

CELEBRATING NEW YORK KNICKS

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

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and celebrate with the New York Knicks on their historic NBA finals win.

After 53 years of hoping each season would be the one, the Knicks are officially the 2025–2026 NBA champions.

From watching their 1973 championship when I was a teenager to sharing this moment with my family, like many New Yorkers and fans across the world, we have waited a long time for this moment.

I am proud that my home area has a special connection to this team. New York CD-16 is home to the Knicks' practice facility in Tarrytown, their Westchester Knicks G-League team, and many players, coaches, and families who live in my district, including the great Jalen Brunson. The heart of Knicks fans, coupled with the team's determination, charisma, and hard work on the court, represents the best of our district and the best of New York.

Mr. Speaker, from the floor of the House of Representatives, I say: Go New York, Go New York, Go. Go Knicks. I congratulate them on a historic championship win.

□ 1940

RECOGNIZING SIMONE KELLY

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

Ms. MEJIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the courage and selflessness of Simone Kelly of South Orange, New Jersey.

During the New York Knicks championship parade, amongst a crowd of 2 million fans, Simone noticed a man climbing onto a roof of a subway station entrance. He was wobbling and swaying until he fell unconscious.

Simone immediately sprung into action. An off-duty EMT with the South Orange Volunteer Rescue Squad, Simone climbed onto that roof, assessed the situation, and administered Narcan, helping to revive the unconscious man until emergency responders arrived.

Her quick thinking, training, and commitment to serve others saved a life that day.

Just as important, Simone reminded us that public service is not confined to a shift, a uniform, or a title. It is a calling that guides people.

New Jersey is proud of Simone Kelly. Her actions embody the very best of our communities, and I thank her for her remarkable service.

JUNETEENTH

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Juneteenth reminds us of the importance of strength, faith, and perseverance.

Across eastern North Carolina, from our smallest towns to our most rural communities, we celebrated Juneteenth, honored history, and remembered the generations who kept believing in a brighter future.

Juneteenth reminds us that we must keep the American Dream within reach for everyone, which is possible when we stand together, work together, and believe together. We must remain committed to building communities where every child, every family, and every neighbor has the opportunity to succeed.

It is up to us to allow freedom to ring.

GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. MCCLELLAN of Virginia was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to anchor this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour to speak directly to the American people about Gun Violence Awareness Month.

We are here to address the public health crisis facing not only the constituents of the Congressional Black Caucus but all Americans. Gun violence is an everyday reality that robs loved ones, erodes our sense of security, and shortens too many bright futures.

Every year, roughly 44,000 people in the United States die of gun-related injuries. In 2023, the most recent year for which the CDC provided complete data, 46,728 people died from gun-related injuries.

Black men ages 15 to 34 are most at risk, with firearm homicide rates at 22.6 per 100,000.

White males, particularly those who are 65 and older, have been disproportionately impacted by firearm suicides at a rate of 17.8 per 100,000.

In my own State of Virginia, gun violence kills over 1,200 people and wounds over 1,600 people. Suicides are 66 percent of those deaths.

In Richmond alone, where I live, 221 people were shot in 2025. While that number is the lowest on record since 2015, it is still too high.

These statistics are jarring, but they are more than just statistics. Each

number is a personal tragedy—mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, friends, and loved ones whose lives were cut short due to gun violence, like 23-year-old Genesis Jones of Petersburg, Virginia, who was killed while celebrating her brother's 25th birthday when a large altercation in the area led to gunfire that killed her and 42-year-old Dominic Antoine Jackson. They died because too many people resort to gun violence to resolve what was once done by fists.

Barbie Perez, 28 years old, was shot multiple times by the father of her child during an argument. He reportedly pushed Perez, and then the argument moved outside. He went to his car and then came back, pulled out a shotgun, and shot Perez in the leg and chest. Perez' mother saw him press the gun against her back and fire more rounds before putting the car in reverse and leaving the neighborhood.

Sierra Jenkins, a 25-year-old journalist at the Virginian-Pilot and Daily Press, was one of three people killed and five people shot in a shooting in downtown Norfolk after an argument broke out.

Increasingly, gun violence takes our children, becoming the number one cause of death for teens and children, like Zion Terry, the 18-year-old John Marshall student just weeks away from graduating, and his 14-year-old sister from Henderson Middle School, Sadie Terry, both killed by Sadie's father in a fit of rage.

