lives have been lost at the hands of gun violence this year. It is sickening because it is stone-cold preventable.

Every time a shooting rips apart a community, all we can offer are thoughts and prayers with hollow solutions that only kick the can down the road. No more thoughts. No more prayers. Action.

No, this is not God's divine order. This is Republicans too cowardly to stand up and solve the damn problem. We have got to talk about guns. We have got to talk about guns. We have got to talk about guns. Unfettered access to guns, compounded with other challenges, is what creates these horrific scenes of death and devastation.

Republicans must gather the courage to work with us and make our streets safer instead of hiding behind antiquated interpretations of the Second Amendment because the majority of Americans want gun reform legislation because they want to live.

Democrats have come together to offer a ban on assault weapons that Republicans have yet to bring to the floor or even consider. AR-15s shred anything in their wake. They are not used by hunters. They were designed to be used by snipers.

Last Congress, Democrats and Republicans passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. This legislation supports red flag laws, enhances background checks for those under 21, cracks down on gun trafficking, dis-

arms convicted domestic abusers, invests in violence prevention violence and mental health initiatives, and funds school safety programs. President Biden signed this valuable legislation into law, but it is not enough to save the lives of our children. We can and should be doing more.

The House Republican majority is playing games, wasting precious time bringing legislation to the floor that has no chance of being signed into law. If they cared about the life of every child, then they should deal with the public health epidemic of gun violence because everyone's child is worth a life.

We need an assault weapons ban, stronger background checks on gun ownership, gun storage. It must be stated that instead of working on these policies, some Republicans choose to inflame our gun violence epidemic with toxic, racist, or bigoted rhetoric.

□ 2130

The Allen, Texas, shooter reportedly espoused white supremacist ideology before his attack. The shooter had a fascination with mass shootings and fascism. If you are amplifying hate, if you are amplifying xenophobia, then you are complicit in these deaths.

Stop, for example, saying that white nationalists and white supremacists need mental health services while making racist comments about gun violence in Black and Brown communities or saying that those neighborhoods are worse than war zones, as the former President has repeatedly done, because everyone's child is worthy of life.

We must come to the table on gun violence to save our communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, from the 1st Congressional District of the Great State of Illinois, to include in the RECORD a letter signed by over 650 faith leaders urging President Biden to declare Mother's Day as a National Day of Prayer, Mourning, Repentance, and Contemplation To End Gun Violence.

OVER 650 FAITH LEADERS CALL FOR MOTHER'S DAY TO BE DECLARED A NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER, MOURNING, REPENTANCE, AND CONTEMPLATION, TO END GUN VIOLENCE

DEAR PRESIDENT BIDEN: The epidemic of gun violence has become so dire that nearly 1 in 5 adults in the United States have lost a family member to a gun death. Mass shootings have escalated so much in recent years (23% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic began) that as of April 12, there have already been at least 147 mass shootings so far this year. It is a war taking place in our schools, houses of worship, supermarkets, movie theatres, homes, businesses, nightclubs, and more. While some may throw up their arms and say that this is a battle too large to win, we, an interfaith coalition, made up of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and other faith traditions, remember the miracles of ancient times and remain optimistic that this scourge can be overcome.

Do we really believe as a nation that the second amendment and the profits of those who manufacture AR-15-style assault rifles, Hellfire missiles, and other instruments of death should take primacy over our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

We thank you for having last year pushed through Congress the first major gun violence protection legislation in 30 years, for highlighting the issue during this year's State of the Union, and the executive order you issued last month.

Given the gravity and urgency of this issue, we ask for more. We appeal to you to declare this Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14, 2023, to be a national day of repentance, mourning, prayer, and reflection to address the culture of gun violence that is staining our collective soul.

We ask for our lawmakers and faith institutions to reflect this Mother's Day on how we are allowing gun manufacturers, the gun lobby, and a culture of gun worship to hold our country hostage.

Mary, a role model for motherhood, stood at the foot of the cross witnessing brutality, inhumanity, and death being inflicted on her child. Today we are all parents looking on as the brutality and death from another mass shooting is inflicted on our children. At the same time, we are painfully aware that gun violence is a racial justice issue. Black Americans are twice as likely as white Americans to die from gun violence.

Esther was counseled by her uncle Mordecai that she was born for such a time as this. For her to go to the King and expose the plots designed to steal the lives of young and old alike. In that same vein, your administration has come into office for such a time as this. Will you squander the demand of this historical time, or go like Esther into the fury to save lives and people?

The Holy Quran, Surah 5 verse 32, teaches: "Whoever kills one person, it is as if they killed all of humanity." The various holy books teach us that "to save a life is to save the world entire." We are responsible to one another and responsible to all life.

As faith leaders, we call on you, and on our communities, to manifest our prayers and create a new covenant—a reclaiming of the name of G-d—committed to honoring and saving lives. We must pray together, not only with our words, but with our feet, and take action, like Esther did, in such a time as this!

In memory of the lives lost in Nashville—Evelyn Diekhous (9), William Kinney (9), Hallie Scruggs (9), Mike Hill (61), Katherine Koonce (60), Cynthia Peak (61), the lives lost in the Kentucky bank shooting on April 10, and the rest of the nearly 50,000 people that die every year in the United States from guns, we ask you to declare Mother's Day 2023 a national day to end gun violence and heal our country.

