

freely held, and when not freely held, how permanent serfdom locks down.

May his legacy inspire us all to strive for a free and prosperous Ukraine.

Rest in peace, Morgan. Your life has made a difference on planet Earth.

HONORING WILLIE MIMS

(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, on May 22, the community I am fortunate to represent in the San Francisco Bay area lost a community leader and a giant for justice, equity, and inclusion and a good friend, Willie Mims.

Throughout his life, Willie demonstrated his passion for his community, working tirelessly to empower and serve Contra Costa County and the Bay Area. A teacher by training, he spent more than 25 years in the classroom supporting and inspiring young minds and advocating on behalf of Contra Costa parents and students.

As a civil rights leader, Willie was an original member of the Pittsburg, California, Black Political Association and executive board member of the East County Branch of the NAACP and was instrumental in the creation of the Antioch, California, School District's African-American Male Initiative, which sought to address racial disparities between Black students and their peers. For his tireless work, Willie received the Dr. Martin Luther King Freedom Fighter Award in 2008 and was the Contra Costa County 2024 Humanitarian of the Year.

It was an honor and a pleasure, and I am filled with gratitude, to have known Willie and to have been his friend over the years. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and the community.

AIRLINE AUTOMATIC REFUNDS

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

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, dealing with a flight delay or cancellation is tiring and frustrating, and it often feels like the airlines are working against you rather than treating you as a valued customer. When things go wrong, even getting a refund can be discouraging or impossible.

Not anymore, because thanks to the Biden administration's new rule, airlines must now automatically refund customers for tickets and fees when a flight is canceled or significantly delayed.

I applaud the administration's rule, and Congress should do even more to stand up to the airline industry.

I have consistently taken on airlines who spend tens of millions of dollars each year lobbying Washington to prevent protections for travelers.

This Congress, I introduced four bills to protect Americans from corporate

abuse when they fly, and I will keep working to hold airlines accountable and do right by travelers.

A DARK STAIN ON AMERICA'S HISTORY

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, June 14, 2017, was a dark stain on America's history. There are several of us in this room today who would not be here for two reasons. Number one, and first and foremost, by the grace of God, and number two, by the fact that then-Majority Whip STEVE SCALISE showed up for practice that morning. Without his security detail, none of us would be here.

The deranged gunman that took, for whatever reason, revenge upon the Republicans on the baseball field that morning sought to give no mercy, just to create havoc.

We know that we are better than the behavior that we saw that day. The bond that brought us all together, especially that day on the baseball field, spread, I believe, throughout the country to bring people together at a time when we needed it. We continue to need it.

When I mention now-Leader SCALISE coming that day, he is only here because of the actions of one of our Members, and that man is Representative BRAD WENSTRUP, combat surgeon, dedicated soldier, and ready for the task at hand. As I personally witnessed BRAD tending to Representative SCALISE on the field, it was truly BRAD's readiness and professionalism that enabled the life flight to occur and SCALISE to successfully make it to the hospital.

I commend Colonel WENSTRUP for what he did and the calm with which he did it. It is the calm, not the excitement, that drives us to the positive results. I cannot thank him enough, as a personal friend, for what he has done for the community as a whole to show what good behavior really means in the face of extreme adversity.

I am honored to be among my colleagues here tonight.

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

6/14/2017—A DAY OF INFAMY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 9, 2023, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I thank those that are here tonight to speak on the experience from that day.

I thought it would be appropriate that we start with Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. DUNCAN was one of the first to leave practice that day, and he will share his experience at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for actually holding this Special Order to talk about what happened in 2017.

One year ago tomorrow marks the day we had baseball practice right before the game. It was the day before the game, and Ron DeSantis, now Governor of Florida, the Representative from that State, rode to practice with me.

That morning, we were on the field. I was starting shortstop. Ron was starting third baseman. As we did at every practice, we had infield practice and then we had batting practice. During batting practice, many of us were out there shagging balls. Ron was standing at third, I was standing at shortstop, and Ron said: "When are you thinking about leaving, JEFF?" He said: "I have got a meeting I can get to if we could head on." I said: "Well, you have done infield and batting practice, and I have."

Chairman MIKE CONAWAY from Texas was in the batting cage batting, and I said: "Let's let Chairman CONAWAY finish, and then we can go."

CONAWAY finished. We ran off the field. I ran around the pitcher's mound. STEVE SCALISE was at second base. I fist-bumped STEVE as I went off the field and went to the dugout. Tom Rooney was at first base. Tom said: "DUNCAN, what time is it?"

I got my bag. I had a bag that I kept keys, phone and all that in. I came out told him what time it was. Tom had to leave, so he left, and he was the first one out of the gate.

