

from all over the country—not just New York—who were affected by 9/11 to look Members of Congress in the eye and ask them to renew this worthy program. They had meetings. They held press conferences. They even brought a celebrity spokesperson to draw attention to their cause.

Toward the end of the day, one gentleman said that he probably wouldn't be coming back to push Congress on this issue in the future. Now, I wish that none of them would have to come back because we would be able to tell them that we took action and permanently established this program.

But the reason he is not going to be coming back is because he has stage 4 cancer, stage 4 cancer as a result of his work on the pile, looking for his friends. He may not be coming back at all. That is what this is about. That is who we are talking about.

Every day first responders, cleanup workers, and volunteers are struggling with health conditions caused by the effects of the attack of 9/11. They have doctors' appointments, tests, treatments, chemotherapy.

And they can't do it alone. That is why we put this program in place in the first place, to help those who can't do it alone, to not just thank them for their service, but to give back to them what they have given to us.

These heroes should be thanked every day for what they have done. They deserve our thanks. They deserve to be honored and applauded and to have floor speech after floor speech given in their name.

But they deserve more than just words. They deserve action by this House, action that we must—not just should—but we must take to ensure that this program will continue to be there for those who need it.

Our heroes deserve better. We hear a lot about "never forget." I want to suggest that we never use the term "never forget" here on the floor, "never forget 9/11," until we pass a permanent extension of the James Zadroga Health Act.

#### GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I am sick to my stomach this morning because we have just witnessed the 45th school shooting this year. There have been more than 294 mass shootings this year, and we have only had 272 days this year.

I am not going to stand for another moment of silence on this floor unless it is joined with meaningful action. It is a hollow gesture to act like we care for these families when the truth is we don't care enough to act.

Twenty-six times since Sandy Hook we have paused on this floor, we have paused to give our prayers and our sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones. But what are we doing for the next set of families that are going to lose loved ones?

We are going to do nothing, absolutely nothing. In fact, we create more credibility in the fictionalized "death panels" than we do about the actual deaths of innocent schoolchildren, college students, and moviegoers.

This is the truth: In America, more preschoolers are shot dead each year than police officers killed in the line of duty. Ninety-two Americans are shot to death each and every day. Ninety-two will be shot to death today. Do we care enough to do anything?

If there were that many people dying each day due to terrorism, disease, faulty consumer products, you bet we would do something, but not when it comes to guns. When it comes to guns, we can only muster enough to stand up on this floor and be silent. What a tragedy.

Our inaction means we are willing to let thousands of our fellow citizens die so we can prop up the myth that gun violence measures, which the Supreme Court has ruled ironclad under the Constitution, will somehow undermine the Second Amendment.

By refusing to adopt the mental health and background check measures supported by 90 percent of the population and 74 percent of NRA members, we are doing the bidding of the NRA lobbyists and the gun manufacturers. We are not standing side by side with the victims of Umpqua and Charleston and Sandy Hook. We are shrugging and saying, "Eh, stuff happens."

Stuff does not just happen. As you can see on this chart, gun violence is dramatically down in States that have passed strong gun violence prevention laws. You can see the trends in other industrialized countries that have reacted wisely to gun violence.

Australia had 13 mass shootings over 18 years. But then they put in strong laws to protect against gun violence, and they haven't had one mass shooting since then.

In Canada and Norway, also, they tightened their gun laws in the wake of mass shootings, and gun violence rates are a fraction today of what they were. These countries are our closest allies. They are not Fascist regimes. If they can do it, we can do it.

We need to make mental health reporting laws universal and enforce the ones already on the books. It is shameful that eight States have no mental health reporting laws and 13 States have submitted fewer than 100 mental health records each to the national background check system.

By the way, Senate Majority Whip JOHN CORNYN says that his measure is the solution. He has even introduced his own bill, but he and his Caucus have declined to advance it.

We have to make background checks universal by closing the gun show loophole and the loophole for online sales. These loopholes allow criminals, drug abusers, and mentally ill people who are already banned from having guns to get guns. Finally, we need to lift the ban on NIH and CDC research.

Mr. Speaker, I will not stand for another one of these hypocritical moments of silence, but I will stand up for any effort we make to pass sensible and genuine gun safety laws. Lipservice alone is a disservice to these families and the next families who don't want our prayers, but want the lives of their loved ones back.

#### CALIFORNIA DROUGHT CAUSING SUFFERING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, today I had the opportunity and the honor to represent my district on the Senate side in a committee to talk about water, and it was to talk about the bill that we passed off this House floor just a few months ago back in June. Obviously, I was very excited to move that forward and excited to see the debate move forward. This is something that I think we need to talk about a little bit more here on the floor, not just in the Senate because I think people need to remember what we are talking about.

I had this picture taken just last week in my district. When people say a picture is worth a thousand words, you look at this picture, and you try to think of just a few different words that this brings to mind. You see houses here in the background, but you obviously see shacks here. You see a child's stroller, a child's toy, cans of food, a box from one of our local food banks.

These are people who are suffering today. This is in the United States of America. These are people who so many in this body claim to represent, so many in this body talk about, but when we see so many in this body sign letters, speak out in opposition to legislation that could help solve this problem, these people are suffering not because of a lack of the will to work but because we are facing a drought, and also because of legislation, because laws are in place that prevent us from delivering water to these communities.

These are people who want to make a difference. A lot of them might be immigrants. Some of them probably are people born in this country, but they are people that want to achieve the American Dream. A couple weeks ago when the Pope was here, he said so many things that both sides agreed with and some things that both sides disagreed with, but what he said was that every man has the right to work, to earn an honest day's wage. These people are being denied that opportunity.

Just beyond these shacks, you see homes. They look relatively new. You see a business here. You see trucks. Those are all people who have the ability to support themselves, but they are also people who right behind, in their own backyard, that don't have the ability to work that honest day's wage, to supply for their family, to buy new toys for their kids, to actually afford