

more aggressive auto engineering program was the government telling the private sector and the consumer what was best for them, that it would drive up the cost of automobiles, and that it would have law enforcement interfere with people having an innocent drink on a night on the town.

Most telling would have been the argument that this really wouldn't make any difference, that none of these steps would stop people from smoking or reckless driving on the roadways. People would still die.

Those excuses for inaction are demonstrably false a generation later. We have cut the rates of adult smoking in half and saved millions of lives. The carnage on our highways has been dramatically reduced and American families are safer.

It is important to have perspective going forward. Yes, there is no single solution to gun violence. But the fact remains that the United States is unique among developed countries, being unable to protect our families from unacceptable levels of death at the hands of the deranged or the careless.

There are things we can do to make a difference, and the public is willing to accept them. I begin this new year hopeful that we don't have to accept Capitol Hill as an island of denial, whether it is the threat from climate change or the potential to do something about gun violence to make our families safer.

Last year, there were times when we in Congress came together and produced some constructive results. At the State and local level, people are not waiting for our Republican colleagues to come to their senses to deal with carbon pollution or gun violence. They are taking action.

I am hopeful that we will be able to broaden the conversation about what, in fact, we can do: tone down the rhetoric and find steps on issues that are both contentious and even those where there is basically no disagreement but we simply haven't gotten around to taking action.

□ 1015

There are clear opportunities for us to broaden that agenda. We can avert a crisis in Gaza from a lack of water and adequate sanitation. We could pass Representative MURPHY's bipartisan mental health bill. We could link food and farm policy with new awareness and research.

Let's not in 2016 have the opportunities for cooperation and progress drowned with political vitriol. Let's cooperate where we can, focus on solutions even where we can't, and set the stage for giving Americans what they deserve: a government not in denial, a Congress willing to cooperate and to face problems, large and small, so as to make progress rather than to revel in discord and hyperbole in order to win votes in contentious primaries. Let's focus on what we can get done and do

it. We will feel better, and the American public will be better served.

RECOGNIZING HUMAN AND SEX TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize January as Human and Sex Trafficking Awareness Month.

Mr. Speaker, let's call sex trafficking what it is. It is modern-day slavery that exploits our society's most vulnerable. Unfortunately, sex trafficking is the fastest growing business of any organized crime in the world. This isn't a faraway problem. In the United States, it is an estimated \$9.8 billion industry and, sadly, children aged 12 to 14 are the largest at risk for sex trafficking. This is absolutely disgusting.

Last year we passed important legislation aimed at stopping sex trafficking, but the fight is far from over. It is our collective obligation to do everything that we can to put a definitive end to this modern-day slavery, which is why we must come together as a country, we must come together as a Congress, to do everything we can to stop this disgusting crime.

MENTAL WELLNESS MONTH

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mental Wellness Month.

To this point, our government's approach to mental health has consisted of ineffective and disjointed policies. Too often, those in need of care end up either in jail or on the streets because adequate services are simply not available.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which would help the Nation's broken mental health system and care for those who are most in need.

This bipartisan bill would improve effectiveness and efficiency in Federal programs that help people, with a focus on early intervention and prevention programs in addition to suicide prevention. I want to thank my friend TIM MURPHY for his leadership on this bill.

I am glad that the administration this week recognized the importance of mental health programs in reducing gun violence, but we need a long-term legislative fix if we are really going to make progress on solving the mental health crisis in our Nation.

That is why, in recognition of Mental Wellness Month, I call on my colleagues to pass this bipartisan bill and to stop playing partisan games with people's lives.

WAUKEGAN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Waukegan High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this week.

Waukegan's program is the oldest JROTC program in the Nation. It was created before the national JROTC pro-

gram was instated in late 1916. Its initial purpose was to prepare high school young men for military service during World War I. This organization has come a long way over the past century, as half of the cadets of this 777-member corps are young women.

The Waukegan High School JROTC offers a curriculum not only of military training, but also of good leadership and citizenship skills. Students receive an education of flag and military structure, self-discipline and guidance on personal, financial, college, and career planning. Of the 777 cadets, 75 percent go on to postsecondary education and 10 percent serve in our military.

Congratulations to the Waukegan High School JROTC for this program and for leading and being a strong and positive representative for our Waukegan community.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S GUN VIOLENCE EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud President Obama's executive actions taken this week to reduce gun violence in America. These policies will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and dangerous individuals and will prevent gun trafficking, while also protecting the Second Amendment rights of responsible, law-abiding citizens.

With over 30 Americans killed by guns every single day, inaction is not an option. In my nearly 3 years in Congress, House Republican leadership has refused to do anything on gun violence, not one hearing, not a single vote.

In facing Congress' inertia, President Obama did what was necessary to address a threat to our long-term national security and economic stability. While we can't stop every criminal from committing every crime, we can take actions that will save lives, and President Obama's executive actions will do just that.

Under these commonsense changes, everyone who profits from the sale of firearms will be required to obtain a license. It shouldn't matter if you sell a gun in a store, online, or at a gun show. It is the sale of a dangerous weapon, and the seller should make sure the buyer is safe, responsible, and law-abiding.

It is a sobering fact that the majority of gun deaths in the United States is from suicide. Expanding Federal funding for mental health services and streamlining States' abilities to report data to the background check system are essential to keeping guns out of the hands of the dangerously mentally ill.

President Obama's executive actions make essential strides in advancing smart gun technology. If you can use a thumbprint to get into your iPhone, there is no reason that the same technology can't be invented so that guns won't fire without the right fingerprint. If a gun would only fire when it

is held by the right owner, stolen guns would be inoperable, drastically decreasing firearm deaths.