Marquan Mitchell-Nash, my son's classmate, 1 week after I stood on this floor and took my oath of office, was killed accidentally by a gun he and his friends were using as a prop while filming a music video.

Shawn Jackson, an 18-year-old Huguenot High School student, and his stepfather, Lorenzo Smith, were killed moments after Shawn received his high school diploma because of a beef that started on Instagram and ended at that ceremony.

Samiyah "Mimy" Yellardy, a 17-year-old George Wythe High School student, was shot and killed in her own home on early Sunday morning during spring break.

McKenna Young, an 11-year-old, and 1-year-old Landrie Harris were both found with apparent gunshot wounds inside their Memphis home, where their mother was found with stab wounds.

These deaths impact families, but they impact entire communities. We cannot allow this violence to become normalized. We must stand together to advance commonsense gun safety legislation, invest in gun community violence intervention programs, and address the root causes that perpetrate this cycle of harm.

Year after year, we go back to our districts, and we talk to community leaders, faith leaders, and families about the real threats that they face. The overwhelming consensus is that Congress must pass comprehensive,

commonsense gun safety legislation if things are ever going to get better, because standing in the well for a moment of silence and thoughts and prayers after each death is not enough.

As a State legislator, I was proud to take action to address this crisis, championing investment in the Firearm Violence and Intervention and Prevention Fund, which provided a pathway to research, demographics, and trends and implemented evidence-based solutions to address the root causes of gun violence, because those causes in the city of Richmond may be different than in Chesterfield, Norfolk, Roanoke, or anywhere else.

I led the senate to pass a bill to establish a center that takes a comprehensive approach by empowering communities to address those root causes in all its forms, and now I am working at the Federal level. We had a similar program that the White House set up under the Biden-Harris administration to work with communities to address the root causes of gun violence in those communities through evidence-based research. Now, it is gone.

I don't even know if the CDC is still tracking the data necessary on these deaths, but as a member of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am committed to keeping our communities safe with these commonsense gun reform policies like universal background checks and gun trace data. Yet, the majority has failed to bring a single piece of gun violence legislation to the floor for a vote this Congress, even when there is bipartisan support for investing and addressing root causes of gun violence.

□ 1950

We are working against the backdrop of an administration whose Federal funding cuts actively prevent us from doing our jobs to reduce such violence.

Last year, the Trump administration terminated nearly 400 grants from the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which provided supported for everything from victim services to substance use and mental health treatment to juvenile justice and child protection.

These grants were initially valued at \$820 million over multiple years. And when the administration rescinded the remaining balances for these awards, they cost our communities an additional \$500 million and more lives.

The Trump administration then made deep cuts to OJP's Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative, the largest source of Federal funding for community violence intervention, even though it is popular on a bipartisan basis.

This funding was authorized by Congress and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022. Since then, over \$300 million was invested in addressing community violence intervention programming and research. Now, half of those investments have been cut.

The President's latest budget cuts more than \$500 million in funding to the DOJ's State and local grant programs, including restorative justice programs, community-based approaches to advancing justice, including zeroing out the community violence intervention programs. These programs are necessarily vital if we are going to intervene in the public health crisis of gun violence.

The Trump administration has also moved to rapidly and effectively reshape American gun policies, loosening restrictions, and putting more lives in danger.

This past April, ATF released 34 proposed and final rules that would severely deregulate the firearm industry. Last year's, you call it the big, beautiful bill, I call it the big ugly law, removed the \$200 silencer suppressor tax even though silencers and suppressors were outlawed decades ago on a bipartisan basis.

All this does is invite tragedy back into our communities. Again, we cannot allow violence to become normalized and an acceptable part of our daily lives. So I call on my colleagues to let this June, this Gun Violence Prevention Month, serve not only as a moment of awareness but a call to action to pass meaningful reform that will save lives, support survivors, and build safer communities for the next generation.

I thank each of my colleagues who will speak tonight. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois' Second District (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for convening us tonight on this extremely important topic. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, as we all know, there is a gun violence epidemic in our country. It is a public health crisis.

Yet, our President is actively making this crisis worse. I don't know if the Congresswoman realized this, but 10 years ago yesterday, KATHERINE CLARK, the late, great John Lewis, JOHN LARSON, David Cicilline, and myself led the sit-in on the floor because we could not get any movement to deal with gun violence prevention. I am proud to say the Democrats all participated in that sit-in that lasted almost 24 hours.

Nothing happened right away, but we were making a statement that needed to be made, and, eventually, we did get a Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. But we all know more needs to be done.