Ron DeSantis went off the field, and then I went off the field. Out in the parking lot, I was stopped by a gentleman who said: "Excuse me. Can you tell me who is practicing today, Republicans or Democrats?" I said: "This is the Republican team practicing." He said: "Thank you."

It turned out that was a shooter. I was face-to-face with him for a brief interlude before he left the parking lot to go into his van by the YMCA and load his weapons and get prepared to fire about 137 rounds at my colleagues who I left on the baseball field that morning as I drove back to the Capitol.

There were a lot of God winks in that event that morning. I can't thank anyone but my Lord and Savior for getting me off that field and away from danger. I would have been standing at shortstop. Ron DeSantis would have been at third base. TRENT KELLY was the third

baseman after Ron left. The first shot was fired at TRENT and hit a chain link fence. One-eighth of an inch definitely saved TRENT's life. It rattled the gentleman, and I think it made him erratic and start shooting my colleagues, spraying bullets across the field that hit STEVE SCALISE, Zack Barth, and Matt Mika, and others.

It turns out that the gentleman had come from Illinois to the Washington area to assassinate Republicans. He had a list in his pocket with six or eight names on it that he wanted to kill. My name was on that list. I was face-to-face with him. Thank God he wasn't prepared at that moment because he had targeted me specifically. He had my name, my address, my age, my physical description, and a number of other things.

There were a lot of God winks on that field that day. We are just thankful that no one died, especially our Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE, my good friend, who the next year, after he recovered from his wounds, came out on the baseball field and had the first pitch in a live pitch baseball game off a bat hit directly to him. He was at second base. I was at shortstop. I came around to back him up behind the bag, and I was the first one there to take him in my arms and hug him and just praise God that he was there for that moment.

As I wrap up here and give others a chance to share their memories, I will give a special shout-out to some heroes of that day. That is David Bailey and Crystal Griner, who were there as STEVE's detail, who actually fended off the shooter and kept, I think, much more harm from being done if that shooter had been able to get on the field. Then the Alexandria Police Department showed up 11 minutes, 12 minutes after the shooting started. That is how quickly it happened. They dispatched the assassin, who the FBI said was hoping to die by suicide by cop.

He was an assassin. Let's call him what he was. He knew he would probably die that day, but he wanted to take out as many Republicans as he could. It was a tragic day that day, but it was special because no one died. Everyone lived. There were so many God winks that were there.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, there clearly was a lot of divine intervention. We titled this event tonight: "6/14/2017—A Day of Infamy in America."

"Infamy" means an evil act, and it truly was that.

I remember watching JEFF DUNCAN leave. I was out in the outfield, and I was thinking to myself: I usually have to leave early. Today I don't. I can stay longer.

There were so many things that were divine intervention.

I met the groundskeeper a couple months later. He said: "I don't know why, but I locked the third-base gate the night before." If that gate was open, he could have walked right in.

The fences are 20-feet high. People can't just hop the fence and get out.

Thank goodness for STEVE SCALISE. He took a bullet for all of us.

The first shot rang out. It hit a link in the fence right by the bullpen. It was our last practice, so our pitchers weren't in the bullpen. That was another divine intervention.

TRENT KELLY, a two-star general who did a couple tours overseas, was at third base, and he immediately cries out: "There is a shooter," and everyone started to disperse. Along the way, everybody was trying to help one another.

A young man, Matt Mika, was hit severely in the side of his chest and out the front of his chest. STEVE went down, and he was crawling towards the outfield. Then he came to a stop, and there he lay.

In the meantime, everyone else was running to try and get out on the first-base side, diving into the dugout, which served as a bunker, as the shooter eventually started shooting above the dugout. You can see the bullet holes there today.

We were blessed that David and Crystal were there as well as the Alexandria Police ultimately. They were both hit, actually, but they were there and saved our lives.

I had changed my mind. For some reason, after I had batting practice, I was on my way back to the outfield. I changed my mind and went down to the batting cage, which is outside the fence of the field on the first-base side.

□ 1830

The shooter started on the third-base side.

A shot rang out at about 7 o'clock in the morning. I got down on the ground.

I served as a combat surgeon in Iraq. My instincts kicked in, and I am thinking: Who is doing the shooting? How many people are doing the shooting?

God put me in a place where I could see the shooter, and I could see the Capitol Police. I could see where everyone was, including STEVE. Thank God for that. I thank God for that. When they eventually took him down, I was able to run out to STEVE.

There were 136 rounds fired that day. Most people don't know that. This went on for a while. Most people think a guy came along and fired a shot. No, it was far more than that.

