

would require elementary school math, wouldn't it? Sorry.

Back to the baseline. Our brothers and sisters are struggling. If you are in markets like I am, where housing costs have gone up dramatically, parts of your food budget have gone up dramatically, we have Americans who are struggling. I showed the inflation numbers, and into that headwind, we have to find a way to stabilize the borrowing to that growth of the economy. At the same time, we have to find a way to get beyond the liars out there that are trying to pollute the debate because they want to see this country fail.

If we don't step up and do our job, start telling people the truth, realize there is a path to stabilize our debt to GDP—and this could be a stunning century for America, but my fear is when I look at the debt spiral that is coming, if interest rates continue to go where they are going, you have maybe 3 years, 5 years. At that point then most of what this government does is we have handed over the power of this government to the bond market because the bond market will be in charge of us. The bond market will decide what our priorities are. They will control the price of our debt. They will control our resources.

Make a decision: Are you willing to act like adults, digest facts, vet, double-check your facts, and then demand Members of Congress start thinking like—it is impolite to curse behind the mike—start thinking in a way where they are willing to do difficult things that are accurate on their calculator and not their feelings? You can't make public policy with feelings and have it actually work out on your calculator. As the old family saying for the Schweikert household goes, the math will eventually win.

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

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, I rise this week, with a heavy heart.

It is exactly 1 year since tragedy struck my community in Louisville, Kentucky. It was just last year, a Monday morning, the day after Easter, the first day back from spring break.

You know what kind of day this was. It was a Kentucky spring day. The air

was crisp. The sun was bright. It was perfect. The type of spring morning that had families heading back into school and had us heading back into work with a sense of rebirth and renewal.

Unfortunately, it didn't last. Spring's ritual beauty was shattered by the unfamiliar booms from an AR-15, the acrid smells of smoke, the sounds of sirens, of screams.

It was a Monday morning, April 10, 2023, that a lone gunman took an assault rifle into the Old National Bank on Main Street in Louisville, Kentucky, and opened fire on his colleagues. He took the lives of five innocent Louisvillians: Josh Barrick, Deana Eckert, Jim Tutt, Juliana Farmer, and my friend, Tommy Elliott.

Eight other people were injured, including officer Nick Wilt. He was in just his fourth shift as a police officer when he ran headfirst into gunfire. His heroism saved lives, but he took an AR-15 round to the head. Miraculously, he survived, and he continues to recover and get stronger every day.

That wasn't it. Just hours later and just a few blocks away, Chea'von Moore was killed at the Jefferson Community & Technical College. Another young woman was struck by bullets in the crossfire between classes. Thankfully, she survived.

That was a Monday morning. It got worse. There was another mass shooting in Louisville later that week. Combined with the tragedies of everyday gun violence, five more Louisvillians were killed by gunfire by week's end.

□ 1815

It was awful. It ripped into us as a community. The scars are still there for so many to see, especially now, especially this week. I think any decent person hearing this story recognizes that it is tragic. Anyone with an iota of compassion for the families, for the lives lost, for the senseless waste of human potential knows how sad this is.

If I told you this story 20 years ago, the world would have stopped. It would have been all you heard about on the news, on the internet, and in newspapers. It would have been a national crisis that would have demanded urgent action and all of our attention.

Today, it was off the news quickly.

Why? I can answer that.

We have grown accustomed to this. Unbelievably, this is our norm.

Now, Louisville, Kentucky, on a perfect spring morning, the day after Easter, the first day back from spring break isn't unique in the horrors it experienced from a mass shooting that day. No, it just got added to a very long list of American cities experiencing this tragedy.

Gone are the days of recognizing American cities for their contributions to our culture—Motown, the City of Brotherly Love, the Big Apple, the Gateway to the West, the City of Angels, the Big Easy.

No. Now we define our cities by their tragedies, Aurora, Uvalde, Las Vegas,

Highland Park, Newtown, Orlando, Buffalo, Nashville, El Paso, Monterey Park, and Louisville, Kentucky.

It was one of those moments as a lifelong Louisvillian you will always remember. I know where I was when I got the call. I was still with my family. In these jobs there are times you try to shield your children from some of the things you have to deal with here, but it was too shocking. I looked at my wife and I said: "There has been a mass shooting." My elementary school daughter heard me. Her face sank. She was ashen. She just looked at us, and she said: "Which school?"