This past Juneteenth weekend, nearly 40 people were shot in Chicago, and 7 people died. What should have been a celebration of freedom turned into a horrific reminder that we are not free from gun violence. President Trump responded on Truth Social by claiming that he can make Chicago a safe city in one month.

Mr. President, you do have the power to make Chicago safer. Release the funding that you froze to provide support for community violence intervention organizations. You stole \$16 mil-

lion that should have gone to CBI organizations in Chicago. Those closer to the problem are closest to the solution. Give those funds back to our city.

You can also reopen the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. You can tell the ATF to overturn their 30 new rules that make it easier to traffic illegal guns and harder for law enforcement to investigate gun crimes.

I know that the President will not put forward any of these real solutions to gun violence because, frankly, he really doesn't care. Instead, he once again threatened the deployment of the National Guard to Chicago.

The National Guard will not make our cities safer, but it will cost taxpayers millions and millions and millions of dollars like it is doing in D.C.

Let's be truthful about the real reason why President Trump wants to deploy the National Guard. It is not to reduce crime. It is to instill fear and abuse his power. It is to reinforce ICE agents who have terrorized our city and targeted people based on the color of their skin.

For generations, Black communities have been burdened with the consequences of being underinvestigated and overpoliced. While gun violence became the leading cause of death for all children and teenagers in 2020, it has been the leading cause of death for Black children since 2006.

We talk about the death, but how many people and families have survived, and the mental and physical damage—everybody doesn't die, but the mental and physical damage of those survivors is vast.

Chicago has worked to reduce these efforts, and last summer, murders were at the lowest rate since 1965.

We have seen success because of our local efforts, our CBI programs, and our local police rebuilding trust with the community. We know there is more to be done: ban on assault weapons, safe storage, resources that help those organizations on the ground, and I can go on and on and on.

People deserve the right to be able to play in a park, ride on a bus, come out of choir practice, get off the bus, and get tea from Starbucks.

This is the only country in the developed world that has issues so severe as this.

We need a President and more Members of Congress to realize no one is truly safe until we are all safe, and we need to do more around gun violence prevention.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I said that gun violence is more than just statistics. Every death is someone's loved one.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia, (Mrs. MCBATH), the Representative for Georgia's Seventh District and someone touched by gun violence directly.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Virginia so very much for holding this Special Order hour on behalf of the Congressional

Black Caucus, but more so, because this is National Gun Violence Awareness Month, and I am very, very aware of this month.

I make time and effort every single year during this month to continue to highlight the scourge of gun violence in America as a public health crisis. I thank the gentlewoman very much for hosting this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Gun Violence Awareness Month to address a crisis that continues to devastate our families and communities all across our Nation.

For far too many Americans, especially Black Americans and other marginalized groups, gun violence is not an abstract policy debate. Gun violence is a daily threat, a lived reality, and, too often, a source of unimaginable pain and loss.

For me, this mission is deeply, deeply personal. Nearly 14 years ago, my son, Jordan, was taken from me by senseless gun violence. I know that I have told the story a thousand times on this floor to this body, and I will continue to do so because his life and his story do matter.

□ 2000

My son was simply going shopping with his friends, from one mall to the next. They stopped at a convenience store gas station to get chewing gum because my son Jordan said: If we are going to pick up girls at the next mall, we have to have fresh breath.

They stopped at a convenience store gas station in Jacksonville, Florida. Within 3½ minutes, a man drives up next to them and parks next to them, on the passenger's side. He labels the boys gangbangers and thugs, and racially profiles them because of the music that they were playing. He started a verbal altercation with the boys, in particular, my son, Jordan.

My son, as I had trained him to do, defended himself. He basically said: We are not bothering you. We are not doing anything wrong. We are just playing music. Can you just roll up your window?

This man proceeds to tell him: You can't talk to me that way.

He took his gun out of his glove box, got out of his car, and took a shooter's stance. As the boys were trying to move out of the line of fire and backing out of the parking lot, he took a shooter's stance and shot 10 bullets into their car.

Three of those bullets hit my son, and he lay dying in the back seat of the car, in his friend's arms. Thank God, the other boys were not hurt.

I recount this story over and over and over and over again because there is no measure of time that can dull this open wound and this pain. My son Jordan's memory inspires me to ensure that there is no other parent in this country who will ever have to endure what I have endured and what so many families in the United States continue to endure.