When I got to STEVE, I was able to recognize that he was hurt worse than people might have thought because he was bleeding internally. We were able to slow down his bleeding. The rest is history, and he was able to make it to the hospital. When he got to the hospital, he no longer had blood pressure, but they were able to save his life.

A lot of miracles and a lot of sacrifices were made. I have always said it is kind of interesting that it happened around a baseball game because baseball is the only sport I know that has a play called a sacrifice where you give of yourself to advance another. I saw so

many people on the field that day doing whatever they could to help those who were hit.

Paul Ryan came on the floor that day and said: "An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us."

I agree. We are fortunate to be here today, all of us. That is part of what we want to talk about today is how grateful we are to God for the divine intervention that occurred for so many as we tell our story. It could have been far worse.

To think that if STEVE SCALISE wasn't there, there would have been no Capitol Police, and this man could have walked onto that field and killed up to 20 or 30 Members of Congress and staff, possibly changing the balance of power in the House of Representatives in one morning.

I contend that is an insurrection. That is an insurrection, but we survived. We are grateful. We stand here today grateful, and we don't want this day to be pushed aside in the books of history. This is bigger than that. God was on our side.

We did everything we could for each other on that day, and that is an important message that we want to share with Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now introduce the manager of our baseball team—after a very successful stewardship of the baseball game last night. This is Representative ROGER WILLIAMS of Texas, and I shared with him how someone last night before the game asked me, when this game comes around, do you think of the events of that day? I said that I think of the events of that day every day of my life.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. It is special to be here tonight, and I thank my friend for calling us together to remember this day.

To me, it is like it was yesterday. I got up that morning just like we all did, got ready, and went to practice. My situation was that I was hitting ground balls to TRENT KELLY. I finished with TRENT and went around and started hitting balls. I said to SCALISE: "I am coming at you."

I remember I threw the ball up, and as soon as I hit it with the bat to SCALISE, a shot went off. Little did I know that the shooter was probably 30 feet or 20 feet behind me. I did not know that. A shot went off, and TRENT KELLY yelled: "He has got a gun. Head for cover."

When he said that, my instincts told me to get to the dugout. Fortunately for all of us, the dugouts were dugouts. They were dug into the ground, not like today where they are flat.

I remember I ran to the dugout and jumped, and it was like jumping into a swimming pool with no water. I remember as I was in the air heading into the dugout, what went through my mind was: I am not surprised because of the anger we have up here.

When I hit the dugout, I slid all the way on the concrete to the dugout and slid into the arms of two of my teammates, Jeff Flake and Mo Brooks. We three were in the corner, and as BRAD said, this guy was firing. There were actually some shells going into the dugout.

Two of the coaches, Larry Hardy and Donnie Watson, were in that dugout. We were all trying to stay away from the action.

Out of nowhere came my aide who worked for me and who came with me to every batting practice, Zach Barth, and Zach had been in center field shagging balls.

When the shooting started, he ran to the right-field foul pole to get as far away as he could from the shooter, but the shooter followed him and shot at him 10 times and missed him. Zach decided the only way he was going to stay alive was to get to the dugout, and he ran to the dugout.

During that running from the right-field line to the dugout, he got shot in the leg. He dove into the dugout, as I did, not knowing I was there. He dove into the dugout and dove right into my arms. At that moment, you had a bonding of a 67-year-old man and a 24-year-old kid. I held him in my arms, and he was saying: "I'm hit, I'm hit."

Mo Brooks, Jeff Flake, and I were there. We didn't know what to do. We didn't have the experience that Dr. WENSTRUP and others had had, but God kicked in. Mo Brooks removed his belt, and we tightened it around his leg to stop the bleeding. We all hunkered down.

Then we heard that SCALISE was down. We couldn't see it. We were in the dugout, but we heard that STEVE had been hit.

These shots were going off, and we didn't hear anything from the Capitol Police. In our situation, we thought they had probably been killed. We decided if this guy came around where we were, we were going to charge him. Maybe it would work, maybe it wouldn't, but we had made that commitment to each other that we would do that.

Then, we heard the sirens, and we were praying for sirens. When you are praying for sirens, Mr. Speaker, it takes a long time, but we heard the sirens, which told us people knew we were in trouble. It was the Arlington Police. When they got there, we heard shooting. It was not just an AK-47 going off. We heard 9 millimeters that were going off.

We praised God for Crystal Griner and David Bailey. I remember being in the dugout and looking up, and David Bailey was down in the dugout and shooting like this at the perpetrator to keep him from coming around to the rest of us.

Finally, it ended. I remember somebody started yelling: "Everybody out of the dugout. Everybody out of the dugout."

I told the guys I was with: "I'm not getting out of the dugout. I don't know who that is. I am staying here."

