

The decision to strip this specific request from the bill, a request previously approved by the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee is not based in reasoning or legitimacy, but instead on bigotry and discrimination.

My office's selection process for Community Projects Funding is recognized as one of the most thorough and fair in Congress. We use an independent board of community leaders from our district. That means today the committee overrode the will of my constituents.

My district is a vibrant community in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and I would venture to say that many on the committee who voted against this funding have never visited it. It is demonstrated in the fact that they couldn't pronounce the name of the city of Reading and pronounced it Reading.

They have not visited the LGBT Center of Greater Reading itself like I have many times, and they have never seen the food pantry that helps those who have been rejected by their family or the warm spaces that welcome people in the winter and allow them a clean space to live and be themselves. These are basic human needs.

On behalf of my community and on behalf of the LGBTQ community, I express my vehement opposition to stripping lifesaving funding from the LGBTQ Center of Greater Reading.

AMERICA NEEDS A RELIABLE DECARBONIZED POWER GRID

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

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, can we maintain an affordable, reliable, and decarbonized grid if we rely only on traditional renewables?

To hear our Republican colleagues talk, absolutely not. They say that nuclear and advanced fossil fuels and hydrogen all have to be in the mix. As the old saw goes, when you are in a negotiation, don't watch the other guy's lips, watch his feet.

The Republicans' proposed appropriations package includes \$15 billion—that is a 20 percent cut—in the title 17 program. This is the loan program office that helps those early stage technologies get to commercialization.

This program, by the way, is currently massively oversubscribed. Of their existing \$73 billion of loan authority, they have already received over \$90 billion of applications of which 37 percent offer carbon management, advanced nuclear, and fossil fuel technologies included that my colleagues claim to hold dear.

These technologies are critically important to the future of our energy system. They all critically need government support to get to commercialization, and they would all be cut by the proposed Republican budget.

I want a reliable, decarbonized power grid that uses all those technologies

and more. My colleagues across the aisle, on the other hand, seem to be rooting for blackouts—or worse.

I know that is true because in the words of Shakira—feet don't lie.

□ 1845

WORSENING CLIMATE CRISIS HAS WROUGHT DESTRUCTION ACROSS THE COUNTRY

(Ms. SALINAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SALINAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, the Civilian Conservation Center Enhancement Act.

The worsening climate crisis has wrought destruction across the country, and Oregon is not immune from that devastation.

Every year, our wildfire season becomes more severe. In fact, right now, there are 19 active wildfires in Oregon alone, burning thousands of acres, threatening properties, and upending daily life for hundreds of Oregonians.

Yet as the risk of wildfire has grown, our wildland firefighting capacity has fallen far behind, and that is where the Civilian Conservation Center Enhancement Act comes in.

This bill will actually cut through the red tape to ensure the Forest Service can hire brave Americans who are ready, willing, and able to battle these blazes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives HOYLE, GUTHRIE, and EDWARDS, for their support of this bill, and I look forward to seeing its passage.

HONORING THE WORK OF REVEREND JESSE JACKSON

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

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the work of Reverend Jesse Jackson as he steps down as president of Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Reverend Jackson has fearlessly fought for the rights of marginalized communities, serving as a beacon of hope and inspiration for millions.

His Presidential campaign in 1988 was a defining moment, not only for our brothers and sisters in the African-American community, but for all Americans who believed in a more inclusive society.

Jesse Jackson has taught us many lessons, among them, that political empowerment is vital to improving our communities. He has encouraged countless individuals to exercise their fundamental right to vote and ensure that every voice is heard and every vote is counted.

There is no doubt that his relentless pursuit with the Rainbow Coalition played a crucial role in the election of Congressman Harold Washington as

Chicago's first progressive and Black mayor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Reverend Jackson for his lifelong commitment to civil rights and his role in helping shape our country's politics to reflect its diversity.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF DR. ORIN ALLEN

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the life and service of Dr. Orin Allen.

Throughout his life, Dr. Allen was committed to advancing justice and serving his community. He worked for the Contra Costa County Probation Department in California for 35 years and was especially passionate about supporting our youth, serving on several local boards. In 1999, Dr. Allen was named Contra Costa County's Humanitarian of the Year in recognition of his commitment to the county's youth.