We often talk about the lives of people who are lost. We rarely acknowledge the lives saved and people who are still with us because someone intervened or because a program worked. As my colleague has expressed, all the work that we did with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act has saved lives. That is because the community stepped in before a trigger was actually pulled.

We can't quantify those victories, but we know that they matter. We know that they worked. They remind us that prevention is possible, but more so that prevention is absolutely necessary.

The pandemic revealed just how quickly gun violence can escalate. In 2020, the United States experienced the largest single-year increase in homicides in modern history. That spike was not inevitable. It was a warning about what happens when communities' safeguards and resources are strained, taken away, or diminished.

In 2021, we passed the American Rescue Plan Act. We delivered \$350 billion to State and local governments, including \$15 billion specifically for public safety and violence prevention.

These dollars helped cities hire crisis responders and people who were doing work for gun violence intervention on the ground. They were targeting those elements in our communities that precipitated a lot of the gun violence. They were expanding community violence intervention programs in America.

In 2022, we passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. It is the most significant, comprehensive gun violence legislation we have ever enacted in this country. It strengthened our background checks, cracked down on gun trafficking, and invested in mental health and community safety initiatives. These were meaningful steps forward. They were making a difference.

Yet, instead of building on these protections, the Trump administration has used the last 18 months to dismantle these safeguards and make it easier for dangerous individuals to have access to firearms.

These choices have put American lives at risk, and they undermine the progress the communities fought so hard to achieve.

Our work is far from finished. Gun violence remains one of the most urgent public health crises of our day. It is a public health crisis. We cannot allow the voices of our survivors, our families, and frontline communities to be drowned out or to be dismissed.

I remain committed to advancing legislation that protects our children, strengthens our neighborhoods, and prevents the next tragedy from happening. I am so proud to continue to fight alongside my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and gun sense champions here in Congress who have long led the charge for justice and equity.

Shortly after my son was murdered, I, along with other mothers of the

movement, as we were called—it was the mother of Trayvon Martin, the mother of Hadiya Pendleton, the mother of Eric Garner, the mother of Michael Brown, the mother of Dontre Hamilton, and, of course, my son, Jordan. We had the very rare opportunity to travel around the country with Secretary Clinton, who was then running in the 2016 campaign for President. We were allowed to campaign alongside her as the face of gun violence in America.

That is the first time in the history of any campaign that gun violence survivors and victims were allowed to tell their stories, were allowed to remind Americans of the scourge of gun violence, and that no one in this country, at any point in time, is immune from being hurt by unnecessary gun violence.

In this country, the industrialized United States of America, you are 25 times more likely to die by gun violence. In this country, our children are dying by gun violence, because it is the leading cause for them to die by unsecured firearms in households.

We are the most violent industrialized nation in the world. Our children suffer from the trauma of lockdown drills, not drills for tornadoes or hurricanes. They are traumatized by those alone, even if there is not an incident in their schools.

There is violence in every corner of the United States, in every district. Every Member in this body has constituents who have been hurt, maimed, affected, or influenced by gun violence.

We have domestic violence by gun, suicide by gun, child deaths by gun, and homicide by gun. Gun violence in America is a public health crisis, and it should be dealt with as such.

Gun violence prevention is not about infringing upon people's Second Amendment rights. It is about sensible gun ownership, about law-abiding citizens having access to firearms to hunt and to be gun enthusiasts, but also having a balance to make sure we are preventing people from being hurt, maimed, and suffering from gun violence.

□ 2010

We owe it, I owe it, to every family member touched by gun violence and to every family that we can still protect to meet this moment with courage and conviction.

People are crying out, and how dare we, this body, be deaf to it?

If we say we are going to be pro-life, pro-life isn't just about what happens in the womb. Pro-life is about existing life and people having the ability to live in their communities and their homes and our children to go to their schools and live in their neighborhoods without being afraid of being gunned down. That is pro-life.

So as a survivor of gun violence, I have vowed to my deceased son and to every survivor that I have met over the years to never ever let this body forget

and to never let anyone forget our responsibility to keeping them safe.

Mr. Speaker, I will do my part, and I pray that this body has the courage to do theirs.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Georgia for sharing her story and turning tragedy into action.

Mr. Speaker, it is every parent's worst nightmare that when your child leaves home, whether to go to school, the mall, to worship, to a park, to a birthday party, to a friend's house, walking down the street, jogging, riding a bike, bird watching, driving and turning into the wrong driveway, when you send them off, you never see them again because of the scourge of gun violence.