Of course that was her first reaction. In elementary schools they now do active-shooter drills instead of tornado drills. Gun violence is the number one killer of kids in America. We can't be shocked by that reaction.

Even though it broke my heart—and maybe it should—we can't let it break our brains.

I actually think we agree that 20 years ago these tragedies would have hit much harder, that they would have been an anomaly instead of the norm.

What has changed? Why is it different?

Well, I can point to one thing: The assault weapon ban has expired. Since then, the gun culture has exploded, and I don't mean hunting and responsible gun ownership. I mean the toxic culture promoted by gun manufacturers and the NRA. The idea that weapons of war are toys and status symbols. That the right to arm yourself with the capacity to kill en masse trumps our right to live.

America's epidemic of gun violence that takes more than 40,000 lives per year and more children than any other cause almost always has a slew of common denominators: a firearm—often a semiautomatic—purchased under a legal framework that only exists in America.

Nowhere else in the world has seen this epidemic of death and done absolutely nothing about it.

Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle insist that this is a coincidence, that the very instrument of death for hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans makes us safer, and that the more we have, the safer we will be, that somehow if every American had a gun, rates of gun violence would decrease.

It would be comically absurd if it weren't so dangerous and so heart-breaking. It should break our hearts, each time, each loss of life, as if it were happening 20, 25 years ago; the gut-wrenching disbelief we felt over Columbine. We can't let it break our brains. It isn't that complicated.

This is not the world we are forced to live in. This is the world we have chosen to live in. We in this body can do something about it.

No, nobody is talking about coming to your house and taking your guns. Nobody wants to stop hunting trips. We are talking about the most basic, commonsense measures: Like safe storage,

waiting periods, universal background checks, stopping the free flow of assault weapons and armor-piercing ammo.

Will these measures end gun violence in America? No, sadly they will not.

Will they save American lives? Absolutely. Immediately.

We can debate how many lives, but isn't even one worth saving?

This is not some fringe fantasy either. These are literally some of the most popular bipartisan proposals in America. They are approved by 70, 80, 90 percent of the American public.

Today, the Biden administration announced a new rule expanding background checks for gun sales. This closes the gun show loophole, ensures that guns aren't sold or traded for profit without a background check.

Good. However, there is more to do.

Our constituents are crying out to us. We are all tired of seeing children killed in their schools and worrying that ours could be next.

Commonsense gun reforms, not only are they overwhelmingly popular everywhere, they are necessary. While they are overwhelmingly popular everywhere, they are not overwhelmingly popular where they need to be. Here. In this building.

Last year, after the shooting in Louisville, I approached many of my colleagues across the aisle. I did it one-on-one, not in front of the cameras, not for social media, but to really ask and say, I think we agree. We want our communities to be safer. Where can we meet on this? What can we do to protect our kids and our communities and save lives?

I had really great conversations, talked about things that we have in common, things what we can do. However, routinely I was told that at the end of the day you know that is not something we can get through here.

Why not? We are ready. We are waiting. I am tired of waiting. The American people are tired of waiting. We can start saving lives today, and we know it.

I know that my friends on the other side of the aisle are good people, and I mean that. I don't know in this instance, though, what we are afraid of by simply putting these things to a vote.

Gun violence right now is a choice, and it is time to make a new one. We can start saving lives today, and we should.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB), my colleague.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his courage and trying to save lives, especially the lives of our children and trying again to address the crisis that we have in our country.

It is always an honor to be able to serve the families of the 12th Congressional District in Michigan.

Before I was a Congresswoman, my two sons made me a mother. I am speaking to you all as a mother more than anything.

It is important to understand—this is a true fact—that gun violence is the leading cause of death for children and teens in our country. As of today, there have already been 106 mass shootings—that is more mass shootings than the days in the year so far.

You know what is more horrific? It is more horrific that the gun violence in our communities that is happening every single day doesn't even make the news anymore.

Congress has become so numb—this institution—truly numb to the gun violence crisis in our country that they are not even paying attention any longer.

We cannot continue like this, Mr. Speaker. I refuse to accept that the death of kids is the status quo.

We have not voted on a single gun violence prevention bill under this Republican majority.

Guns now have more rights in our country than women do. It is sick.

It is disgusting that campaign donations from the NRA and gun manufacturers have bought inaction and bought the silence of many of my colleagues and blocked many, many important, major reforms that we need to keep our communities safe across our Nation.