Dr. Allen also worked tirelessly to ensure quality education and supported students. He served as an elected member on the Pittsburg Unified School District Board for more than 20 years, and was recognized for his contributions with an Outstanding Friend of Education award from the Association of California School Administrators.

Outside of his professional pursuits, Dr. Allen enjoyed spending time with his family and friends of which I am one and consider myself lucky to have been his friend.

Sadly, Dr. Allen passed away on April 23. He will be remembered for his compassionate nature and his many contributions to our community. Please join me in recognizing the life of Dr. Orin Allen.

GUN VIOLENCE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AMERICAN CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANGWORTHY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, gun violence is the leading cause of death for American children.

Let me repeat that: Gun violence is the leading cause of death for our kids. It is shameful that every Member in

this body knows that guns are used to kill our kids and the Republican majority is refusing to take any action to stop this epidemic.

Parents are scared to send their kids to school. They are worried that it may be the last time they see them alive. Kids are being impacted by active-shooter drills and are scared to death that their school will be the next site of a school shooting.

The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force is leading efforts in Congress to compel our Republican colleagues to bring gun violence prevention measures up for a vote.

The American people are with us on this. The only place that gun violence prevention is a partisan issue is right here in this Congress.

A recent FOX News poll shows that the American people overwhelmingly support gun violence prevention measures, 87 percent support universal background checks, 81 percent support raising the legal age to purchase firearms to 21, 80 percent support red flag laws, and in this same FOX poll, 61 percent support banning assault weapons.

It is time for the House Republicans to join House Democrats in prioritizing saving our kids. Democrats took an important first step in the last Congress when President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which was the first major gun violence prevention bill signed in 30 years. There is still more work to do.

We are here this evening to shine a spotlight on the failure of the Republicans to join us in support of policies that will save lives. The Republican leadership's callous inaction is contributing to a mass casualty every day in our country. There have been more mass shootings this year than there have been days in the year.

As a combat veteran, a hunter, and a gun owner, not one Republican can tell me that background checks interfere with our Second Amendment.

When debating background checks, we have definitively refuted every tired Republican excuse time and time again. Republicans have countered with an even more callous response: They respond to every death with deafening silence.

The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force will continue our work to hold Republicans accountable for their obstruction. The leading cause of death of our children and teens demands our attention, and we are demanding that the House pass legislation to help save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW), my friend and colleague from Colorado, and an Army Ranger who was deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the victims of the horrific mass shooting that occurred at Century 16 movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, 11 years ago. My community forever changed the night of July 20, 2012.

Twelve people, with arms full of popcorn and candy, walked into theater 9

and never walked out. I think those of us in this room whose communities have faced this type of tragedy would agree: There is a before and there is an after, and what comes after is a shattered community trying to make sense of a senseless act of violence.

Today, we remember Veronica, A.J., Micayla, Jessica, Alexander, Jonathan, John, Matt, Alex, Jesse, Rebecca, and Gordon. They should still be here.

Every year, Aurora and the greater Colorado community come together to remember the lives we lost and the collective trauma shared. We also recognize those, who in the face of unspeakable fear, stepped up to help their loved ones and neighbors.

Let us not grow numb to the pain of this day, rather, we honor the lives of those we lost by being relentless in our pursuit for gun reform. As Members of Congress and as Americans, it is our duty.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, MARY GAY SCANLON.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, there have been more mass shootings this year than there have been days.

We do not have to live like this.

Children are scared to go to school, parents are scared to put their kids on the bus, and teachers are scared that they will have to protect their students from a mass shooter in the classroom. The daily gun violence that often goes unreported by the media, including suicide and domestic violence, impacts neighborhoods in every corner of the country.

We do not have to live like this.

Last Congress, House Democrats passed into law the most significant gun violence prevention legislation in 30 years, but we know that was only a baby step in the right direction. We have seen that evidence-based violence prevention programs, like group violence intervention, can dramatically reduce gun violence. When it was implemented in the city of Chester, Pennsylvania, 3 years ago, homicides by gun dropped by over 60 percent. The expansion of that program to other cities around the country is already yielding results, but we have also seen the fatal impact of guns flooding our streets nationwide and making their way into the hands of criminal or mentally unstable users.

We can't give up. Democrats are working to prevent the bloodshed.

We are offering commonsense legislation that will address the epidemic of gun violence and protect the Second Amendment rights of responsible gun owners.

Democrats introduced three discharge petitions last month to ban assault weapons, require universal background checks, and close the Charleston loophole. The MAGA Republicans running Congress don't want these bills to come to the floor because they would have to make a choice, and voters would see it, whether to side with

the gun lobby that funds their program, their campaigns, or to protect our kids and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, especially those who claim to be moderates, to have the courage to sign the discharge petitions and force Speaker MCCARTHY to bring the legislation to the floor and to have the courage to choose kids over guns.

We do not have to live this way.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I would just remind you that guns are the leading cause of death for children in the United States of America, and we are here today because we can do something about it.

If you look at this other chart, it clearly points out that, again, firearms are the leading cause of death. However, if you look at other factors, the second, motor vehicle accidents, look at the steep decline in the loss of lives from motor vehicle accidents.

It is because we did something. We passed laws, we made cars safer, we reduced the number of children who were killed in automobile accidents by taking action on this floor, and it is shameful that the Republican leadership will not allow us to do that today to curb children's death by gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. AUCHINCLOSS).

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding and for convening this critically important Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the plague of gun violence in our country.

I was asked recently whether January 6, 2021, was my worst day in Congress, and I answered truthfully that no, it wasn't, actually. My worst day in Congress was the night of the Uvalde shooting when I tucked my children into bed knowing that families in Texas would never get to do the same again, when at that very moment, they were identifying them by their shoes.

I am sad to say that since then, my Republican colleagues have continued to bow to the will of the gun lobby instead of listening to families across the country who are begging for action.

This uniquely American suffering is a policy choice. It doesn't have to be this way. We know what we need to do to fix it. We need to pass the assault weapons ban. I slept, ate, trained, and patrolled with an assault weapon for 4 years as a marine officer.

Weapons of war have no place on our streets or near our schools. We also need to adopt commonsense gun safety measures like universal background checks, red flag laws, safe storage requirements, and evidence-driven violence intervention policies. All of these are supported by a supermajority of Americans and, indeed, by a majority of gun owners.

My home State of Massachusetts is a good example of how strong, sound policy can save lives. Research suggests

that if our State's gun safety legislation were adopted nationwide, tens of thousands of children could be saved every year. Congress would do well to follow that lead.

□ 1900

It is time for Republicans in Congress to find a backbone, stand up to the gun lobby and NRA, and work with Democrats to keep our communities safe.

We cannot continue to allow our schools, our places of worship, and our grocery stores to become scenes of terror because of a lack of political courage.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, can you give us any idea when the Republican leadership will bring bills to deal with gun violence prevention to the floor for a vote?

I didn't think so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN).

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the west Michiganders who are asking and begging Congress to finally act on the uniquely American gun violence epidemic.

As a mother and a lawmaker, I simply cannot sit by and let our kids be senselessly killed in their classrooms and our communities any longer. It is just too much.

Gun violence has become the number one cause of death for kids in the United States. Not drug overdoses, not car accidents. Gun violence.

Earlier this year, the entire State of Michigan watched in horror as the Michigan State University campus was on lockdown during a mass shooting. Three students died and five were injured. The reverberating impacts were felt around the entire State and the entire country. The effects of this trauma linger.

This is now the reality for our children and young adults, but it doesn't have to be.

I stand here on the floor today with my sons watching on, urging my Republican colleagues to take commonsense action. We can and must come together to close loopholes in the law, ensure universal background checks, and keep guns out of the hands of those that should not have them.

I stand ready with my fellow task force members to do the work to protect our kids, schools, families, and communities across the country. It is time our Republican colleagues join us.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. FOUSHEE).

Mrs. FOUSHEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge Congress to confront and act on the deadly epidemic that plagues our communities each day: gun violence.

This is a painful topic and one that is near to my heart. In this year alone, there has been an average of two mass shootings per day. Gun violence continues to be the leading cause of death for children and teens in this country.

Earlier this month, a 5-year-old girl from my district was shot and killed by one of her family members after an argument, and the girl's 15-year-old babysitter was also shot—seven times.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated event. In Durham, which is located in my district, over 20 young people under the age of 17 have been victims of gun violence since the start of this year.

Thoughts and prayers are not enough and will never be enough. Gun violence victims, gun violence survivors, their families, and their loved ones all deserve more. Congress must act urgently to save lives and keep our communities safe.

The House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force has been pushing for action by signing discharge petitions for the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, the Assault Weapons Ban, and to block the Charleston loophole.

This is a bipartisan issue that a majority of Americans support, but we need support from across the aisle.

Addressing gun violence requires an all-hands-on-deck approach that includes increasing access to mental health services, investing in youth mentoring programs, decreasing firearm access through safe storage, and much more.

My Republican colleagues claim to be working on this issue, but not one of them has joined our task force to help end gun violence nationwide. Instead, they have unilaterally worked against gun violence prevention action on this House floor.

No one in America should have to fear for their lives in our schools, our stores, our places of worship, our streets, or anywhere in our communities.

House Democrats and the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force stand united, and we will not waiver. I encourage our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to put their words into action and join us in these efforts to save lives.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman mentioned that our Republican colleagues aren't doing anything in regard to guns. It is actually worse than that. They have done something. The Republicans passed a bill, a gun bill, off this floor this year. Their bill would make this gun legal.

Short-barreled rifles have been regulated by the National Firearms Act for decades. They are regulated because they are incredibly dangerous, they are easy to conceal, and they are deadly accurate. They are used in crimes. They are responsible for the deaths of many, many people, and they have been tightly regulated.

The Republicans in this House passed a bill that makes this gun legal. They call it an arm brace. "Arm brace" is just another way of saying you are putting a stock on a semiautomatic assault pistol, so you are making it a short-barreled assault rifle. It is lethal. It is immoral. Everyone who voted for

that bill and the leadership who brought it to this floor for a vote should be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB).

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the leadership and guidance by Congressman THOMPSON as he leads our effort with the task force. I have learned so much about some of the work that has been done prior to getting here and knowing, again, we are taking steps, but we know that we need to move with urgency.

I know 205 of my Democratic colleagues have signed a discharge position to bring the assault weapons ban to the House floor for a vote. I don't know how many more mass shootings it will take for Republicans to finally join us.

These weapons of war have been used in many of the deadliest mass shootings in our history and are the weapons of choice for shooters to kill as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

From 1994, Mr. Speaker, to 2004, while American families were protected by the assault weapons ban, there were 40 percent fewer shootings. Since the ban expired in 2004, gun violence has massacred our communities.

A bullet fired by an assault weapon can tear a softball-sized wound into victims. Imagine a child. There is no reason that anyone needs a weapon that can fire up to 60 rounds per minute.

Weapons of war designed to hunt human beings have no place in our communities, our schools, our places of worship, or on our streets.

It is shameful that many Republican colleagues care more about securing funding from the NRA than saving the lives of our children. Their inaction has left our communities devastated and families torn apart.

The trauma of being survivors of gun violence is real. We cannot afford to wait any longer. We owe it to the victims, to survivors, to our children. We must honor them with action by banning assault weapons.

Maite, a 10-year-old child who was killed in Uvalde, deserves us to act today. She deserves us to do more to save lives.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 40 minutes remaining.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, 30 people every day are killed by someone using a gun. If you add accidental deaths and suicides, that number jumps up to 100 people per day. It costs the American taxpayers roughly \$600 billion every year. Gun violence costs almost \$600 billion every year. Communities across our country are upended. We already heard that there have been more mass shootings this year than there have been days of the year.

Police officers across the country are taking ghost guns off the streets every single day, guns that can be purchased as a kit so they don't need a background check and they are unserialized. These are guns that are used a lot in crime. Cops are taking them off the streets every day.

This is a serious problem. Our communities are hurting. People are being killed. We need to take action. The Republican leadership in this House needs to bring gun violence prevention legislation to the floor so we can vote it out and help keep our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER).

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my neighbor and colleague and friend, Congressman THOMPSON, for the time and for his tireless leadership on this important topic and for his incredible understanding, from many perspectives, on this important subject.