About that time, we saw the police, and we got out of the dugout. A helicopter, I think, had come to get STEVE, if I remember. There was a lot of chaos. People gathered around together. Dr. WENSTRUP saw me, and I had been injured in the ankle, and he called an ambulance for me and said: "Get him to the hospital."

It was the first time I had ever been in an ambulance, and they took me to the hospital. That night I was in the hospital, and BRAD came to see me. I will never forget that. President Trump called me, and Vice President Pence called me. He said: "Should we play the game tomorrow?" I said: "Absolutely. We can't let this end like this."

In my situation, I had got hit with shrapnel, and Dr. WENSTRUP knows exactly what I had, but I had a lot of treatment. There was a decision made that if I didn't get better in 2 weeks that I might lose my leg.

It was a life-changer for all of us. STEVE SCALISE and BRAD WENSTRUP showed courage like I have never seen. Even today, they show that courage. We have—what?—25 guys and gals. We all have our story, and everybody did their thing.

There were angels that day, the angel that my friend talked about, and the angel was as small as something as David Bailey's cell phone.

David reached to get his cell phone and moved it up. Because David thought we were surrounded by ISIS, which would have been another whole story, he reached for it and called for help and got hit. He got hit in the phone.

If it hadn't hit his phone, it might have hit him in the side, and it might have been a whole different story. He may not have made it.

I think that was an angel. I think the lock was an angel. It reminded me God was in charge. It could have been just the opposite.

I remember in the dugout, as the shooting was going on, two things went through my mind. First of all, people asked me: "ROGER, are you afraid to die." I was not afraid of dying, but I did hope that my wife remembered I want the song, "Put me in, coach, I'm ready to play today" at my funeral, and I wanted to make sure I made it because I had a granddaughter coming in October.

God was in charge. He took care of us. The perpetrator paid for his act. The Arlington Police saved us; David Bailey saved us; and Crystal Griner saved us. For that, we are all owing to them for the rest of our lives.

It is not often you get to hug somebody who saved your life and be able to thank him like we were able to.

It is a day I will never forget, but like BRAD and the others said, it just doesn't come along on this day, you wake up every morning thinking about

it. Every time we have baseball practice, you think about it.

Those of us who were there wear bracelets. We wear bracelets today that have the date of the shooting and say, "In God We Trust."

It is a day I will never forget. I am thankful to God for letting us have another chance.

As BRAD said, there were several articles written about the shooting. One article I read talked about if it had gone just the opposite, things politically and things in the world would have been much different. But they weren't.

Because of people like David Bailey, Crystal Griner, BRAD, and others, and the Arlington Police, I get to see my granddaughter. I get to still coach the baseball team. I get to still be in Congress. I get to still love my wife. For that, I am grateful.

At the end of the day, we can do better than this. People should not be that angry, and that is a goal we should have as we are in Congress, to agree to disagree and not go out and kill people.

I will just end this with the way I end all of my speeches: In God we trust. Praise the Lord, and God bless America.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I thank ROGER for his words. I greatly appreciate them.

Now, we will hear from BARRY LOUDERMILK, who was there that day and was one of several who not only was there and survived but participated in helping others throughout that entire time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK).

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for this moment.

Mr. Speaker, I think back to that day. At noon, when we gathered in this Chamber, I sat right over here in the front row. Speaker Paul Ryan went to the podium, and as was said already, he said that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us.

As I look around the Chamber, not much has changed from that day to today. The carpet is the same. The chairs are the same. Some of the people are the same, but none of us who were on the field that day are the same. It has had an impact on all of us.

As you just heard Coach WILLIAMS tell his story, Mr. Speaker, we all have the same story but different perspectives. Some of it is that, physically, we were in different locations, as I was in a different location than Representative WENSTRUP, who was in a different location than our coach, but we all experienced the same thing.

One thing that you will hear, Mr. Speaker, that is consistent are the miracles that happened that day. One of the things that this has had an impact on me, as we have all dealt with some level of traumatic stress afterward, but this has built my faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says that "faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen."

□ 1845

None of us saw angels on the field deflecting bullets that day. None of us were there when an angel spoke to the groundskeeper the night before and impressed upon him to lock the gate on the third-base side of that field. Had he not called a groundskeeper at 9 o'clock the evening before our practice and had not chain-locked that gate, that shooter would have gotten on the field, and it would have been a different story. We didn't see the angels conducting the miracles, but the evidence was there.

I was standing at home plate. I had just put on a batting helmet, and I was waiting on my turn to step into the batter's box and take some live pitching. Rodney Davis was there ahead of us, and he was hitting. As I was standing there, I heard the distinct sound of the report of a firearm.