It is every parent's worst nightmare when the alert goes out about a mass shooting and you wonder: Is my child there?

It is every parent's worst nightmare when their child is in the middle of a mental health crisis and because it is all too easy for them to get access to a gun, that rather than getting the help they need from medical providers, they end their suffering with a gun.

Mr. Speaker, it is every parent's worst nightmare that when you marry off your child and the marriage goes wrong or the relationship, if they are not married, and in the midst of that conflict the person who professed to love your child the most takes their life in the ultimate act of betrayal and control.

I want to thank Congresswoman MCBATH for having the strength to turn her nightmare into action so no other parent has to live through it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY).

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Virginia for her powerful words and for hosting this Special Order, and I thank the Congressional Black Caucus. I certainly want to thank my colleague from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH). I had the chance to serve with her on the Judiciary Committee, and I know she feels this very deeply and very passionately and rightly so.

I think it is important for all of us to try to make sure that even if we haven't suffered a great loss like that, that we try to understand and remember the importance of the impact of what that kind of an event can do to a family, to a community, and what it has done to the country.

I am blessed with six kids, and they all live in the D.C. area. We meet together frequently on weekends. I am a grandfather, too. A few months back, my granddaughter was in a heated argument with her cousin. They are not the arguing type, so I kind of paused and started listening. I was trying to figure out: What are you all arguing about?

She looked at me and said: Well, we are trying to figure out the best way you should respond when an active shooter comes into your school.

She had her version of it, and he had his version. I just remember being sort of stunned by the whole thing because I am 65. I grew up in a different era, obviously. I am originally from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and Dale City, Virginia. They are two quiet towns, especially back in the sixties and seventies, at least on this kind of front. I went to schools where we had fire drills, but we didn't have active shooter drills. We are now at the point where schools are being approached and they are selling bulletproof blackboards, and they are selling bulletproof backpacks and the like. That is where our schools have come.

There have been debates about whether teachers should be armed or not. Although we have seen that having armed personnel at a school during an active shooter drill doesn't necessarily fix that problem, but that is kind of where we went with that.

I came up and didn't really know much about gun violence until I became a prosecutor, first here in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Attorney's Office. It just happened that I started that job in 1990, which was in the middle of the crack wars. D.C. was averaging somewhere in the neighborhood of 450 to 500 homicides per year. The numbers have jumped from when I was a kid. Murder was a front-page story, but it got so prevalent during that timeframe that sometimes they didn't report on a homicide. They didn't even make the paper. There were just so many coming in day after day after day after day. It was young people killing young people, young males in particular, usually over drug disputes, but sometimes not even that.

When I later became elected prosecutor in Prince George's County, I had cases that were kind of the same ilk. A guy cut in front of another guy in line. He was looking at my girl. He disrespected me. All of that was sufficient to kill somebody on the spot.

Those were young boys. Well, young men in some instances, late teens, early twenties. That is where we were as a country. That is where we, in some ways, remain as a country.

Just before I was elected State's attorney and was sworn into office, we had a double murder that took place in our community. What was special about this one was that these were two deputy sheriffs who had been killed, gunned down. They had been called to a family's house. A mother and a father were having trouble with their son, and they called because it was a mental health call.

The two officers, Arnaud and Magruder, came into the house, and they said: Well, he is down the hallway. So they walked down the hallway towards the bedroom not knowing that he had hidden the gun in his bedroom inside the speaker of the stereo system. As they came down the hall, he grabbed the gun, confronted them and shot both of them to death. Then he ran out of the house.

I had not even become State's attorney yet. I hadn't been sworn in yet, but going to that funeral was my first official act as State's attorney. Sadly, there were hundreds of more murders to come. We still have them. Crimes are coming down in Prince George's County, and crimes are coming down in Washington, D.C. Crimes are coming down across the country, but any murder is too many. As we just heard from our colleague from Georgia, that mother and that father never stopped grieving over the loss of that child, and rightly so.

When I got to Congress 3 years ago, one of the things I started trying to figure out was: What are the things that we can do to try and address this problem?

I recognize that Democrats and Republicans are in different places. We had an assault weapons ban in the United States in the nineties. It expired. Evidence seemed to show that there was some success from that, but our Republican colleagues then and Republicans across the country opposed it.

□ 2020

It has never been re-enacted. Are there common ground approaches to try and address this problem? Are there ways in which we can find a common ground approach to deal with some of these issues?