I come to this subject as a survivor of gun violence, having lost my father to gun violence 44 years ago. As Mr. THOMPSON mentioned, suicide is the leading issue with gun violence, and we know the free and easy access to guns in States and communities that don't provide for evidence-based research results in almost 60 percent of those daily deaths. Sixty of the 100 a day are by people that are self-inflicted like my father.

In California, the district I represent and the district Mr. THOMPSON represents, the Bay Area, we can be proud that these commonsense, evidence-based gun violence and public health initiatives make you safer. According to Giffords, significantly safer. We have years of research to demonstrate this.

While we are proud of the fact that you are safer in California in our districts because of sound public evidence and constitutionally approved policy, we are frustrated that weak gun laws in other parts of the country make it more dangerous even in our communities.

Forty percent of the guns used in California come from outside of the State illegally. The ATF reports that nearly 60,000 guns are trafficked across State lines nationally each year with tragic results.

As many as 87 percent of the firearms used in crimes in Chicago, New York, and Boston were trafficked from other States, in spite of those jurisdictions' thoughtful gun violence prevention laws.

Seventy-five percent of trace guns that cross State lines come from States without background checks.

Because of this patchwork of State and local laws, States like California, with strong gun laws, see increased rates of gun homicide and gun crime when they border States with weak gun laws.

To make a real impact, action has to happen here at the Federal level. We should all commit that we will not back down from this fight because

every American, no matter where they live, regardless of where they call home, deserves to live free of the fear of gun violence.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER).

□ 1915

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to once again call for urgent action to address the epidemic of gun violence in our Nation. What is wrong with us as a people who we are increasingly here in this well mourning needless gun deaths, yet we can't move in this body any commonsense, wildly popular policies to keep our children and our communities safe?

How many more shootings will we have to endure? How many more lives will have to be lost before Congress—let me be specific here—before my Republican colleagues will do anything to help take care of our kids and our communities?

We have put to this Congress legislation to require universal background checks, ban assault weapons, get ghost guns off our streets, and store firearms safely. Yet, not one of my Republican colleagues can find the will or the courage to support any of this life-saving legislation. For goodness' sake, these bills are law-and-order legislation.

Every day, more than 100 people die from gun violence in this country. In the first 6 months of this year alone, more than 23,000 people have lost their lives needlessly to gun violence in the United States. I represent Highland Park, Illinois, which is still reeling from a mass shooting last July Fourth when seven people were murdered and more than 40 grievously wounded.

Last year, that was the 308th mass shooting in the country. This year, we have already had more than 390 mass shootings.

These deaths impact us all. The trauma resonates throughout our society. Right now, in America, when our children enter kindergarten, one of the first things they learn is how to react and behave if an active shooter enters their school.

As has been noted, gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in the United States. As it says right there on the board, guns are the leading cause of death for children in the United States.

Children are suffering post-traumatic stress from Highland Park in my communities and in communities all around this Nation. Children are facing violence every single day as they walk to school, as they study in their class, and as they join their families in houses of worship.

Republican inaction is unconscionable. As I spend time in my district talking to constituents, I constantly hear about how Congress needs to tackle this issue.

Earlier this month, I held a roundtable with police chiefs in our commu-

nity. There were 17 community police chiefs plus our county sheriff. The very first issue they raised with me, which was brought up earlier by Mr. THOMPSON, was getting ghost guns off of our streets.

For those unfamiliar, ghost guns are unserialized and untraceable firearms that can be bought online and assembled at home. These are bought online by criminals and bought online by young kids who are too young to buy guns in a store.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to be introducing the Ghost Guns and Untraceable Firearms Act with my colleague and friend, Representative ADRIANO ESPAILLAT. Our legislation would amend the legal definition of a firearm to include ghost guns, requiring those who buy gun components to comply with Federal gun regulations.

I urge leadership to bring this and other critical commonsense gun violence prevention bills to the floor immediately. This is not a Republican or a Democratic issue. This issue affects every American in every community in every State of our Nation, and we have to do our jobs in this body to keep our communities and our children safe.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, members of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force have made clear the terrible cost of gun violence on our kids, families, schools, and communities.

We have talked about sad milestones. In 2020, guns became the leading killer of kids in America after overtaking motor vehicle accidents.