Now, where I live in Georgia, that is not unusual. When I am working in the backyard, I hear shots all the time of people sighting in their rifles, doing target practicing. I didn't think much about it at the moment, but then I realized I am not at home in Georgia, but I am in Alexandria, Virginia. Why am I hearing a gunshot? The next sound I heard was our third baseman, TRENT KELLY, holler: "He's got a gun. Run."

At that moment, I started running up the first baseline. Many of my colleagues, as you heard, went into the dugout, but, as one of the veterans, immediately my training kicked in, and I thought: This is not a great place to go in case the shooter gets on the field. However, to get off the field would expose me longer, but I decided to head past the dugout and go out the gate.

As I am running, I see the ground erupting on each side of me, and I realized that the shooter was targeting me at that moment. As I reached the gate, I turned to go out of the field, and I heard the sound of a round hitting the fence post next to me.

Right outside the gate, about 20 feet outside the gate, is a wooden shed. My training started coming back to me: When you are under assault, seek concealment. Find the aggressor. If you have a means to fight back, fight back. If not, plan an escape route and get to safety.

Those things were running through my mind. I saw the shed. I went behind the shed, but I couldn't see where the shooter was because he was down the first baseline. I needed to get to where I could see the shooter.

As I rounded the corner of the shed where I am looking back down toward the backstop, that is when I saw one of their staff members, Matt Mika, walk around the other side of the shed, already covered in blood, and lay down next to the Capitol Police SUV.

At that moment, I realized: I can't escape now. I have a colleague who is down. I have to stay and help him.

I jumped up and started to run to him when Brian Kelly, another staff member who had gone around the side of the shed with me, hollered: "Barry, get down. Get down."

As I went down to my knees, I heard the sound of a bullet go right past my head and hit the shed next to me. I didn't realize it, but the shooter had come around the back of the backstop and had targeted where I was and Brian Kelly.

As I went down, I saw David Bailey and Crystal Griner come around the back of the SUV, both of them trying to engage with the shooter. Within a couple of moments, the shooter came around the backstop, was next to a concrete building, and started shooting underneath the SUV. One of the rounds hit Crystal Griner in the ankle, and I saw her immediately go down.

David Bailey then would walk out and expose himself so the shooter would turn and start targeting him to give us an opportunity to hopefully get to Matt Mika and Crystal Griner. However, every time we would start to try to move up to help them, he would turn and start shooting back at us again. What seemed like an eternity, the gunfire was going over and over again. Bullets would run the ground right next to us, but we stayed there. Brian Kelly and I stayed there because I wasn't going to leave Matt alone.

Finally, I saw David Bailey's pants flutter, and he started to limp, and I realized he had just taken a round in the leg. As we found out later, he had actually taken some shrapnel where a bullet ricocheted off of a car's wheel.

I realized that, if David Bailey goes down, the shooter is coming directly to us. Within a few moments, we heard another distinct sound of a different type of firearm. The Alexandria Police had arrived, but, as I stood there and I looked, David Bailey fully exposed himself as the shooter came around the other side of this concrete building and was standing there shooting at David Bailey as he was returning fire saying: "Drop the weapon. Drop the weapon. Drop the weapon."

It was about that moment the Alexandria Police then took down the shooter.

My immediate reaction was to go to Matt Mika and help him. With a gaping hole in his chest, I thought I could do more damage than good trying to put pressure on it, but I knew one thing I could do: I could pray for him. I laid my hands on Matt, and we prayed. I don't remember what I said that day.

Then I realized the SUV has to have a medical kit in it, so I asked Crystal Griner: "Do you have a medical bag?"

She said: "Yes. It's in the back."

I got up, and I ran around. By the time I pulled the medical bag out, I was astonished. When I came back around the SUV, the paramedics were already there with Matt Mika. I was surprised they were there that fast.

I didn't realize STEVE SCALISE had been shot at that moment, but I looked, and there was a crowd gathered out on the field, and someone told me he was there.

I ran out to the field, and I dropped the bag off to BRAD and the others who

were on the field. I looked, and I don't know how he got there, but David Bailey was there checking on STEVE SCALISE. He still didn't realize he had been hit in the leg, and he was trying to walk off the field by himself, so I helped David walk off the field. That was one of the most memorable moments.

As others have said, if it had not been for the heroism of David Bailey and Crystal Griner, we would not be here today. If it wasn't for the brotherhood and the camaraderie of all of us supporting each other, things would be a lot different here today, as well.

I think it is interesting that we are discussing this just a few days after the 80th anniversary of D-day. My father was a medic in World War II, and he landed at D-day. One of the things that he used to tell me as child was: "Friends who share a foxhole are brothers for life."