Sincerely,

Over 650 faith leaders including Rev. Jesse Jackson; Bp. Vashti Murphy McKenzie, Interim President & General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ, USA; Dr. Cornel West; Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Executive Director of the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice; Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary Emeritus, Reformed Church in America; Rabbi Jill Jacobs, C.E.O., T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights; Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Executive Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Dr. Shane Claiborne, Red Letter Christians; Rev. Hope Christensen, Co-Chair of Faith Leaders for Ending Gun Violence; Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, President, Sojourners; Rev. Jim Wallis, Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair, Center on Faith & Justice, Georgetown University; Dr. Daisy Khan, Executive Director, Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and

Equality (WISE); Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia, Executive Director, Religions for Peace USA; Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ; Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray, President, Unitarian Universalist Association; Rev. Dr. Emma Jordan-Simpson, President, Auburn Seminary; Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President, Union Theological Seminary.

CELEBRATING ISRAEL'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) for 30 minutes.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate your service for the citizens of Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is a shining beacon of democracy in the Middle East. As she celebrates her 75th anniversary, I appreciate being joined by my colleagues to mark this important milestone of affirming our support for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, I am grateful to mark the historic 75th anniversary of Israel with a strong commitment to the partnership of our two countries.

Since its creation, the United States has supported the Jewish state with bipartisan support from Congress, working to build a strong security, intelligence, and defense relationship enshrined by shared values and mutually strategic interests.

A strong and secure Israel is a vital pillar of the national security policy of America in the Middle East for mutual benefit of stability for all countries of the Middle East.

Congress has continually worked to support Israel with annual security assistance, defense cooperation, and an emerging relationship in key areas, including agriculture, high tech, homeland security, cybersecurity, science, space, and health.

Both of our countries are committed to democracy and justice, and we continue to look for new ways to integrate Israel into the region, such as expanding the historic Abraham Accords that were promoted by President Donald Trump that normalized ties between Israel and our Arab allies—the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.

Instead of boycotts and isolation, I am encouraged that our Gulf allies see

the future of Israel as working with the Middle East to tackle regional problems.

Most importantly, Congress has marked the historic Abraham Accords by passing the Israel Relations Normalization Act of 2021 and encouraging more of our Middle East allies to deepen and expand their cooperation with Israel.

Israel is the democratic anchor of the Middle East, and Congress will continue to support important regional cooperation through partnerships for peace and prosperity, including the Negev Forum.

We support Israel's right to defend herself against terrorism, and we are inspired by the Israeli resistance in the face of mounting threats. The borders of Israel are continually threatened by Iranian-backed groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Congress reaffirms its support for Israel's security by annually funding \$500 million for cooperative missile defense programs to help Israel meet these growing threats funded by the Iranian regime.

Without lifesaving defensive systems like the Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3, both Israelis and Arabs living in the region would be more endangered than ever.

Israel is also threatened by continued efforts of the Iranian regime to get nuclear weapons. We are all concerned by the Iranian regime advancement of highly enriched uranium, advanced centrifuges, and its ballistic missile program, which it has never stopped despite every effort of the Iran nuclear deal, which was such a fraud.

Sadly, the Iranians never stopped developing ICBMs to attack Israel and attack, ultimately, of course, sadly, the people of the United States.

When the extremists chant "death to America, death to Israel," they pledge to wipe Israel off the map by vaporization.

We will continue to support efforts to enforce sanctions on the Iranian regime to cut off their resources and commitment to obtaining nuclear weapons.

As we look to the growing challenges ahead and compete with the Chinese Communist Party, we must continue to work with our trusted and strategic ally to advance U.S. interests, as we also need to address war criminal Putin in his invasion, aggression, and mass murder being conducted, sadly, in Ukraine as we speak tonight.

I am grateful to have authored H.R. 1777, the United States-Israel Future of Warfare Act, to meet increasing threats in areas of emerging technology by establishing a research and development fund to deepen defense collaboration with Israel.

Having visited Israel on several occasions, including the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem in 2018, a highlight of my service has been to lead the House delegation to the U.S. Embassy

May 14 opening in Jerusalem with Ambassador David Friedman, fulfilling promises made, promises kept by President Donald Trump.

I will always cherish the warmth of the people, and I am grateful to partner with our ally in the charge ahead to prepare and confront the challenges of the next 75 years.

May the U.S.-Israel relationship continue to flourish. May we continue to promote our shared interests in supporting democracy, peace, and cooperation throughout the region.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my great friend and leader from South Carolina for yielding time, and I appreciate the Speaker pro tempore leading us tonight.

Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago, the nation of Israel began anew, and it was a miracle. It was more than two millennia since Israel existed after the Romans sacked Jerusalem.

It was a miracle that Israel survived after gaining its independence in 1948 when all of its neighbors invaded with a goal of erasing the new Israel off the map.

Israel prevailed then and has many more times when the odds looked bleak. It is a miracle today that Israel has become one of the wealthiest economies in the world and a regional power. Israel is a miracle, and I thank God for it.

One of our previous Presidents said we need light between the United States and Israel, and today, I say unambiguously that I disagree. I believe that we should stand shoulder to shoulder with our ally.

We must support the security of Israel. America must stand closely by Israel when it is surrounded by many adversaries.

We can never forget that, over two millennia, when there was no Israel, Jews were targeted, abused, and often murdered throughout many places in the world.

Jewish history will not forget what happened in Kishinev in 1903, where 49 were murdered and hundreds were injured or raped, or in Odessa in 1905, where 400 Jews were murdered and 1,600 homes destroyed.

There are many of these barbaric examples, and we must never forget what happened in the 1930s and 1940s, where half of the Jewish population in Europe was murdered by the hands of the Nazis.

Israel is a safe haven today for the Jewish people from anywhere in the world where anti-Semitism and repression exist, and America must help make this safe haven secure.

In our support of Israel, we make clear the following:

We oppose Iran gaining a nuclear weapon while it threatens to wipe Israel off the map.

We oppose Iran's terrorism that seeks to murder Israelis and Americans.