I looked around and thought if we can't do assault weapon bans, what about ghost guns? Ghost guns came out maybe not even 10 years ago. For those of you that don't know, ghost guns are guns that do not have serial numbers on them. They can't be identified. The reason they are popular, especially among criminals, is because you can use the gun and drop it. If you don't leave any fingerprint or DNA on it, they sure can't trace back through the gun to figure out who had it and who committed the murder.

Guess what happened. The use of ghost guns surged. Between 2017 and 2023, there was a 1,600 percent jump in the use of ghost guns at crime scenes. It went from 1,629 to 27,490 in a 6-year period.

What can we try and do about that? We can try to do legislation. We do legislation here in Congress, right? Let's try and do the legislation piece.

Democrats offered two bills to ban ghost guns and do it in different ways. Hundreds of Democrats signed on, not one Republican signed on to either bill, either piece of legislation to ban ghost guns.

That didn't work, but the crime, as you heard, continued to go up. The use of ghost guns in crimes continued to go up. It skyrocketed, really. The Biden administration said to the ATF, issue a regulation, base it on the Gun Control Act, which is the longstanding law that covers gun usage and the regulation of guns in the United States, and maybe that will help.

They issued the regulation about 2, 3 years ago at this point. My Republican

colleagues—I was on the Judiciary Committee at the time—railed against it. It is a horrible overreach, they said, by the Biden administration. It is an infringement on our constitutional rights, our Second Amendment rights. Of course, there were challenges. It was taken to court and worked its way up to the Supreme Court. Guess what happened at the Supreme Court: 7-2 margin in *Bondi v. Vanderstok*.

The Supreme Court said: We are going to uphold this regulation. We don't think it violates the Constitution. We are going to let it stand. That opinion was written by Justice Gorsuch. In fact, all three Trump Supreme Court appointees joined in the majority of that opinion. I thought, well, maybe that is a big step in the right direction.

Now I am on the Appropriations Committee, and guess what. Just a few weeks ago, the Republicans put out a bill and the bill contains language to undercut the enforcement of that regulation.

Now, why would they do that? We know that only criminals want to use ghost guns. There is no other purpose. If you are a law-abiding citizen, it doesn't matter if you have an identification number on it. It is just like a car. Cars have VIN numbers. Why can't guns have identification numbers? It is certainly useful for law enforcement. It can't be on those grounds, and it can't be constitutional grounds because the Trump Supreme Court by 7-2 vote just told them this does not violate the Second Amendment. They put out this reg, quietly.

I hope it doesn't pass in the Senate, but that is where it is now. They are trying to undercut it, even though it is constitutional. It is not just the ghost guns piece. It is other issues, too. One that I thought we would be able to find common ground on was suicide.

In 2026, we have 27,600 suicides by gun, 4,600 were veterans. Whether Democrats or Republicans, we all love veterans, right? Why wouldn't we want to support efforts to try and bring down suicides among veterans?

As you just heard a few minutes ago, many of the programs that are aimed at reducing gun violence, including for suicides, have been cut by the Trump administration. Matter fact, one of the first things the Trump administration did when they came into office was to eliminate grants that helped reduce gun violence across the country that had been proven to work over the past few years. Not only that, the President issued an executive order that removed the Surgeon General's advisory report on firearm violence because it used the term "public health crisis in America," I guess, which could it be any more obvious that this is a public health crisis. It is the number one cause of death in young people.

I remember having a debate with my Republican colleagues on the Judiciary Committee one time about whether it was number one or number two, and I

paused and said: Does it really matter? Is it okay if it is only the number two cause of death in the United States for our children? Isn't that sufficient for us to want to try and do something on this front?

The Trump administration also cut funding to address gun violence prevention, \$66 million for assistance for gun violence victims, \$82 million for law enforcement support and training and safety. Why would we cut those? The training piece, if you didn't know how important it was, you should really know after watching ICE in action in Minneapolis. The killings of Good and Pretti, among other acts of violence that took place at the hands of ICE agents in Minnesota and across the country, I think clearly demonstrate that those agents were not prepared for the type of policing that they were put out there to do, not at all.

They certainly weren't trained in things like the force continuum. In fact, many of them didn't even have the tools that you would use other than guns along the force continuum, no tasers and the like.

It is the same thing when they put the National Guard on the street. President Trump put them out in D.C., and I remember being out at dinner with my wife one day when they first came out. They were walking around in groups of four and five with M4s.