There is a bond between all of us here that cannot be broken and cannot be shaken. Did that day change me? Yes. I had the choice to let it negatively affect me or to positively affect my future. I chose the positive. Look for the positive. Make positive change.

I believe that we have done that. We are stronger because of it. I think we are wiser for it, but we are also more dedicated to one another to see each other through these things. Regardless of when some of us leave this great institution, we will never spiritually leave one another.

God bless all of you and thank you.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Thank you very much, BARRY. I am grateful for you bringing that bag of medical supplies from the Capitol Police van because there were things in there I needed, and we were able to put a clotting bandage on, use a better tourniquet than a belt, and we started supplying liquids to STEVE to help sustain him.

Also helping me right there was Mr. GARY PALMER. Next, we are going to hear from Mr. PALMER.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, BRAD, for giving us this opportunity to reflect on the events of June 14, 2017. Regardless of what we do the rest of our lives, that day will bind us together, those who were there that day.

The interesting thing is, the day before, I saw the man who attacked us. He was sitting in the bleachers behind the backstop looking, in my opinion, very distressed. I thought about going over and talking with him, but we were trying to get to practice and get practice started, so I didn't see him again until later.

As Congressman DUNCAN related, I was actually over at second base with SCALISE when DUNCAN and Ron DeSantis left. TRENT KELLY was already over at third base, so I moved over to shortstop.

Our practices are a lot of banter back and forth at each other. It is a lot of fun, a lot of ragging each other. All that was going on, and then I heard a sharp crack. I immediately recognized it as a gunshot.

I yelled at TRENT KELLY that it was a gunshot, and Trent said: "I know."

The bullet had whizzed by him. By the providence of God and by an act of God, that bullet had struck a link in the chain link fence.

The shooter, after he had asked DUNCAN if we were Republicans or Democrats, walked over to his van. He had been living in his van for about 3 months and parked in the parking lot of the YMCA across the street from the field. They were doing some construction. There were some little containers there that blocked our view of anyone approaching from that side. He came up on the outfield end of the third-base dugout and, maybe about 4 feet, 5 feet from the fence, fired that first shot.

There was a few seconds of hesitation before anything else happened. It was almost like it was just a single shot. When I yelled out at TRENT, TRENT turned around and saw him, and he yelled out: "He's got a gun. Get off the field."

Everyone was kind of stunned. Things just kind of froze for a moment until the gunfire erupted. Thank God the third-base gate was closed, but the only open gate was on the first-base side, and so we were all running in that direction. I remember seeing General JACK BERGMAN lying flat on the ground up by home plate along with Mike Bishop from Michigan, others scrambling to get into the dugout.

I saw SCALISE get hit. I knew he was hit low. I didn't know where, but I knew he was hit low because of the way he fell. As I was running across the infield trying to get off the field, I had two thoughts that went through my mind. One was: If today is the day, I am ready. Then I thought: I wonder what it will feel like.

As I got off the field, I took cover behind a big oak tree that was really between where the little building where BARRY LOUDERMILK and the other guys had taken shelter and that concrete block building where the shooter had taken a position.

I saw Crystal Griner on the ground. From the blood on her leg, I thought she was shot in the leg. It turned out she was shot through the ankle. She was trying to pull herself up toward the front wheel well of the SUV to, I think, try to get in a position to return fire.

Behind the oak tree was TRENT KELLY and JOHN MOOLENAAR from Michigan. I don't know who said it, but someone said we needed to pull back to a concrete block building behind us, where the concession stands were and where the restrooms were. When I pulled back, got back there, I took a position beside BRAD WENSTRUP.

BRAD and I were at that corner, and SCALISE had dragged himself with his hands and arms out of the infield out in the outfield. When he started doing that, when I was still by the oak trees, he kept raising up trying to look. I think he was trying to see where he was shot.

I started yelling at him to get down, get down, because bullets were flying everywhere. When he got out in the outfield, he just lay quietly, and BRAD would yell out at him: "Raise your hand," for a show of life. STEVE would raise his hand. We were praying that this would end so that we could get to STEVE in time to give aid.

□ 1900

Thankfully, someone yelled out, "He's down. He's down." There were about—what, BRAD?—five or six of us who got out there.

When I saw where he was shot, I knew he was in trouble. I knew there would be bone fragments. I knew there would be lead fragments. I also knew that I had no clue what to do other than put pressure on the wound.

BARRY LOUDERMILK brought the first aid kit out and gave it to me, and I opened it up and was providing BRAD with whatever materials that we could find in the bag. BRAD fashioned a lower-body tourniquet by getting SCALISE's baseball belt off, and Brian Kelly took his shirt off and was able to make that tourniquet.