Another dark milestone has been the 389 mass shootings already this year. We have had more mass shootings by mid-July this year than we had in all of 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

We know it doesn't have to be this way. We know that States with the most gun violence prevention laws have half the death rate for children and teenagers compared to States with the least gun violence prevention laws. The States can't do it alone.

These weak national gun safety laws make it much too easy for people who are a danger to themselves or a danger to others to access guns regardless of where they live.

According to the ATF gun-tracing database, the largest source of out-of-State guns used in crimes in my home State of California is Arizona, a State with over twice the gun death rate whose gun laws are rated an F.

Likewise, New York, a State with the fourth lowest gun death rate, has guns pouring in from Georgia, which, you might have guessed, has an F rating as well for their weak gun violence laws and over three times the gun death rate.

Similarly, gun deaths in Illinois are fueled by guns from Indiana, Missouri, and Wisconsin, States whose gun laws are rated F, F, and D-plus, respectively.

Members of our task force have been calling on the Republican leadership to bring commonsense gun violence prevention bills to the floor to protect our kids and keep our communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, we have been on the floor for 30 minutes focused on gun violence prevention. That is 30 more minutes than Republicans have scheduled to debate gun violence prevention bills on the House floor this entire Congress.

Tonight, you heard from Army veterans, Marine Corps veterans, combat veterans, hunters, gun owners, and moms and dads. We say: Enough. We need to pass laws that will help keep our children and our communities safe.

We will continue to fight until Republicans join us in stopping the gun violence epidemic or until Democratic leadership in the next Congress can resume our work and pass the gun violence prevention legislation that has proven to save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very much, and I want to join the stellar Members from so many different backgrounds to add another 2 minutes to that 30 minutes and emphasize that it is now 32 more minutes than we have had an opportunity to discuss gun violence—gun violence against our children.

I am reminded of the late John Lewis, and as I look to the front, Mr. Speaker, where you are, I am reminded of the overwhelming impact that gun violence had just a couple of years ago when he was alive, so much so that Members took to the floor—the actual floor—and sat down on the floor because the pain was so deep.

I remember the tear that President Obama shed as he had to speak about Sandy Hook. I remember going to Uvalde within days of 19 children and teachers being slaughtered. Yes, Mr. Speaker, they were slaughtered with an AR-15 that a young man was able to get online and have shipped to him without any background check of sorts and without any supervision. He was able to recklessly shoot his grandmother in the face and leave his house to go to an elementary school just a few blocks away.

One could not expect law enforcement initially to know what was going to happen. One thing we do know is that if that young man had not had an AR-15, those little babies in Uvalde, where parents are still in such abject pain, would still be alive.

We also know that as I worship with them, as I hug them, they have now become, through their own advocacy, absolutely incredulous that we in this country have not been able to pass bans on assault weapons. I support bills like the Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act, which impacted Kimberly Vaughan, a 14-year-old who died in Santa Fe because another young man was able to get guns that were left at home.

I think I am here as a mother and as a Member of Congress who has been here since Columbine. I remember being on the Columbine task force to see what we could do about guns. I have been through Sandy Hook, Parkland, Santa Fe, Virginia Tech, various churches, synagogues, and temples that have seen gun violence—and dance studios.

I don't know what it takes for this Congress to come together. No one is trying to take away anyone's firearms. The Second Amendment is constitutionally present. It is in place. None of the language in the Second Amendment prevents us from having a reasonable, safe regulatory scheme that will help save all of our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very much. As the vice chair of the gun task force and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, we are waiting and ready to take up bills as we did with the Protect our Kids Act and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. There is still a lapse of real bills that further need to be in place to change laws. The waiting period, the issue of universal background checks, and storage bills are really crucial to saving lives.

The last point I will make is that we often use mental illness. Let me say that we pray for people who suffer from mental health concerns, but other countries around the world have people who suffer from mental health concerns, and I do not label them in generality. These are human beings who fight every day to survive. That is not a good excuse for saying that is what is causing gun violence. It is not.

In tribute to my colleagues who come from cities like Chicago and other cities where there is handgun violence, individual violence, and domestic violence, you need to have a response to just plain gun violence. That means we have to debate on this floor and find a common solution.