Every one of our colleagues that refuses to vote for commonsense gun violence prevention I truly believe has blood on their hands—responsibility.

It is clear. They value guns more than the lives of our children. I truly believe our children deserve so much more than, again, inaction and our continued silence.

I thank my colleague for hosting this Special Order. I have seen him on this floor being a father, being a Congressman, and we know what is at stake. Again, no parent ever should worry about their child when they leave home, that they would be a victim of gun violence.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, as a parent, this is heartbreaking. I had a parent tell me after the Uvalde shooting they now look at their child's shoes every day before they go to school just in case they have to identify them.

I always said every policymaker in America should have been required to drop their kids off at school the day after Uvalde like I did.

This is something we can do something about.

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

□ 1830

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time and for hosting this discussion tonight.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about gun violence and all its horror, the images that often come to mind are mass shootings, assaults, and murders. These tragedies are an important part of the conversation, and, unfortunately, too much discussion in American everyday life, but do not represent

how most Americans will encounter gun violence.

Every day in America, up to two-thirds of the gun deaths come about because of gun suicides, which account, again, for a disproportionate amount of gun deaths in the United States every day. This wasn't about self-defense, this was about Americans taking their own lives.

Mr. Speaker, 35 years ago, on April 20, I lost my own father to gun suicide. I was the last of my four siblings to talk to him, and he gave no indication, from 3,000 miles away from where I lived at the time, that he was considering suicide.

Mr. Speaker, 35 years later, we have not done enough to address this epidemic of suicide. For far too many people, they continue to lose loved ones the same way I did.

What is most troubling, gun deaths amongst children and teens rose 50 percent in just 2 years, between 2019 and 2021, and firearm suicides amongst those ages 10 to 24 is at its highest rate in more than 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, 10- to 24-year-olds in the United States are experiencing an uber epidemic of gun suicides. These statistics are sobering, and we need to take action now.

Fortunately, research has shown that there are solutions that we can do to help stop this. Gun suicide rates in States with the strongest gun safety laws, like California, have actually decreased over the past two decades. Meanwhile, in States with the weakest gun safety laws, gun suicide rates have increased by almost 40 percent. They have gone down in States with constitutionally, legal, evidence-based research gun violence protection laws, but they have gone up by 40 percent in those States with the weakest.

If all U.S. States had experienced the same trend in their gun suicide rate as the eight States with the strongest gun safety laws, approximately 72,000 fewer people would have died from gun suicides.

The gun lobbyists often counter this evidence in the debate to say: Oh, well these people would just have tried something else. Not surprisingly, they are lying. They are lying about people taking their own lives with their product.

Research has repeatedly shown that States that have experienced a decline in gun suicides, have not seen a corresponding increase in suicides using other methods. The other methods most commonly used for suicide are actually vastly slower, research tells us, than by the availability of guns and the use of guns.

Mr. Speaker, to honor those who have lost their lives by taking their lives and to protect the most vulnerable, we need to follow the evidence and enact national commonsense, proven reforms because where you live should not determine the probability of losing a loved one to gun suicide.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative DESAULNIER for

his wonderful words and his courage in telling his personal story.

We have talked about mass shootings today, and I think it is also important that we put some focus on everyday gun violence. We have talked about guns. Let's also talk about crime. Let's talk about the root causes of crime as well, and make sure that we are doing everything we can—from public safety to guns, to things like jobs, affordable housing, healthcare, hunger, education.

We also do need to talk about mental health and make sure that people in this country have the mental health support they need and they deserve. There is no argument that the number one cause of gun deaths in this country is death by suicide, but when you talk about suicide and death by a firearm, there are ways to help prevent it.

I met this week with the UoFL trauma team, who did an amazing job on April 10, 2023, keeping people alive and navigating an incredibly difficult situation. And because suicide is the number one cause of gun deaths in this country, I talked with them about it.

I spoke with Dr. JASON SMITH, who is a trauma surgeon at the University of Louisville, and he shared a person is most at risk of taking their own life when they reach their lowest point, and that lowest point typically only lasts for about 10 minutes. If you can get someone through that lowest point, they have an amazingly increased chance of living a full life.

We know that there are laws that work to protect us. In my State of Kentucky, we watch it across the river in Indiana where they have a State red flag law.

We can make this a national priority, through law and through funding, to help people get what they need, to help people who are in crisis and temporarily remove them from a firearm while retaining their rights.