When the EMT showed up, they actually had one. It was my understanding that BRAD was the only one who knew how to put it on expertly, and he got it on. That is, in my opinion, what saved STEVE's life.

These are individual actions that I think were guided by the hand of God because there is not another explanation for why 136 rounds were fired at people congregated like we were and five people were hit, five victims, but none of them died. The only person who died that day was the shooter.

The other thing that struck me was the Members' reaction. There was nobody screaming, nobody panicked. Now, you hear a lot of times what people talk about in combat or in these types of situations—police officers talk about this—that time slows down. It just seemed like everything was so focused. As soon as the shooter was down, our Members sprang into action, helping each other.

I was so proud of how our guys responded and didn't panic because it was certainly a situation where I think most people would have panicked.

Congressman LOUDERMILK mentioned David Bailey being wounded. When Bailey came out to be by the side of STEVE SCALISE, I offered to try to tend to his wound, and he refused treatment. He would not leave the side of STEVE SCALISE.

The epilogue, I guess, of this is how it has affected us, and I think it has made our bond even stronger. As I said at the very beginning, we are bound together for life. It is a wonderful relationship that we have with each other as Members of Congress, as members of the Republican baseball team, but this is an event that defines us in many respects.

I will never forget it, but the epilogue is the disappointing part of the

story. There is no doubt in my mind this was an act of political violence. It was clearly an attempt, a planned attempt, to kill Republican Members of Congress.

We had a briefing by the FBI. When STEVE SCALISE had gotten out of rehab—that was several months after the shooting—they gathered us in a room to have the FBI give us the report, and they told us that this was an act of an individual attempting to commit suicide by police.

I want you to remember that both the Capitol Police officers were shot. When the Alexandria police showed up and fired on him initially, he returned fire on them. If this was his intention to commit suicide by cop, he wouldn't have been firing on them. He came there to kill Republicans.

It was one of the most shameful days, in my opinion, for the FBI to come before us, with STEVE SCALISE sitting in a scooter because he was still not able to walk, sitting right in front of him to read a report to us that wanted to describe this, categorize this, as an attempted suicide.

I am so grateful to BRAD WENSTRUP, who has refused to accept that and has continued to pursue the truth and to get the FBI to classify this as what it was. The truth needs to be told, but there is also more to the story.

There is another part of this story, too. When the ambulance arrived to take SCALISE to George Washington Hospital, there was so much traffic that it became evident that because, as BRAD pointed out, STEVE's blood pressure was basically zero, he had minutes, not hours.

It was evident they were not going to get there. A helicopter flew over. I believe it was a Department of the Interior helicopter. They radioed the helicopter to land at the baseball field, and it did. They took STEVE out of the ambulance and put him in the helicopter. The only place that had a pad for the helicopter to land was MedStar Hospital.

They took him there, and it just so happened—again, I believe the providence of God—one of the top trauma surgeons in the country was on call. Still, for 2 days, we didn't know if STEVE was going to make it.

When he did his rehab—STEVE is a huge LSU fan—some of us even went to great lengths to encourage him by putting on an LSU cap. As someone who, in my case, played football at Alabama, that was a one-time event. I told STEVE I would never do that again, but I knew how much LSU football meant to him.

It happened that that fall, LSU was playing at the University of Alabama, so I called the University and asked them to invite STEVE SCALISE to be our guest at that game because STEVE is the kind of guy who you give him an objective, and he will achieve it.

I had the honor of hand-delivering a letter of invitation from Coach Nick Saban to STEVE in the hospital. Coach

Saban and STEVE knew each other from the time when Saban was the head coach at LSU.

I sat there as he ripped open the envelope and read the letter, and STEVE SCALISE was at the University of Alabama for the LSU-Alabama football game. We beat them, which we usually do.

It was one of the great moments for me to go through this tragic event, see this guy fight for his life, achieve an objective, come back on this floor, stand at this microphone, and give one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I think we all understand what happened that day. We understand the condition of our country right now, the anger, the division, that could potentially tear us apart. I don't think we need to be reminded of the responsibility we have in conducting the affairs of the governance of this country in a way that not only allows us to continue to function as a nation, but restores respect for the Chamber, restores respect for the separation of powers, restores respect for our ability to disagree but still live together.

Tomorrow, as we said, is the 7-year anniversary of that event. I know, as my colleagues have all said, it is a day we will never forget, but I hope, as tragic as that day was, that it will serve as a reminder to every Member of this body, Democrat and Republican, that we have a responsibility in how we conduct our business and how we present our arguments and that we dedicate ourselves to trying to bring unity back to a country that right now is just stricken with anger and malice that, if we don't deal with it properly, is going to do enormous harm to our ability to live together, to govern together, and to give those who follow us an opportunity to live in what is the greatest country in the history of the world.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PALMER, and I thank all of my colleagues who participated in this event tonight. People ask me what my greatest memory of my time in Congress is. I tell people, it is the day that STEVE SCALISE walked back on this floor. It truly is.