A word to my colleagues in the name of the children who have died, the number one killer of our children in America, and in the name of places like Uvalde and Sandy Hook that comes to mind, Parkland and other places where children have died, we can minimally do something to help our children. Let's do real anti-gun violence legislation. Let's make our children safe.

Mr. Speaker, today, I speak out in support of my bill H.R. 52, the Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act.

This bill establishes best practices for safe firearm storage to protect Americans, especially children, from improperly stored or misused firearms.

The Kimberly Vaughn Firearm Safe Storage Act is named after one of the victims of a shooting rampage that took place on May 18, 2018, when a 17-year-old student went on a shooting rampage, killing 8 students and 2 teachers and wounding 13 others at Santa Fe High School in Houston, Texas.

The shotgun and pistol used by the perpetrator belonged to his father and were available to him at home.

In 80 percent of gunfire incidents at schools where the shooter is under 18, the shooter obtained the firearm from their home or the home of extended family or friends.

Texas is the state with the second most mass shootings this year so far with a total of 50, and the highest number of mass shooting deaths in the U.S.

Only 3 of 10 adults in households with children report storing all guns unloaded and locked up.

Safe storage practices are also important to keep firearms away from dangerous individuals.

In the last decade, nearly two million firearms have been reported stolen.

An estimated 47,000 guns are stolen each year in Texas alone.

Overall, at least 186,548 firearms were reported stolen in Texas over from 2007 to 2016, which is more than any other state in the nation.

America's gun epidemic is as deadly as ever.

The frequency of firearm violence can largely be accredited to the lack of safe firearm storage.

Previously part of the Protecting Our Kids Act in the 117th Congress with the addition of a tax credit program, the Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act is an exhaustive solution to improperly stored or misused firearms.

Firearm injury is the leading cause of death for children and young adults in the United States.

American children are twice as likely to be shot and killed as they are to die drowning.

However, there are more safety regulations for pools than gun storage.

An estimated 4.6 million minors live in homes with at least one unlocked, loaded firearm.

One in three U.S. households with children have firearms and firearms accounted for nearly 19 percent of childhood deaths in 2021, which is a 50 percent increase since 2019.

Securing firearms protects children in preventing unintentional shootings and firearm suicides.

The spokeswoman for the National Rifle Association noted earlier this year that, "the NRA supports safe storage for every firearm owned in America, and we educate gun owners to keep firearms away from unauthorized users."

This is a nonpartisan issue with a bipartisan solution.

On average, 9 minors are killed by improperly stored or misused guns every day.

In my home state of Texas, more than 4,000 Texans are shot and killed each year.

The Kimberly Vaughn Firearm Safe Storage Act is an important bill that will establish best practices for storing firearms.

In particular, the Attorney General is directed to establish voluntary best practices relating to safe firearm storage and publish them on a website and in print.

Second, it will require most weapons to have a clear written notice on the packaging that says, "Safe Storage Saves Lives" and how to obtain the best practices established by the Attorney General.

Additionally, the bill will provide grants to states and local governments with a ten-year, \$10 million grant program to distribute safe storage devices.

Every year, almost 20,000 children are shot and killed or wounded by a firearm, and 3 million are exposed to gun violence.

The presence of unsecured firearms in the home increases the risk of unintentional and intentional shootings.

It is long past the time to do something about the epidemic of gun violence in our nation—the nation that prides itself on protecting our children and the future generations.

If we want to protect the youth, we must start by learning how to effectively store guns in the homes that choose to have them.

The Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act will help protect our children and adults from senseless gun violence through simple gun storage legislation.

I encourage my colleagues in the House and on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force to push this bill forward so we can promptly and proactively act on preventing firearm violence in America.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks, her good work on gun violence prevention efforts, and her dedication to making sure that we pass the laws that will keep our kids and our communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we have had Army combat veterans, Marine Corps combat veterans, hunters, gun owners, gun collectors, and moms and dads on this floor tonight asking and pleading with the Republican leadership to allow gun violence prevention legislation to come to this floor for debate and for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, can you give us any idea when your leadership will be bringing gun violence prevention bills to the floor for action?

Sadly, that is what I was afraid of. Silence. Just like after every mass shooting, silence.

There has to be an effort on the part of this leadership to deal with this issue that is disrupting communities and leading to thousands and thousands of deaths.