Representative DESAULNIER referenced that suicide is growing among young people, and, unfortunately, it is. But that is not the only group affected. In fact, a statistic that worries me, because Louisville is located just north of Fort Knox, we have about 50,000 veterans who live in our community. The single-most at-risk group for death by suicide with a firearm are White men over the age of 50 who own a firearm and are a veteran.

Mr. Speaker, I sit on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, where even today in a committee hearing with the Secretary, death by suicide was brought up for veterans. The people who were brave enough to put on a uniform and sacrifice everything for us, we should be brave enough to pass policies in this body that will help them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE), my distinguished colleague.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the distinguished gentleman, my good friend, from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, whose leadership with respect to addressing the scourge

of gun violence that has, unfortunately, taken hold in so many parts of our country, has been unparalleled since he first stepped into this august Chamber last year.

We are grateful for his service, we are grateful for his leadership, and we are grateful for him initiating this important conversation tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that there are many constituents of mine who are frustrated, who are outraged, who are anguished at the inaction of this body to address an issue as fundamental as this one.

What could be more important, Mr. Speaker, than the safety of our families, of our friends, of our neighbors, of our colleagues, of our children, of our fellow citizens.

This Congress has a job to do, and that job must include addressing gun violence and enacting commonsense reforms that we know will save lives.

I have the distinct privilege, Mr. Speaker, of representing the great State of Colorado, and we have been no stranger to the anguish of gun violence.

Next week will mark the 25th anniversary of the tragic and devastating massacre at Columbine High School. Mr. Speaker, 13 Coloradans murdered in cold blood, 12 students, and 1 teacher, 25 years ago next week.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, my community was devastated by yet another mass shooting at our local grocery store. Mr. Speaker, 10 community members gunned down, including 1 police officer, who bravely died in the line of duty, saving lives, making the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost far too many. There are far too many mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, children, Americans, dying from gun violence. We have the power to stop it if we follow the articulate admonition of my friend and colleague, Mr. MCGARVEY, by passing commonsense solutions here in this Chamber.

For those who doubt our ability to do so, Mr. Speaker, I will point you to fairly recent history.

There were many, many who doubted the ability of the United States Congress and the President to enact laws, commonsense laws that ultimately would and could save lives. They were wrong.

Because of President Biden's leadership, we passed a bill in the last Congress, the 117th Congress, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. That law is saving lives today.

Earlier today, the White House, next to the leadership of President Biden, Vice President HARRIS, the leadership of our attorney general, Attorney General Garland, announced yet another reform, a new rule pursuant to the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act that will finally close the gun show loophole, an important step forward, Mr. Speaker, and one that I applaud. I hope, I sincerely hope that it can be a building block for us to take on.

Now, I have to confess, I looked at the notice in the Committee on Rules, the committee on which I serve, with great dismay, just a few hours ago. What did that notice portend for next week? What have House Republicans decided we will spend our time on next week—not gun violence prevention, the Refrigerator Freedom Act.

I kid you not, that is literally on the agenda next week: The Refrigerator Freedom Act.

How about a bill to address gun violence? Is that too much to ask? My constituents don't think so, and I don't think the people of Kentucky think so either.

I thank the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY) again for his leadership, for initiating this important conversation. It is the beginning and not the end.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative NEGUSE for his wonderful words. I can't believe it has been 25 years since Columbine, another tragedy which I can remember exactly where I was when I found out that news. We went to our TV screens to watch in horror as students fled from the building, as parents wondered if their kids were alive. We grieve with Colorado, not just for Columbine, but for Boulder and for Aurora, for the tragedy you all have endured.

Hearing Representative NEGUSE talk about the tragedies in his community reminded me that when the mass shooting happened in Louisville on April 10 last year, I had several Members of Congress reach out to me immediately. They were not only offering their condolences and their sympathies and asking what they could do to help—many of them had experienced the same tragedy in their communities—they offered advice on how to deal with it and how to help your community get through it while you yourself grieve. In essence, there is a playbook on what to do after a mass shooting.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this body to act and have a playbook on how to stop the shootings from happening in the first place, because we know how to do it.

We know the damage that assault weapons cause. We know the need for safe storage and universal background checks, and I am tired of hearing there is nothing we can do when we are doing nothing.

We can solve this uniquely American problem, and we can solve it together, keeping our kids and our communities safer. It just takes the political will from this body to do it.

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

□ 2300

RECOGNIZING FAITH MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the