I thank those who are watching and listening tonight. I encourage people to read STEVE's book. Maybe I shouldn't say this on the floor, I don't know, but it is a great book. It really sums up all the miracles of the day. It is called "Back in the Game."

Look, you have heard from a lot of people tonight very touching stories, sentimental to all of us, a lot of lessons learned, but it is pretty interesting if you listen to everybody, you recognize that we went to a baseball practice and, as a result, carved out our chapter in history and affirmed our faith in God.

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

REMEMBER WHY WE SERVE THE PEOPLE

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

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen who were just speaking on the floor, my friend, Mr. WENSTRUP, and my friend, Mr. PALMER, for what they were doing in reminding the American people what happened 7 years ago.

It too easily gets glossed over for the politically motivated attack on Members of Congress that it was. A lot of statements are made about January 6, about things that have occurred, but not enough is made about what happened that day when someone was targeting our friends, our colleagues, for political reasons. It gets, frankly, ignored, with all due respect, by some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

STEVE SCALISE and everybody who was a part of it stand as, I think, a stark reminder of what is great and good about those who serve here who are willing to move forward for the good of the country.

The country shouldn't forget about what happened and forget what those gentlemen on that field went through and why that is so critically important. I thank them for that, and I certainly thank them for their continued service.

I do think it is really important that we remember, as a body, in that vein, why we are here. Why do we convene as a Congress? Why do we come here and engage from all over the country, from 50 States, and fly in here each week and conduct business?

Too often, it turns into a clock-punching exercise where people come in, fly in, do their votes, go to some meeting, go to some fundraiser, go to some event, go to a quick hearing, do their thing, go back, vote, and go home.

Yet, what we have to remember when we come here is that we are supposed to be stopping for a moment and remembering that we are representing 750,000-odd Americans each and that we have an obligation to fight for them and do what we said we would do when we ran for office to represent them in the first place.

When I go all over the country, doing campaign events or even a bunch of personal business, I am reminded that a lot of American people do watch what we say here. A lot of people do watch videos that get circulated around on social media.

From time to time, frankly, quite often, people bring up to me a speech that I gave about 6 months ago in which I asked rhetorically, but importantly and emphatically, to name one thing that we have done, name one thing that we accomplished. I was talking to Republican colleagues, in particular.

I stand behind that question. It is an important question to ask. Of course, it is often clipped to leave out the important part, which was to name one thing we have accomplished besides doing something that is equivalent to Democrat-lite or something that is the soft version of what our Democratic colleagues want to do.

□ 1915

I will remind people, because it is important, what we have been able to accomplish as a united Republican Party, under now the leadership of two Speakers over the last 18 months.

A little over a year ago, we passed the Limit, Save, Grow Act in which we had Republicans unite across the body to pass an increase in the debt ceiling that was relatively modest, \$1.5 trillion is, sadly, relatively modest, in exchange for very significant policy changes to get our country on the right track.

We repealed the so-called Inflation Reduction Act subsidies that are subsidizing and empowering multibillion-dollar corporations, empowering China, and undermining our ability to produce energy effectively.

We implemented spending caps and put them in place to reduce the size and scope of government and to limit the size of discretionary spending and to cut back on the weaponized government at the Department of Justice and at the FBI and at the Department of Education and in so many other different agencies across the bureaucracy.

We passed the REINS Act to rein in the regulatory state and to say that if regulations are going to have a certain impact, they must be approved by Congress. We implemented work requirements on things like SNAP and Medicaid. We worked together to try to transform this country as we told the American people we would do.

We did that together. We united to do it. Again, we modestly increased the debt ceiling, modestly relatively speaking, in exchange for actual policy changes to take our country back and put it on the right path. We did that.

We passed a strong border security bill that effectively said you will be detained, as our current law contemplates, or you will be turned away. It is that simple.

Most Americans support that. You will be detained if you have some sort of a claim, asylum claim or something else or some humanitarian exception, but you will be detained for the full time until we adjudicate it, or you will be turned away. That is effectively what we passed in what we call H.R. 2, our second big bill number.

H.R. 2, is our border security plan that we, Republicans, united to pass. Again, for the first time in decades, if not ever, this body came together and we passed a bill that would legitimately secure the border of the United States and force the hand of an administration that is refusing to secure the border while our country is being undermined and endangered.