

Bernardino, Columbine, or Oregon, and many places beyond? Guns must be restrained. The President's mission is correct—more data for secure technology, more NCIS data in order to run through those background checks appropriately.

Remember Charleston, South Carolina? Remember the message? He got the guns because 3 days had passed. And he killed nine people worshipping in a church.

So it is important, Mr. Speaker, that Congress owns up to its own responsibility, not one that says the Second Amendment is being undermined. It is not. You can never undermine our Constitution. It is a procedural structure that we are not engaged in. We are only trying to provide a guidepost to save lives of children and families. I am looking forward to working with the Judiciary Committee in the House and the Senate to look at constructive legislation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am saddened that again we come on the floor with Planned Parenthood legislation that talks to the very heart of America, quality of health care, protecting women in terms of cervical cancer. This is a nonstarter. Vote against it. Protect American women. Protect families and children against gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, upon taking office, every Member of Congress makes a solemn pledge: to protect and defend the American people. This is the most important oath we take as elected officials—and, to honor this promise, we must do everything in our power to stem gun violence in our nation.

Yet, after another mass shooting and countless acts of gun violence in communities across our country every day, House Republicans are still unwilling to act to stop gun violence and save lives in American communities.

The Democrats have been calling for an immediate vote on the bipartisan King-Thompson Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act to strengthen the lifesaving background checks that keep guns out of the wrong hands.

This Congress has a moral obligation to do our part to end the gun violence epidemic. Now is the time for Republicans to join Democrats in protecting the lives of Americans by taking common sense steps to save lives.

The Administration is announcing two new executive actions that will help strengthen the federal background check system and keep guns out of the wrong hands. The Department of Justice (DOJ) is proposing a regulation to clarify who is prohibited from possessing a firearm under federal law for reasons related to mental health, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is issuing a proposed regulation to address barriers preventing states from submitting limited information on those persons to the federal background check system.

Too many Americans have been severely injured or lost their lives as a result of gun violence. While the vast majority of Americans who experience a mental illness are not violent, in some cases when persons with a mental illness do not receive the treatment they

need, the result can be tragedies such as homicide or suicide.

The Administration takes a comprehensive approach to mental health issues by expanding coverage of mental health services so care is affordable, launching a national conversation on mental health to reduce stigma associated with having a mental illness and getting help, directing funds we have now to improve mental health facilities, and proposing more funds be used for efforts such as training additional mental health professionals.

At the same time, the Administration is committed to making sure that anyone who may pose a danger to themselves or others does not have access to a gun. The federal background check system is the most effective way to assure that such individuals are not able to purchase a firearm from a licensed gun dealer. To date, background checks have prevented over two million guns from falling into the wrong hands.

The Administration's two new executive actions will help ensure that better and more reliable information makes its way into the background check system. The Administration also continues to call on Congress to pass common-sense gun safety legislation and to expand funding to increase access to mental health services.

#### PROGRESS TO STRENGTHEN THE FEDERAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

Over the past year, the Administration has taken several steps to strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which is used to run background checks on those who buy guns from federally licensed gun dealers to make sure they are not prohibited by law from owning a firearm. For example:

The President directed federal agencies to make all relevant records, including criminal history records and information related to persons prohibited from having guns for mental health reasons, available to the federal background check system. This effort is beginning to bear fruit. In the first nine months after the President's directive, federal agencies have made available to the NICS over 1.2 million additional records identifying persons prohibited from possessing firearms, nearly a 23 percent increase from the number of records federal agencies had made available by the end of January.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIONESTA DAM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Tionesta Dam, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, in Forest County.

This vital flood control project is estimated to have prevented more than \$570 million in flood damage over the past seven decades. The Tionesta Dam, located in Forest County, was officially dedicated on January 9, 1941, as a result of the Flood Control Act of 1936 and 1938. The dam itself is located on the Tionesta Creek just over one mile from the Allegheny River. It is key to

flood protection along the Allegheny and upper Ohio Rivers.

Mr. Speaker, this dam is so important that during the 1972 Tropical Storm Agnes, which caused damage all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is estimated to have prevented more than \$60 million in additional damages.

Today, the dam and the lake it created serves purposes beyond flood protection. Tionesta Lake and the area around it amount to more than 3,000 acres available for camping, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The lake itself is a hotspot for boating, water skiing, and other activities for families each summer.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Army Corps of Engineers for their years of work at the Tionesta Dam, and I wish the Park Rangers and staff the best for the future.

#### SAVING TREES IN THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of efforts by the Allegheny National Forest, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, in addressing invasive insects which are threatening the forest's ash, beech, and hemlock trees.

Invasive species are a major concern for national forests across the United States, with the emerald ash borer decimating white ash, the woolly adelgid affecting Pennsylvania's State tree, which is the eastern hemlock, and the beech bark beetle killing American beech trees.

In some areas in the Allegheny National Forest, steps are being taken to proactively manage and treat trees. Over the summer, I met with the local forest service and helped apply a woolly adelgid treatment to eastern hemlock trees. In other areas of the forest, the best approach is to harvest these trees while they still have value.

That is what is proposed across 4,000 acres in the forest, which includes high percentages of these tree species. The harvesting project itself will spread across the forest's four counties, adding up to a total scope of more than 100,000 acres.

I appreciate the approach of the Allegheny National Forest's personnel, their hard work, their dedication, and their continuation to advocate for such proactive management practices.

Now, I will continue to do what I can in the House and as chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee for Conservation and Forestry to help our national forests address these invasive species, which threaten both the health of the forest and the timber resources which helped build this Nation.

#### REVEREND CHRIS HADGIGEORGE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional