

In Maine, we have a strong connection to those who make their living on the water, and we know the risks they take every time they go to sea, but in no way does that make a tragedy any less painful.

It is difficult for me to know what the families of the crew are going through and have been going through, but they are in my thoughts and the thoughts of everyone in our State.

I also want to thank the Coast Guard, the Navy, and the Air Force for their round-the-clock efforts during what were very dangerous conditions. And although I wish the results had been very, very different, we owe those men, as well, men and women, a debt of gratitude for risking their lives to try to find the crew of *El Faro*.

HONORING RON GIFFORD OF SCILL

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ron Gifford for his dedication to creating and nurturing a trained workforce for the growing industrial base of Starke County.

Ron is the director of the Starke County Initiative for Lifelong Learning, known as SCILL, a 2-year school for juniors and seniors. SCILL also trains industrial employees, offers several continuing ed courses, computer classes, and an automotive tech program.

The importance of SCILL and Ron's work cannot be understated. A highly trained workforce is the backbone of a strong, diverse economy. Many of the skills needed to compete in the global market of the 21st century are technically demanding.

Currently, the demand for qualified workers is increasing at a pace far greater than existing communities can produce. Thanks to Ron's dedication, SCILL has focused on developing and training more workers to meet this demand, building a strong workforce to ensure the growth of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ron Gifford for elevating the contributions skilled workers make to ensure that our economy is stronger than ever.

UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks before I was sworn into office, a deranged gunman entered Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut and murdered 20 young children and 6 school employees.

What was the response of this Congress to make sure that never happened again? Nothing. Despite an overwhelming amount of support across the country for universal background checks, and bipartisan legislation to

implement them, this Congress did nothing.

Across my district in San Diego, moms, dads, college students, seniors have all been calling on us to take action that will keep our children and our community safe. They are angry at our inability to act, and I share their anger.

We should pass the bipartisan Thompson-King bill on background checks, and we should do it today. That would be a good start to addressing this devastating problem. It is time to do something.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE CREW OF THE EL FARO

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

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, Maine is home to the greatest mariners in the world, and Maine Maritime Academy in midcoast Castine is one of the finest schools in the world to train our ship captains, engineers, and navigators.

Last week, the cargo ship *El Faro* succumbed to Hurricane Joaquin en route from Florida to Puerto Rico. During this horrible tragedy, 33 individuals likely perished, including five graduates of Maine Maritime Academy.

Captain Michael Davidson was 53, Second Mate Danielle Randolph was 34, Michael Holland was 25, Mitchell Kuflik was 26, and Dylan Meklin was 23.

Mr. Speaker, some were married, some had kids. One was engaged, and one was on his maiden voyage. All of these individuals were children of moms and dads.

The great State of Maine and our country is so proud of our brave mariners and grateful for them helping us live better lives. I know I speak, Mr. Speaker, for the entire Congress in extending our thoughts and prayers for their families.

May God rest their souls and let them remain mariners forever.

LA FAMILIA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate La Familia Counseling Service on its 40th anniversary.

La Familia is based out of Hayward, in my district, and also out of Oakland, California, as well as Livermore. It is an inclusive Latino community-based, multicultural organization committed to strengthening the emotional values of individuals and the preservation of families.

Their services help build strong families and communities, fight cycles of poverty, and bridge education and health disparities. For example, they offer important healthcare services, job training, education, and leadership

development opportunities for disenfranchised youth living in our neighborhoods.

I enjoy working with them. I worked with them when I was a prosecutor in Alameda, and our office works with them today.

Appropriately named, the board, volunteers, and staff at La Familia truly view the people they serve as family, and every day they make a difference in someone's life.

Their CEO, Aaron Ortiz, and board members Gabriel Arteaga, Rene Macias, Dr. Claudia Aguilar, Mary Mele, Eleanor Dwyer, and Yvette Flores are working very hard. I congratulate them on their 40 years and what is to come to help the families in the East Bay.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE CREW OF THE EL FARO

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 33 sailors of the *El Faro* cargo ship which disappeared Thursday, October 1, during Hurricane Joaquin. The *El Faro*, an American-flagged ship, had just left Jacksonville, Florida, for San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The 790-foot ship is believed to have sunk after its engines failed in the face of 130 mile-an-hour winds. This week, rescuers found two large debris fields, and officials called this the worst American maritime disaster in over 30 years as, tragically, the entire crew is presumed lost.

Thirteen of these brave souls were from our State in Florida. But regardless of where they came from, our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the crew on the *El Faro*, and with the brave men and women serving in our Coast Guard attempting the rescue.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE CREW OF THE EL FARO

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, my heart and prayers go out to the family and loved ones of the 33 members onboard the cargo ship *El Faro*—*El Faro* means bright star, shining star—which disappeared Thursday evening during the hurricane en route to Puerto Rico.

I held prayer vigils with the families and with several ministers all day Monday, and we are keeping the families in our prayers.

I want to commend the Coast Guard for everything they do for our Nation in the area of maritime security and environmental protection, and I have worked closely with the agency for many years. I want to commend the Merchant Marines who played a key