We were eating outdoors at a restaurant, so there were crowds of people all along the walkways. I thought about it and I said: M4s are so powerful that even if they shot the right guy and hit him, the bullet would keep going.

Now, when you are in warfare and you guys are facing each other, the soldiers are facing each other, that is one thing because if it goes through that guy, it is going to hit another bad guy behind them. But when you are in a crowded street like I was on the waterfront here in Washington, D.C., the last thing you want to have to use is an M4 because the collateral damage is not just collateral damage. It is human beings whose lives could be taken, even though they weren't doing anything but just walking along the waterfront enjoying the evening.

Let me say this, as well. I think that the goal, at least that I came here with, was to try and find ways to address gun violence. I thought ghost gun restrictions would be one way to go. Clearly, that was wrong. Let me try another angle on this. We put out a bill called Raise the Age, and the thinking on that was, if we raise the age from 18 to 21 for people purchasing assault weapons, they will be okay with that because it moved from 18 to 21 when Reagan was President. He supported it for handguns.

If we are going to have 21 for handguns, shouldn't we also have it for assault weapons? Why allow them to buy an AR-15, but they can't buy a 9 millimeter? I got zero cosponsors from the Republican side on that bill, this Con-

gress and last Congress. I can't get any of them to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I get it. I know there is a lot of political challenges here and, frankly, we will keep working at it, but I knew when Republican colleagues were shot and Democratic colleagues have been shot, when we have been victimized by gun violence and we still can't move on legislation to address gun violence, then I don't know that there is enough to make it happen. When it is people outside of this Chamber, other than us getting shot, is enough. I just don't know if that is ever going to be the case.

□ 2030

I think we have to continue to keep fighting and keep working to address this problem because the homicides keep happening, the bodies keep falling, the chalk lines around them keep being drawn, and the pools of blood oozing out of their bodies until the police get there to try to fix the problem that, in many instances, these guns are too powerful to allow them to be fixed.

Let's try to find a way to address this. Let's try to find a way to work together. Mr. Speaker, I know you are not going to agree to all the legislation that I would propose. I certainly don't agree with a lot that has been done by my Republican colleagues—surely, in the cuts and especially to the ghost gun regulation. I can't figure it out.

I can't figure out why we would want to restrict information from being gathered so that researchers and scientists can try to figure out other approaches to reduce gun violence, other than just enforcement.

We have seen intervention and prevention programs work. Why shouldn't we study them to see if we can expand them to see if we can find ways to combine enforcement with intervention and prevention efforts and reverse gun violence even more? Why can't we do that?

We will see how it goes. I can't say I am super-hopeful right now, but I truly believe that we can find a way to protect people's Second Amendment rights and also protect second graders. We have to find a way to make sure that they can be safe in school, on the streets, and in their homes. We have to find a way to bring down the suicides for veterans who serve this country and, in many instances, were broken because of their service to this country, because of what we had them do. We also have to find ways to protect law enforcement officers, who put their lives on the line out there on the street and are particularly at risk from gun violence, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for putting this together. I thank my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus. I hope we can find a way to work together across the aisle, this Chamber and the other Chamber on the other side of the building, and even with the Trump administration, to get something done on this front.

I know the routine mantra that we just have to lock them up. We need more penalties, more enforcement, no bail, and all of that. The problem is that all of these first-time shooters, many of them mass shooters, we didn't have a chance to keep them in jail because they never went. We didn't have a chance to withhold bail because they didn't have to pay bail to be out on the street.

Let's not wait. Let's address this problem. Let's work together. Let's save lives here in the United States.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BELL).

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the St. Louis region, my constituents, and all the families across the country who have been impacted by the gun violence epidemic, an epidemic forgotten by some, intentionally ignored by others, that still ravages my home and our Nation.

As a former prosecutor, sadly, I have had a firsthand view of what families go through after losing a loved one to gun violence. I truly have no words for the heartbreak and devastation I have witnessed these families shoulder.

What is worse is that this isn't a complex equation. Gun violence is the leading cause of death of children in America. Despite this, my colleagues across the aisle have repeatedly failed to act to keep our children safe.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue championing legislation and programs that address the root cause of this disease plaguing our country. There is simply too much at stake.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned when I started, gun violence doesn't just impact those who lose their lives and their loved ones. It impacts entire communities.

Now that gun violence is the number one cause of death of children—and I think about when I was a child, for some reason, as a member of Gen X, I was terrified of quicksand. Now, the likelihood of my being killed by quicksand was pretty low. Yet, everybody that I know who is a member of Gen X, who was a kid in the eighties, was terrified of quicksand. Now, my children are terrified of gun violence.

