

fate does not wait for the individuals and families the government is currently rounding up.

Along with other Members of Congress, I am seeking answers from Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson as to why this policy is needed, why it was launched to instill fear in immigrant households over the Christmas holidays, and why family detention centers I have been trying to close are now filling up with new families awaiting deportation.

This is not the Democratic Party's solution to immigration questions, nor should it be America's. We expect heated calls for raids and deportation from the other side. We hear their calls for walls, bigger jails, and further restrictions on legal immigration. We will fight their efforts to erect religious or economic barriers to who can qualify for a chance to come to America.

Our party has rejected those calls with good reason. Americans want order and legality in immigration, not deportations and families forcefully split apart or exiled. We do not need to repeat that scene multiplied by hundreds or thousands of times across our Nation.

What we need to do is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. We need to take steps to solve the problems of gangs, weak and corrupt governments in Central America, and people who have no hope for a brighter future right here on our continent.

Serious aid is more than giving more money to the police departments of those countries. It is more than putting U.S. personnel in those countries to tell moms and dads, no, you can't seek refuge in the U.S. It is more than working with Mexico at its southern border. We need to give mothers and fathers and children a way to live in their own countries.

I have gone to the detention centers in Texas and met with the moms and the kids who were detained there when they came to the United States. One woman summed up their plight concisely by saying: LUIS, in Honduras, my family and I could live in poverty, but we could not live in peace.

Raids will not bring her peace. Raids will not bring us order. Raids will only bring misery.

TEACH ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a growing problem in the United States: Employers across our country have millions of job openings but are unable to find workers with the skills needed to fill those jobs.

According to a recent study by CareerBuilder, nearly 50 percent of employers nationwide cannot find skilled workers to fill open positions. Many of these jobs are located in lucrative ca-

reer fields like welding, emergency medical response, electrical engineering, robotics, and carpentry.

This gap between employers and our workers is holding our economy back; it is exacerbating our unemployment problem; it is hurting our communities; and it is placing unneeded pressure on our families.

The American economy needs qualified workers with the skills and drive necessary to fill these open jobs. I believe part of the answer to how we address this problem is career and technical education. Career and technical education, or CTE, is simply education that specializes in the skilled trades, applied sciences, information technology, and similar disciplines.

Career and technical education occurs in schools across America. In my home State of West Virginia, about 65,000 students each year participate in CTE courses. Those who do are much more likely to succeed. Over 80 percent of West Virginia participants meet industry-driven performance requirements for the technical skills they receive, and 95 percent go on to additional postsecondary education, the workforce, or the military.

I hear about CTE all the time as I travel across my district in West Virginia and visit schools and community colleges. I have seen the classrooms and the students whose eyes light up when they show off their work. I have spoken to the faculty and administrators who have committed their careers to training up a next generation workforce, and I know that just a little more support will make a huge difference.

While there is no silver bullet to our Nation's unemployment problem, additional investment in CTE is one way to help put people back to work and grow our economy.

The skills provided by CTE are some of the most highly sought-after skills in our economy today. But ironically enough, these are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States because of the lack of adequately trained individuals. According to a recent study by the Manufacturing Institute, over 2 million manufacturing jobs will go unfilled in the next decade because of the skills gap.

I believe we can help. That is why I joined with seven of my colleagues to introduce H.R. 4263, the TEACH Act, also known as the Technical Education and Career Help Act.

My bipartisan bill will invest in our CTE programs by providing new resources for the technical education teachers without authorizing any new spending. My bill will authorize the Higher Education Act's teacher residency grant program to be used to help schools recruit and train high-quality CTE teachers. This is currently not allowed.

My bill will increase the quality of training that students receive by recruiting midcareer professionals in relevant technical fields. Having teachers

with real work experience in the fields that they teach will ensure students receive the best training.

I would like to thank Congresswoman KATHERINE CLARK for cosponsoring this bipartisan bill with me, along with Representatives ROD BLUM, BRUCE POLIQUIN, TOM MACARTHUR, JIM LANGEVIN, PETE AGUILAR, and AMI BERA.

Our bill has been endorsed by a broad group of experts, including the Alliance for Excellent Education, the American Federation of Teachers, the Association for Career and Technical Education, and the Future Farmers of America.

My bill is an example that Republicans and Democrats can work together. My bill will help provide new hope to our communities by equipping hardworking West Virginians and all Americans with skills they can actually use.

We need to invest in career and technical education now or we will miss out on this important opportunity. I encourage my colleagues in the House to support the TEACH Act and consider the important difference it would make across our great country.

GUN VIOLENCE AND THE PATH FORWARD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, traditionally we start the new year on a note of hope. Notwithstanding troubled headlines and difficulties home and abroad, the new year is an opportunity to consider the future afresh, to reflect on opportunities, past accomplishments, and new opportunities.

I appreciate President Obama beginning the new year with a continued focus on gun safety. His modest proposal was greeted with predictable opposition and scorn as some Republican politicians attempted to distort it all out of proportion and to change the subject to a nonissue: confiscation of the guns of law-abiding Americans when, in fact, virtually all responsible American gun owners support reasonable background checks to make it more difficult for people we all agree should not be armed to get guns.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have been the response in today's superheated, contentious political climate with the efforts of a generation ago to reduce the carnage on our highways from unnecessary auto deaths or the hundreds of thousands of people who became addicted to cigarettes and died of cancer and heart disease. There would have been screams of outrage about the nanny state and political correctness, that the government was going to take cigarettes away from people because it knew what was best for them. It was going to force people to pay unconscionable levels of tax that would fall on the poor, that a