Similarly, just like there are childproof caps on aspirin, there should be childproof guns. This will help protect children from accidentally discharging firearms. Smart gun technology is centuries old. Smith & Wesson invented the first childproof trigger over 150 years ago.

While President Obama's executive actions are crucial steps to reducing the senseless gun violence that is plaguing our Nation, they don't absolve Congress of its moral responsibility to act. There are gaps in existing gun laws that leave us all vulnerable to gun violence. These holes are ones that only Congress can plug.

I have two commonsense bills which will complement President Obama's executive actions and help bring a reduction in firearm mortality.

The first bill, H.R. 224, the Recognizing Gun Violence as a Public Health Emergency Act, would require the Surgeon General to submit an annual report to Congress on the public health impact of gun violence. The bill currently has 135 cosponsors, and I hope that this commonsense proposal can get an up-or-down vote this year.

For the past 20 years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health have been prevented from conducting research on firearms. This lack of data has limited academic research on guns, and it has prevented Congress from obtaining the data it needs to craft impactful legislation.

The second bill, H.R. 225, the Firearm Safety Act, would close the loophole which prevents the Consumer Product Safety Commission from creating rules regarding the safety of firearms.

Quite simply, if the Consumer Product Safety Commission can regulate teddy bears, bicycle helmets, and car seats, it should be able to regulate firearms. Simply improving safety lock quality and improving storage safety will reduce accidents, misfires, and will prevent theft, saving thousands of lives.

These bills would give Congress the data it needs to pass meaningful and impactful gun violence prevention legislation, and they would ensure firearms are as safe and consumer friendly as possible, all without obstructing the Second Amendment rights of responsible gun owners.

Senseless gun violence has been plaguing our Nation for too long. It is simply unacceptable in the United States of America that gun violence is the leading cause of death for people under 24. It is time for us to come together to end the gun violence that is taking a generation of young Americans.

I applaud President Obama's leadership and his important actions to curb the violence that is plaguing our communities, actions he took because Congress has done nothing, not even call-

ing up bipartisan bills with many cosponsors. Congress must now carry the torch and pass meaningful gun violence prevention legislation.

REPEAL AND REPLACE OBAMACARE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I have voted over 60 times to repeal or to replace all or portions of ObamaCare. I have voted numerous times to defund Planned Parenthood.

These issues have always been held up by the parliamentary rules in the Senate, which is the ability of a minority number of Senators to block bills from coming to the floor. But not now, not today. Under reconciliation procedures, a simple majority vote can move a bill out of the Senate Chamber.

So today we will vote to repeal and replace major pieces of ObamaCare that distort the market, raise prices, and deprive our citizens of choice. The bill today will eliminate the individual mandate and the employer mandate. The government's forcing of our citizens to buy a product that they do not want is un-American and costly. I say good riddance.

We were all aghast over the recordings that were released that highlighted Planned Parenthood's selling of baby body parts. As a Member who believes that individual, distinct life begins at conception, Planned Parenthood's lack of remorse or even of concern highlights its dark business. Today we send a bill to the President's desk to defund Planned Parenthood.

Many of my constituents have told me: We gave you the House majority in 2010. What have you done? We gave you the Senate majority in 2014. What have you done? Why can't you get something to the President's desk?

Today we do. We send a bill to the President's desk that repeals ObamaCare and defunds Planned Parenthood, and it is about time.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, what the new year gives us is an opportunity to refresh, to regroup, to look forward to opportunities in this instance and in this august body to protect the American people.

So today I rise with a great deal of applause and enthusiasm, words that I think do not connote the presentation made by President Obama yesterday, for it is not often the American people can see the deepness of our hearts, the affection we have for them, and the concern that we have over loss of life.

The President did all of that. In his teary expressions, he pierced the hearts of Americans, and he should have

pierced the hearts of the Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats. There is no doubt that thousands are dying from gun violence. There is no doubt that people with guns kill. There is no doubt that more people get guns who should not have guns.

I am particularly excited by the President's thoughtful and collaborative work, along with that of Attorney General Lynch and a number of my colleagues, and of, certainly, the House Judiciary Committee, in particular our ranking member, JOHN CONYERS, those of us Democrats on the committee, and particularly those on the Crime Subcommittee, on which I have the privilege of serving as the ranking member.

We have worked together to have an agenda on criminal justice. The issues dealing with guns deal with criminal justice. Why should we run away from the wide and well-known proposition that there are people who are getting guns without their having had background checks?

Tragically, in my own community, an off-duty officer was attempting to sell guns in an open parking lot or in an open area in which he thought he would be protected. What ensued? A gun battle.

I don't know how those individuals purchasing those guns could have had background checks, but I would say that that is certainly not representative of the many in law enforcement with whom I have engaged who have already said that guns kill and that so many guns in America—more guns, we understand, than there are people—provide for a deadly mixture.

□ 1030

So I think it is important for the American people to know that the Federal Government has been working, unlike some have said. In 2015, NCIS received more than 22.2 million background checks, an average of more than 63,000 per day. By law, a gun dealer can complete a sale to a customer if the background check comes back clean or has taken more than 3 days.

I think, in this instance, we need to look at the legislation of Mr. CLYBURN, who indicates you must have a background check. I also think we should look and work legislatively with the President. Why would we be against hiring 200-plus more ATF officers? Why would we be against putting more resources in mental health?

I am very proud that I have introduced H.R. 4316—this bill is the Gun Violence Reduction Resources Act—just last evening to add those 200-plus ATF officers. I ask my colleagues to join me. I introduced that with Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY.

I introduced, with Representative KAREN BASS and Congresswoman NAPOLITANO, H.R. 4315, the Mental Health Access and Gun Violence Act of 2016, to increase the resources necessary, yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, how many more need to die? Do we still need to have an amnesia check on Connecticut, San