

State. So, please, please don't be distracted by political rhetoric.

We are strengthening our support for women's health, and we are stripping Federal taxpayer dollars from an organization that performs more than 327,000 abortions a year.

While I have long fought to stop this atrocious practice, I was especially shocked this summer by videos of Planned Parenthood's cold indifference and barbaric murder of the society's most vulnerable members.

It is our duty as lawmakers, as citizens of a great nation, as friends, as neighbors, as family members to protect those who cannot protect themselves. It is a tragic shame to watch employees of Planned Parenthood so willing to sell the body parts of unborn babies.

These are truly some of the most horrifying and heartbreaking videos I have ever seen, even throughout all my work in combating sex trafficking, sexual assault, and abuse.

The United States is a nation that seeks to protect the least among us in numerous ways, from medical research assistance for the needy to elderly care. It is time that we do the same for our precious unborn children.

Mr. Speaker, today is an historic day when we will finally stop taxpayer dollars from funding Planned Parenthood's abortions. Surely, no Member of Congress can, in good conscience, claim that we should fund these heinous activities with your hard-earned dollars.

After seeing these horrible videos, I was compelled to take action. I joined Congressman SEAN DUFFY and Congressman CHRIS SMITH in sending a letter to Chairmen UPTON and GOODLATTE, requesting an immediate investigation into Planned Parenthood's actions. I would like to thank House leadership and the committee chairmen for granting our request and for the work that they have done on their committees already.

Planned Parenthood has shamelessly tried to defend the indefensible before these committees. They have shown no remorse for the actions described in these videos, apologizing only for the tone of them. In response, they have effectively dared Congress to act. And today we do.

Today Congress says enough is enough. Today we pass legislation that will give the President a very stark choice: continue paying for acts that are so disturbing, so horrifying, and so disgusting that they require congressional investigation, or simply respect life and respect the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the heart of my team's mission statement, which currently hangs in my office, reads: To confront injustice and serve as a voice for the most vulnerable in our society.

Defunding Planned Parenthood is the right thing to do. Today I will give voice to the voiceless. I will proudly cast my vote for life, for these innocent

angels. I will continue to fight for the day when abortion is not only illegal, but is unthinkable.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 56 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of this new day, we are grateful as individuals and as a Nation for all the blessings we have been given.

We ask Your blessing upon the Members of this people's House as they reconvene for the second session. May they anticipate the opportunities and difficulties that are before them and before so many Americans with steadfast determination to work together toward solutions that will benefit their countrymen.

Grant that they be worthy of the responsibilities they have been given by their constituents and truly be the people You have called them to be. May the walls of disagreement that have divided this assembly be put aside and replaced by a spirit of respect and dignity.

May Your Spirit, O God, be in all of our hearts and minds and encourage us to do the works of justice and peace now and always.

May all that we do be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING PEGGY SAMPSON

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I honor and congratulate Peggy Sampson, a long-time member of our congressional community, who retired after more than 37 years of outstanding public service.

Throughout her exemplary service, Peggy demonstrated strong commitment and dedication to the House of Representatives and to our great country.

Peggy arrived on Capitol Hill in 1978 as part of our proud U.S. Capitol Police. After 8 years, she was appointed as the Republican Page Supervisor. Since 2011, Peggy has been helping Members and staff as the House Floor Operations Clerk.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deep gratitude to Peggy on her many positive contributions to the institution we are so humbled to serve.

Peggy, I wish you all the best in your much-deserved retirement, and I look forward to your continued friendship. Godspeed, my friend.

GUN SAFETY

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President of the United States announced another series of actions that his administration is taking to curb our Nation's gun violence epidemic, for they are important steps, and I commend the President and Vice President for their continued focus on this ongoing crisis. As the President said yesterday, Congress still needs to act.

In my 15 years as a Member of the House, Congress time and again has

failed to answer the cries of Americans who have lost their loved ones, particularly our children, to the scourge of gun violence.

Congress has failed to respond to the pleas of Americans who have been disabled by stray bullets. Congress has failed to acknowledge the vast majority of Americans—Republicans and Democrats, gun owners and non gun owners—who believe that every gun purchased should be accompanied by a background check. With each failure, we are closer to a day when tragedies like those of San Bernardino and Sandy Hook will become what they never should be: commonplace.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to find the courage to take action. It is long past overdue.

PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS RESTRICT SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as citizens of the United States, we are afforded basic rights and privileges under the Constitution. One of these fundamental rights is the Second Amendment, and its guarantee to keep and bear arms is clear.

Yesterday, in yet another attempt to erode our basic liberties, President Obama announced plans to undermine the will of Congress and challenge the Second Amendment rights of all Americans.

Just like his unilateral actions on immigration, this proposal is an overreach of the President's constitutionally granted executive authority. Congressional refusal to pass bad policy does not transfer legislative authority to the President, and I will fight against this attempt to diminish our constitutional rights.

Guns are one of many tools that people use to commit horrific crimes, but the problem of evil cannot be legislated away. It is important that any legislative response, whether it is at the Federal, State, or local level, ensures that the constitutional rights of all citizens are protected.

GUNS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last year more than 13,000 Americans lost their lives because of a gun. More than 3,300 children were killed or injured. As the President said yesterday, the question of whether we address gun violence is really a question about who we are and what kind of country we want to live in.

Do we want to be a country in which we have a mass shooting nearly every single day of the year? Do we want to be a country in which children in a school have to practice hiding silently

under their desks or in a closet in order to avoid an active shooter? Do we want to be a country in which the National Rifle Association buys influence and drowns out the voices of concerned citizens? Do we want to be a country in which all Congress does after a mass shooting is hold another moment of silence instead of addressing the problem?

That is the country we live in today, a country in which gun violence threatens lives every day, a country in which we are growing accustomed to atrocities that just don't happen as often in other developed countries.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better. The President has done his job. Now it is time for Congress to do its job.

Let's pass universal background checks. Let's do more to keep guns from criminals and from those with serious mental illness, such that possessing a gun would pose a threat to themselves or others. Let's get military-style assault weapons out of our communities. Let's do better.

PROTECTING AMERICANS' SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, President Obama has announced plans to use an executive order to implement new gun control measures. This plan is a complete overreach into the lives of the American people.

Unfortunately, this President has spent his entire time in office expanding the size of our Federal Government and infringing on our constitutional rights. This disappointing news is just another example of his blatant disregard for the United States Constitution.

As a gun owner myself, I will continue to fight to protect our Second Amendment rights. I remain completely opposed to any action that puts any level of new restrictions on our Second Amendment right to bear arms.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, we have barely started 2016 and here we are, about to take our 62nd vote to dismantle the Affordable Care Act and facing the 11th attack on women's health care in the 114th Congress. Defunding Planned Parenthood and dismantling the ACA will rob hard-working Americans of affordable family planning, and it will strip life-saving cancer screenings away from millions of women across the country.

As Congress, we haven't taken 62 votes to improve women's health and access to healthcare programs for women and seniors. The 114th Congress hasn't declared war on the appalling

lack of healthcare, nutrition, and mental health programs.

But here we are again, wasting valuable tax dollars in order to rehash the ideology of a loud few, one that hurts women and our most vulnerable of constituents. This is just a sad and shameful day.

Congress, this must stop.

ROYER-GREAVES SCHOOL FOR BLIND

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work of Viola Wiskoski, a resident of Paoli, Pennsylvania, which is in the Sixth Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Recently, Viola retired from the Royer-Greaves School for Blind after 70 years of dedicated service as the school's secretary. The Royer-Greaves School for Blind has been a staple in the Paoli community since 1941, and for nearly a century it has provided quality care and assistance to individuals who are visually impaired.

Viola coined her work as an "experience of a lifetime," particularly the privilege of having worked directly with Dr. Royer-Greaves.

For 70 years, Viola ensured that the school operated smoothly, enabling it to work toward its mission of "providing a supportive education and training environment for students with multiple disabilities to help them reach their full potential and enjoy an enhanced quality of life."

In 2009, her service to the school and community was honored with accolades, including the Jessie Royer-Greaves award.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate and thank Viola for her dedicated service to the Royer-Greaves School for Blind. Her achievements have left a meaningful impact on the school, its students, and the community. She is a great and caring American. We wish her the best in health and happiness in retirement.

GUN VIOLENCE AND OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I have stood here many times in the last few years with the same message to my colleagues: Let's take action on gun violence and save some lives.

I have named horrible statistics on gun death, like young people in the United States are more likely to be killed by a gun than in a car accident.

I have told stories about people who have suffered incredible loss, like Vicky Lindsey from Compton, who lost her son to gun violence and founded Project Cry No More.

I have cited polls showing bipartisan support from voters for sensible reforms; but year after year, Congress