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

STATE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decrying the alleged lack of action by those on my side of the aisle with respect to gun violence and with respect to guns generally.

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I think it is important to note the primary driver of the current malaise and the current dangers upon citizens by those with guns comes from criminals and those who have mental health problems.

A full one-third of Americans are currently putting themselves out as depressed according to polls. We have mental health issues and drug issues with our children. We have problems with people who feel socially detached.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that when I was a child, about the time I was born, fully one-half of American households had weapons and they had guns. Fewer than one-third do today.

The fact is we have a problem and an epidemic of people with mental health issues and we have a lack of resolve of leadership in this country to deal with those or to deal with the criminals perpetrating crimes. That is the truth.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle rush to say that they want to get the guns. The fact is we need to stop the criminals. I was a Federal prosecutor. I spent my time in the United States Attorneys' Office targeting criminals with guns and putting bad guys behind bars. There has been a movement of late to allow these criminals back out on our streets. That is a mistake.

There has been a longstanding movement to not treat those with mental health problems, and it is getting infinitely worse with these devices, iPhones, and all of the focus that our young are directing towards electronic devices rather than engaging with their fellow mankind.

We know it, we see it, and we do nothing about it.

We rage against TikTok because of its relationship to China.

Why don't we rage against the extent to which these are addictive devices putting garbage in the minds of our children and creating environments where children get detached from reality and detached from society?

We see it unfold before our very eyes, and the response among leaders of this country is to form a task force. You don't need a task force to understand that our society is breaking down, and you don't need a task force to understand that our communities are breaking down.

This is what the American people are feeling on a daily basis. When I talk to my constituents, the people I run into, the people I run into on airplanes, Americans I don't represent and Americans I do represent, they know that something is very, very wrong with our country.

That is the truth. That is what the American people know.

Not just with politicians and not just with elective leaders, not just with Congress, and not just with the economy, but that something is just fundamentally wrong and fundamentally broken with our way of life.

They are not wrong. Just a couple of weeks ago, we celebrated Independence Day. One line from that document which was written specifically about and to King George citing the death warrants for all those who signed it, he said, Jefferson wrote, they wrote, they said that he—the king—has abdicated government here by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

How different is that from our current situation?

The elites in this country are waging war against us. They are waging war

against our values, waging wars war against or prosperity, and waging war against our natural rights as parents, as citizens, and as individuals.

The average Americans right out there today listening just want to play by the rules. They want to go to school, they want to get a job, they want to buy a house, they want to support their family, and they want to raise their kids. They want to raise their kids to be happy, they want their kids to be free, and they want a society—more importantly—they want a family that is flourishing and happy and that can achieve. All of that is what we historically call the American Dream.

What is the state of the American Dream today?

If I ask that question, half the people in the room would be staring at their dadgum iPhones because we don't engage with people anymore.

If I said this in the middle of a meeting of my colleagues, or if I said it in a restaurant, how many times do you see everybody just staring at these things?

The question here is: What happened to the American Dream?

If my colleagues were in this room—of course, they are not—I would ask: Do you believe the American Dream can be achieved by your children and by your grandchildren today?

Do you believe it?

Do you believe it is attainable?

Do you believe that if they play by the rules that they will achieve the dream?

Or do you think that the rich and the powerful—the large corporations, the government, your own leaders—are rigging the system to protect their own status and to protect their own wealth against your freedom and your prosperity?

We have a system where too often today, crony policies help big, woke corporations make windfall profits while families struggle with inflation and small businesses struggle to stay afloat amid a mountain of regulatory burdens and costs. That is the truth.

Everybody I talk to can't afford labor, they can't afford their supplies, they can't afford a car, they can't buy a new vehicle because it has been regulated to death, and they can barely afford their electricity bills.

That is the truth of everyday Americans right now, and they are wondering why? What happened to that American Dream?

The elites, on the other hand, bailed out Wall Street, and they forced Main Street to pay for it.

Now they are doing it again. Wall Street got a \$1 trillion bailout after a heavy hand at tanking the economy, and they are making more money than ever now.

This year the Federal Government gave a \$22 billion bailout to Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank of New York.

The administration only cares about their own. Treasury Secretary Yellen