The anxiety they feel—particularly my son when they have an active-shooter drill, the anxiety they feel when a loud pop occurs in a public place—my son, who in the middle of his seventh grade year, after the excitement of standing on this floor as I was sworn in to office, a week later was mourning the death of his classmate, Marquan Mitchell-Nash, who was killed when a gun that he and his friends were using as a prop in a music video fired accidentally and killed him.

His school year ended a day early when Shawn Jackson, moments after receiving his high school diploma, and his stepfather, Lorenzo Smith, were killed due to gun violence that started as beef on Instagram. Something that, in my generation, high school students

would have settled with their fists is now being settled permanently through guns that can cause massive damage in a small amount of time and that are all too easy to access because the root causes that lead them to pick up that gun go unaddressed.

Every time there is a shooting, whether at a grocery store, a house of worship, a school, a park, someone's home, while driving down the street, a concert, a nightclub, a movie theater—no place is immune. Every time there is a shooting, whether it is a mass shooting or the unreported, often overlooked day-to-day domestic violence or individual crimes, my son asks me a question: "Mom, am I next?" I look him in the eye and say, "I am doing everything within my power to ensure that you are not."

Mr. Speaker, I can't do it alone. Our communities can't do it alone. We are about to celebrate 250 years of the remarkable idea that all people are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The purpose of government is to help them achieve those ends, or at least get out of the way.

I came here to help people and solve problems. The number one problem plaguing our communities right now, and especially our children, is gun violence. Yet, even when there is bipartisan support, we can't get a vote on anything that will make a difference.

I am tired of having to see that look of fear on my son's face when he hears of another shooting and having to hear that question. I am tired of the pit in my chest when my kids leave the house, and I wonder if they will come back, not because of anything that they do but because of the public health crisis of gun violence.

So let's do something about it. At a minimum, let's address the root causes, but thoughts and prayers aren't enough.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

□ 2040

AMERICA CELEBRATING 250 YEARS

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. HAGEMAN of Wyoming was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about something spectacular, something worthy of a year-long celebration, and something that will shortly be lighting up the skies from sea to shining sea: the 250th anniversary of the creation of the greatest country that has ever existed.

On July Fourth, we will be celebrating our collective birthday, and I am honored to stand on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, in this beautiful Capitol, in this glorious and dynamic city, to describe what that means to me, the lone Representative of the least populated State in our country.

Our experimental Republic, having been born from the ashes of a Middle Ages monarchy, has survived 2½ centuries and is today stronger than ever, with all of us being a testament to what our forefathers envisioned, being a free people, participating in self-governance, with an understanding of the vision and divine intervention that created this country 250 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, 250 years that at times has involved struggle, hardship, discrimination, and war, while also yielding 250 years of freedom, opportunity, respect, compassion, and unprecedented prosperity.

It was 250 years of building a truly inspirational legacy that warrants a generational celebration to confirm that Americans have the right to be proud of our country, to celebrate what it means to be an American.

Now this right to celebrate our 250th milestone does not mean that we should ignore or rewrite our history, but that we should look upon that history with a full and accurate understanding of what it means, both in terms of our dark periods and our incredible accomplishments.

I will say it again because it bears repeating: America is the greatest country in the history of the world.

Despite that fact, there are many individuals, including some who serve in this very body and who are running for office, who claim otherwise, and who seek to tear us apart from within so that they can replace this Republic with the same type of failed states that exist elsewhere in the world.

They claim that we have no American culture. They argue that slavery is our original sin and that we should be forever and only defined by that history. They claim that our forefathers, the Founders of this country, are not worth honoring, but should instead be excised from our collective consciousness.

So, while American pride has historically been part of the fabric of our society, there has been an organized move afoot since at least the 1960s to undermine our reverence for this great country. Those actions have taken several forms, such as with claims that America was never great; with the retelling of our history; or with slanderous accusations about who we are, what we believe in, and the contributions that we have made to the world.

Considering the fact that we are celebrating 2½ centuries of America's existence this year, I think it is high time that we confront those sentiments head-on and expose those narratives for what they are—an effort to destroy our republican form of government to make way for the implementation of failed policies, moral bankruptcies, and the human suffering found in socialism and Marxism.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to remind everyone as to what has made us such a great country, why our history is worth defending, and to emphasize that the future of America is bright indeed.